

HERITAGE AND INNOVATION: REDEFINING KUALA LUMPUR'S FASHION IDENTITY THROUGH CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of accelerated globalization, the fashion industry has transcended regional confines, evolving into a notably internationalized domain. This investigation delves into the collaborative endeavours between international fashion brands and local Malaysian designers, particularly within Kuala Lumpur—a city characterized by diverse cultural influences- as a pivotal arena for amalgamating cultural heritage with contemporary design aesthetics. The inquiry focuses on utilizing cultural heritage elements, such as batik, within these collaborations to foster design innovation while examining the repercussions of such alliances on brand localization strategies and market positioning. Employing a case study approach, the study reveals results in three dimensions: cultural heritage preservation, brand awareness enhancement, and commercial sustainability. These instances underscore the pragmatic integration of cultural heritage into modern fashion, highlighting the significant role these partnerships play in bolstering the international visibility of local brands and preserving traditional craftsmanship. The study's findings underscore the transformative potential inherent in cross-cultural collaborations,



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nurturing cultural ingenuity and reinforcing Kuala Lumpur's identity as a cosmopolitan nexus. Furthermore, the investigation proffers strategic recommendations tailored to policymakers, industry stakeholders, and academia, emphasizing their integral role in promoting sustainable economic, social, and cultural growth through intercultural cooperation. The research emphasizes the efficacy of integrating cultural heritage into contemporary fashion to yield distinctively enriched products, thereby augmenting the global competitiveness of local brands. These findings have significant implications for enhancing the global competitiveness of local brands, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting sustainable economic growth, with Kuala Lumpur playing a crucial role in this process.

Keywords: *Cross-Cultural Collaboration, Cultural Heritage, Modern Design, Local Brands, Kuala Lumpur Fashion*

INTRODUCTION

With the acceleration of globalisation, the fashion industry has transcended regional boundaries to become a highly internationalised field. This study explores how international brands collaborate with local Malaysian designers, particularly in Kuala Lumpur—a melting pot of diverse cultures—as a crucial platform for integrating cultural heritage with modern design. Previous studies on co-branding have focused on exploring consumer responses to co-branding efforts, emphasising the importance of fit and consistency and highlighting significant management issues. In the context of globalisation, international brands have rapidly expanded their products worldwide through transnational networks, thereby increasing brand recognition and influence (Zhukov & Diugowanets, 2020). This process promotes the exchange and integration of global cultures and enhances brand competitiveness in the market. In this context, collaborations between international and local brands become crucial for integrating cultural heritage with modern design, especially in multicultural hubs like Kuala Lumpur.

The convergence of global consumer demands has spurred market globalisation, leading to competition for global resources and customers. International marketing strategies, including branding, pricing, and

distribution processes, are significantly influenced by local cultural characteristics, underscoring the importance of aligning marketing strategies with cultural significance (Camankulova & Ayhan, 2020). Through global supply chains, brands can reduce production costs while accessing broader market resources, enhancing market competitiveness (Strange, 2006). Despite the apparent trend of globalisation, glocalisation strategies are equally important in the fashion industry. International brands increasingly recognise that merely replicating and promoting globally uniform products cannot meet the diverse needs of consumers in different regions. Therefore, brands are increasingly integrating local culture by collaborating with local designers and incorporating local elements to create products with regional characteristics (Wang & Tai, 2023). This strategy better meets local consumers' preferences and enhances brand recognition and loyalty in local markets (Chiang et al., 2021).

Under the dual influences of globalisation and localisation, integrating cultural heritage and modern design has become a significant trend in the fashion industry. Brands are reinterpreting traditional crafts and cultural elements to create products that are both modern and culturally rich (Kim, 2022). For example, luxury brand Gucci has collaborated with Japanese artists to incorporate traditional Japanese art into its designs, receiving high market acclaim. Fashion brands are valuable assets closely related to consumers' self-concept and expression (Rosihan & Aris, 2022). Luxury fashion, in particular, is pressured to expand its consumer base and brand awareness while maintaining exclusivity, uniqueness, and premium pricing (Cerisola & Panzera, 2022).

As the capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur is not only the political and economic centre of the country but also a multicultural crossroads. As a rapidly developing city, Kuala Lumpur blends modernity with tradition, showcasing unique urban charm. In recent years, Kuala Lumpur's status in the global city network has risen, making it a significant hub in Southeast Asia (Kozlowski et al., 2022). The city has developed into an essential globalised city in Southeast Asia, driven by market forces and neoliberal policies, leading to rapid urban development (Ahmad Sayuti et al., 2018). The city's role in the creative economy further reinforces its position as a vital hub in Southeast Asia, with initiatives such as creative centres contributing to urban development and cultural growth.

In this context, Kuala Lumpur's cultural heritage, particularly batik, is crucial to the city's cultural image. Batik, a traditional Malaysian craft, has a history dating back centuries. Malaysian batik flourished in the early 20th century and became a national cultural symbol in the 1970s, receiving strong governmental promotion (Wahed et al., 2022). As a representative of Malaysian cultural heritage, batik can enhance Kuala Lumpur's international image through modern fashion design. With the increasing global focus on sustainable fashion and cultural diversity, batik fashion brands have gained a unique competitive advantage internationally. Promoting batik fashion brands can stimulate local economic development, promote cultural heritage and innovation, and enhance social cohesion (Razali et al., 2021). Efforts to protect and promote Malaysian batik, including innovative design patterns, are essential for preserving cultural heritage and attracting global interest.

This study will explore how cross-cultural collaborations influence brand localisation, market strategies and analyse the roles of these collaborations in reshaping Kuala Lumpur's fashion identity. Through case study analysis, we will evaluate practical cases of collaborations between international brands and Malaysian designer brands, exploring how they utilise Malaysian cultural heritage, particularly batik, and the significance of these collaborations for cultural heritage preservation and innovation.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The principal objective of this research endeavour is to explore how collaborations between international and local brands promote the preservation and innovation of cultural heritage. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine the significance of brand collaboration in preserving and promoting cultural heritage within Kuala Lumpur's fashion industry.
2. Assess the influence of brand collaboration on the visibility and competitive positioning of local fashion brands in Kuala Lumpur.
3. Investigate the potential of fashion brand partnerships to integrate traditional cultural elements into contemporary fashion design, enhancing Kuala Lumpur's fashion identity.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do fashion brand collaborations between international and local designers in Kuala Lumpur promote the preservation and innovation of cultural heritage?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of cultural heritage in shaping urban identity has been widely recognised in academic circles. Cultural heritage embodies history and tradition and is crucial to a city's uniqueness and appeal. Guinand and Rogerson (2022) argue that cultural heritage, through forms such as historical buildings, traditional crafts, and cultural activities, transmits a city's history and culture to future generations, enhancing residents' sense of belonging and identity. Globally, many cities have successfully enhanced their international image and attractiveness by protecting and promoting cultural heritage. Culture is closely related to urban image and identity in the developmental process. Heritage sites and traditions contribute to local identity and attachment (Cercleux et al., 2022). Cultural heritage contributes to urban identity through creativity and cosmopolitanism. The synergy between cultural heritage, creativity, and internationalism shapes urban identity (Cerisola & Panzera, 2022).

For example, Barcelona successfully created a unique cultural brand by promoting Gaudi's architectural works. Barcelona's cultural brand is built to promote Gaudi's buildings, the entrepreneurial city model, and urban branding (Rius-Ulldemolins & Roig-Badia, 2023). Malaysian Batik holds significant historical and cultural value, deeply rooted in tradition and heritage (Wahed et al., 2022). It symbolises national pride and is an emblem of traditional attire ingrained in Malaysian culture (Suasmiati, 2022). For Kuala Lumpur, promoting Batik culture can showcase its rich cultural heritage and multicultural characteristics, thereby shaping a unique urban identity. By promoting Batik culture, Kuala Lumpur can demonstrate its rich heritage and enhance its urban identity through multicultural characteristics (Wahed et al., 2022). The city can celebrate its cultural diversity, preserve traditional art forms, attract global attention, and position itself as a city with a unique and vibrant cultural identity.

The Malaysian government's support for cultural heritage protection and promotion has been widely recognised. Selviani discusses the government's policy measures and programs (Selviani et al., 2022). The Malaysian Ministry of Tourism and Culture encourages designers and brands to incorporate traditional cultural elements in their creations through various programs and funds, thereby enhancing the international influence of Malaysian culture. The fashion industry can significantly boost urban branding and economic benefits by promoting cultural products. Fashion is an expression of aesthetics and a reflection of culture and values. Fashion cities enhance urban branding and economic benefits by promoting cultural products. Cities like London, with their aggregation of material, creative, and iconic production forms, highlight the importance of cultural and creative industries in urban economies (Zhang et al., 2024). Cities worldwide actively seek the development of cultural and creative industries to promote economic growth and employment opportunities, viewing culture as critical talent capital (Casadei & Gilbert, 2022). The complex interaction among the central, national, and transnational cultures in fashion cities underscores their roles as hubs of transnational fashion capital circulation and as places where local producers create and disseminate unique cultural genres (Casadei & Lee, 2020).

Integrating culture and design in fashion enhances artistic expression and promotes the dissemination of history and culture through creative products (Liu & Chiu, 2017). In the context of globalisation, the fashion industry can create culturally rich products that appeal to global consumers by integrating traditional cultural elements and modern design. For example, Italy has successfully established "Made in Italy" as synonymous with high-end fashion by promoting its traditional leather and craftsmanship (Belfanti, 2023). For Kuala Lumpur, integrating Batik culture into fashion design can enhance the city's international image, drive local economic development, promote cultural heritage, and foster innovation (Maaruf et al., 2020). In recent years, the Malaysian government has emphasised protecting and promoting cultural heritage, implementing policies and measures to support the development of local culture and creative industries. For instance, the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism and Culture encourages designers and brands to incorporate traditional cultural elements into their creations through various programs and funds, thereby enhancing the international influence of Malaysian culture.

Rollet proposes that co-branding enhances brand image and content through target market expansion while reducing research, marketing, and communication costs (Rollet et al., 2013). Oeppen and Jamal examined the nature of co-branding relationships within the fashion industry, with existing co-branding literature primarily focusing on consumer evaluation (Oeppen & Jamal, 2014). Fashion industry research covers various aspects, from design and production to marketing and consumer behaviour. Rangaswamy conducted an in-depth analysis of the operational mechanisms and strategies of the fashion market. Iannilli and Linfante explored the globalisation process of the fashion industry and its geographical impact (Iannilli & Linfante, 2019). However, these studies have mainly focused on the economic and market aspects of the fashion industry, with less emphasis on the specific application of cultural heritage and modern fashion integration.

Torres-Zamudio discussed the theory and practice of urban branding, emphasising the importance of cultural elements in shaping city brands (Torres-Zamudio et al., 2021). Capone and Lazzeretti suggest that city branding needs to combine multiple aspects of culture, economy, and society to enhance a city's international image and appeal (Capone & Lazzeretti, 2016). Alexander examined how co-branding is aimed at responding to rapidly changing markets and increasing customer brand loyalty (Alexander & Contreras, 2016). Co-branding partnerships, particularly between designer luxury brands and fast fashion brands, have been widely documented in academia for their benefits in brand loyalty. Academic research on cross-cultural collaborations between local and international brands is relatively scarce, with existing literature mainly focusing on individual case studies and theoretical discussions. Krišukėnienė provides a theoretical framework for understanding cultural symbols and the creative industry (Krišukėnienė & Pilinkienė, 2023). Despite the rich body of research in the areas above, systematic studies on the collaboration models and impacts of international and local brands in integrating cultural heritage and modern design are still lacking. This research gap limits our comprehensive understanding of the practical effects of cultural creative industries and urban branding.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by empirically analysing specific cases of collaboration between international brands and local Malaysian brands, revealing their practices and impacts in integrating cultural heritage and modern design. By systematically reviewing and

analysing global definitions, concepts, and examples, combined with the practical context of Malaysia, this study seeks to uncover the practices and impacts of international-local brand collaborations in integrating cultural heritage and modern design, providing theoretical support and strategic recommendations for the development of Kuala Lumpur's fashion industry. This will fill a significant gap in current research, offering new perspectives and approaches for academia and practice.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY


This study employs a case study approach to provide an in-depth understanding of how collaborations between international brands and local Malaysian designers promote the preservation and innovation of cultural heritage. The case studies were selected based on their relevance to cultural heritage, significance in the fashion industry, and diverse examples of integrating cultural heritage into contemporary design. The selected case studies include Coach x INNAI, SHEIN with various Malaysian designers, Swatch x Kenji Chai, Uniqlo x Christy Ng, and CalaQisya x Disney. Data was collected through document analysis of press releases, brand websites, and fashion industry reports; semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the collaborations; and visual analysis of the design elements and aesthetics of the collaborative products. The analysis focused on three dimensions: cultural heritage preservation, brand awareness enhancement, and commercial sustainability. This methodology allows for a comprehensive examination of how international-local brand collaborations can enhance cultural heritage preservation, boost brand visibility, and ensure commercial viability.






RESULTS

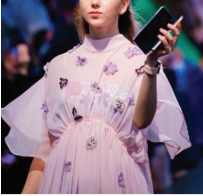



The data analysis summarised 13 instances of collaboration between international brands and local Malaysian brands from 2018 to 2023 (Table 1), focusing on three dimensions: cultural heritage preservation, brand awareness enhancement, and commercial sustainability. By examining these dimensions, the study explored these collaboration models' economic benefits and sustainable development potential,

revealing their role in enhancing market competitiveness, optimising resource allocation, and promoting commercial sustainability.

Table 1. Branded Product Co-operation Form

International Brands	Local Brands and Designers	Time	Collaboration Themes	Product Features
Starbucks	Rico Rinaldi	2018		Endangered animals meet Malaysian nature.
KFC	Pestle & Mortar	2019	 Streetwear Collection	Combination of KFC Brand Elements and Malaysian Art
Warner Bros.	Ariani	2021	 Harry Potter series	sport with a Harry Potter-themed design
Coach	INNAI	2022	 Paradise Swirl	Combining traditional Malaysian Batik textile art with modern design

<p>SHEIN</p>	<p>Miriam Omar</p>	<p>2022</p>	 <p>11 designers co-designed the collection</p>	<p>Vibrant Southeast Asian cultural flavour design, elegant and chic batik design</p>
<p>Uniqlo</p>	<p>Christy Ng</p>	<p>2022</p>	 <p>UTme</p>	<p>Fusion of traditional batik and modern fashion</p>
<p>Disney</p>	<p>CalaQisya</p>	<p>2022</p>	 <p>Raya and the Last Dragon Series</p>	<p>Southeast Asian culture meets Disney animation</p>
<p>Samsung</p>	<p>Dmeow</p>	<p>2022</p>	 <p>mobile phone accessories series</p>	<p>The combination of Malaysian cultural elements and modern technology</p>
<p>Barbie</p>	<p>dUCK</p>	<p>2022</p>	 <p>fashion collection</p>	<p>Barbie film meets modern fashion design.</p>

Samsung	Mimpikita	2022	 <p>GalaxyZ collection</p>	Technology meets fashion
Christian Fischbacher	Rebecca Duckett-Wilkinson	2022	 <p>Interior Decorations Collection</p>	The combination of Southeast Asian art and interior textile design
Swatch	Kenji Chai	2023	 <p>Chaigo Graffiti Art Watch Collection</p>	Combining Malay cultural illustration with modern design
Petron	Flipper	2023	 <p>Sustainable Footwear Collection</p>	The combination of environmentally friendly materials and fashionable design

Source: Author

Cultural Heritage Preservation

Examining 13 instances of collaboration between international brands and local Malaysian counterparts underscores the pivotal role such partnerships play in transmitting and preserving cultural heritage. These collaborations signify a fusion of cultures and a convergence of design and

creativity, revitalising traditional culture through contemporary expression and innovative heritage initiatives. For example, in 2018, Starbucks collaborated with Rico Rinaldi to introduce a product line centred around endangered animals and Malaysian nature, highlighting a commitment to environmental conservation. In 2022, Coach collaborated with INNAI to launch the Paradise Swirl series, fusing traditional Malaysian batik artistry with contemporary design aesthetics. Similarly, SHEIN collaborated with Miriam Omar and eleven other designers to curate a collection rich in Southeast Asian cultural nuances and refined batik patterns, all contributing to the urgent task of preserving our cultural heritage.

These collaborations are not just about showcasing traditional Malaysian craftsmanship; they are about making a global statement. By blending traditional batik textile art with modern design sensibilities, they redefine the boundaries of fashion. For instance, Petron's collaboration with Fipper exemplifies sustainable fashion, using eco-friendly materials to convey a commitment to environmental stewardship while honouring traditional culture. This harmonious blend of sustainability, innovation, and cultural heritage preservation is not just about safeguarding the environment; it is about fostering the continued development of traditional culture within modern society. Similarly, Starbucks's collaboration with Rico Rinaldi masterfully integrates elements of Malaysian flora and fauna into contemporary design aesthetics, showcasing Malaysia's cultural diversity and natural splendour.

These collaborations demonstrate the facilitative role of partnerships between international and local brands in preserving and evolving cultural heritage. Through the lens of design and creativity, they imbue traditional practices with renewed vitality and value, reflecting a modern approach to cultural preservation that resonates globally. By selecting genuine batik motifs and culturally significant themes, these collaborations better reflect Kuala Lumpur's local fashion identity and contribute to a more authentic representation of Malaysian arts and culture internationally.

Brand Awareness Enhancement

To establish brands' visibility and facilitate the global dissemination of local culture, local brands such as INNAI, Miriam Omar, and Ariani have

increased their domestic market presence and attracted greater international attention and recognition by forming alliances with international brands.

For instance, SHEIN's collaboration with Miriam Omar elevated her international profile by incorporating natural and cultural elements into its designs, showcasing local Malaysian art on the global fashion platform. This collaboration highlighted the unique blend of traditional Malaysian motifs with contemporary fashion, making a solid cultural statement. Similarly, Samsung's collaboration with Mimpikita demonstrated the diversity of modern lifestyles through the combination of technology and fashion, facilitating the wider international distribution of Mimpikita's designs and products through Samsung's global marketplace. This partnership showcased how local design aesthetics could seamlessly integrate with cutting-edge technology, enhancing the brand's visibility and appeal.

Uniqlo's collaboration with Christy Ng attracted consumers interested in culture and fashion by combining the traditional art of batik with modern design, significantly enhancing the brand's market appeal. By showcasing traditional Malaysian craftsmanship through a global retail giant, this collaboration boosted Christy Ng's profile and promoted the cultural heritage of batik to a broader audience.

In 2019, KFC joined forces with Pestle & Mortar to unveil a streetwear collection that amalgamated KFC brand motifs with Malaysian artistic expressions, exemplifying the blend of Indigenous culture with global branding. This collaboration successfully highlighted local culture while leveraging KFC's global brand recognition, expanding its market reach and resource access.

These partnerships have significantly boosted local Malaysian brands' visibility and competitive positioning on the international stage. By highlighting the unique cultural contributions of local brands, these collaborations have enhanced their international profiles and influence. Through these partnerships, the successful integration of traditional cultural elements into modern design underscores the importance of authentic cultural representation and innovation in enhancing brand awareness and market appeal globally.

Commercial Sustainability

The collaborative endeavours showcased Malaysia's cultural richness and solid commercial sustainability. In 2021, Warner Bros. and Ariani developed a sports collection themed around Harry Potter, garnering widespread interest and commercial success. This collaboration demonstrated the successful integration of global pop culture with local fashion, creating products that appeal to diverse markets. Similarly, in 2022, Samsung and Dmeow released a line of mobile phone accessories that intricately melded Malaysian cultural motifs with cutting-edge technology, exemplifying the successful fusion of tradition and innovation. Samsung's collaboration with Mimpikita on the GalaxyZ collection epitomized the blend of technology and fashion, highlighting how technological advancements can complement traditional design elements.

In 2023, Swatch collaborated with Kenji Chai to produce the Chaigo graffiti art watch collection. This collection combined Malay cultural illustrations with contemporary design principles, further demonstrating the market appeal of culturally infused products. Petron and Flipper introduced a sustainable footwear collection, merging eco-conscious materials with fashionable aesthetics, showcasing a commitment to environmental sustainability while honouring traditional culture.

These collaborative endeavours demonstrated strong commercial sustainability and achieved mutually beneficial outcomes through resource sharing and collaboration with international brands. They enhanced the visibility of Malaysian culture globally and nurtured cross-cultural exchange and innovative design practices, contributing to the sustainable commercial development of local brands.

By analyzing these three dimensions—cultural heritage preservation, brand awareness enhancement, and commercial sustainability—the study highlights the significant impact of cross-cultural brand collaborations on cultural heritage preservation and innovation, market competitiveness, and sustainable commercial development. These collaborations epitomize deep-seated partnerships between international brands and local designers, synthesizing distinctive Malaysian cultural elements, such as batik art and broader Southeast Asian heritage, with contemporary design paradigms and

technological advancements. The role of technology in these collaborations is particularly noteworthy, as it contributes to the sustainable commercial development of local brands and augments the visibility of Malaysian culture in the global arena.

Through these collaborative efforts, local brands have leveraged international partnerships to gain access to new markets, share resources, and enhance their competitive positioning. These initiatives underscore the importance of integrating cultural heritage with modern design and technology, fostering sustainable business practices that benefit local and global stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

Enhancing brand awareness through these collaborations is not limited to market influence but includes an educational component. Collaborations between international brands and local designers help introduce Malaysian culture and fashion to global consumers. For example, Uniqlo's collaboration with Christy Ng introduced batik to a broader audience and provided background and history on the batik craft, enriching the consumer experience. This aligns with the findings of Houghton and Stevens in 2011 on the importance of cultural elements in enhancing city branding and consumer engagement. This study extends this understanding by demonstrating the reciprocal benefits of these collaborations, where both international and local brands gain new dimensions in their market appeal.

The benefits of brand collaborations are not just theoretical; they are practical and proven. These partnerships have opened up new revenue streams for local brands, enabling them to diversify their products and reduce reliance on the local market. This is particularly reassuring during economic uncertainty, as global market presence can buffer against local economic downturns. The findings align with the arguments of Leão and Da Silva in 2021 on the tangible benefits of global supply chains in enhancing market competitiveness. As seen in Samsung's collaboration with Mimpikita, these partnerships have sparked innovations that blend cultural heritage with modern technology, providing concrete, sustainable business practices for other industries to adopt.

This study offers a more nuanced view of the benefits of international-local brand collaborations compared to existing literature. While previous studies often emphasise the potential risks of cultural appropriation and the dilution of local cultures (Lojacono, 2022), this research provides concrete examples of how these risks can be mitigated through respectful and meaningful partnerships. The evidence suggests that the outcomes can be mutually beneficial and culturally enriching when international brands authentically engage with local cultures.

The findings of our study carry significant implications for policymakers and industry stakeholders. Policymakers should actively promote and facilitate such collaborations by offering incentives and support structures for local designers to engage with international brands. This could include grants, networking events, and educational programs highlighting best cross-cultural collaboration practices. For industry stakeholders, our study underscores the importance of approaching collaborations with mutual respect and cultural sensitivity. This ensures that partnerships drive commercial success and enrich cultural content, making all parties involved feel valued and respected.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significant impact of international-local brand collaborations on cultural heritage preservation, brand awareness enhancement, and commercial sustainability within the Malaysian fashion industry. By examining 13 such collaborations, it is evident that these partnerships effectively integrate traditional Malaysian elements, like batik, into contemporary design. This revitalises cultural heritage and ensures its relevance and transmission to modern audiences.

The collaborations between international brands and local designers have significantly enhanced local Malaysian brands' visibility and competitive positioning on the global stage. These partnerships expand market reach, foster consumer engagement, and highlight the unique cultural contributions of local brands, thereby elevating their international profiles.

Commercial sustainability is another critical outcome of these

collaborations. Partnerships have driven sales, market expansion, and innovation by blending cultural heritage with modern technology. The sustainable practices observed, such as in eco-conscious footwear collections, illustrate how cultural heritage can be preserved while promoting environmental stewardship, offering a model for sustainable business practices.

The findings have significant implications for policymakers and industry stakeholders. Policymakers should encourage such collaborations by providing incentives and support structures for local designers. On the other hand, industry stakeholders should approach these partnerships with respect and cultural sensitivity. This will ensure that collaborations are both commercially viable and culturally enriching, making them feel valued and responsible for preserving the local culture.

In conclusion, international-local brand collaborations have inspiring and hopeful transformative potential. They are not just about preserving cultural heritage, enhancing brand awareness, and ensuring commercial sustainability. These partnerships can elevate the global profile of local Malaysian brands and contribute to the sustainable development of the fashion industry. By fostering a respectful and innovative integration of traditional and modern design elements, these collaborations provide a robust model for other cities and industries navigating globalisation while preserving and celebrating local cultural identities.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed significantly to the design and execution of this research. Guo Hui, Asliza Aris, and Rose Dahlina Rusli collectively conceptualised the research framework and developed the research objectives and questions. Guo Hui led the data collection process, including identifying and analysing case studies. Asliza Aris contributed to the methodology design and statistical analysis of the data. Rose Dahlina Rusli

provided critical insights into the aspects of cultural heritage and ensured the accuracy of the cultural elements discussed in the research. All authors were involved in writing the manuscript and have read and approved the final version.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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