

The Evolution of Silhouette Design: Western Tailoring Adaptation in the Transformation of Traditional Baju Kebaya in Malaysia

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Abstract—The *Baju Kebaya* serves as a quintessential repository of aesthetic and socio-cultural identity, functioning as a dynamic symbol of Malaysia's intangible heritage. This study investigates the structural evolution of the *Baju Kebaya* (Malay and Nyonya Peranakan) across a century of transformation, from 1910 to 2017. Employing a qualitative, object-based material culture research design, the study utilises digital tracing analysis and micro-visual observation of 112 heritage artefacts, corroborated by semi-structured interviews with cultural custodians and master practitioners. Drawing upon Syed Ahmad Jamal's *Rupa dan Jiwa* (Form and Soul) framework, the research maps a significant morphological transition from traditional, loose cylindrical geometry to anatomically contoured, "hourglass" silhouettes influenced by Western dressmaking. The findings demonstrate that the assimilation of technical components such as darting, princess lines, and shoulder padding has fundamentally reshaped the garment's visual aesthetics. However, this study argues that such technical integration constitutes a resilient "techno-cultural negotiation" rather than a loss of identity; the *Baju Kebaya* effectively synthesises these globalised tailoring influences while sustaining its foundational *Jiwa* (spirit) as a symbol of modesty and feminine elegance. By providing a longitudinal analysis of these structural shifts, this research contributes to the safeguarding and scholarly understanding of heritage garments in an era of rapid industrialisation and digital globalisation.

Keywords: Baju Kebaya Cultural Heritage; Digital Tracing Analysis; Fashion Studies; Material Culture; Rupa dan Jiwa

1. INTRODUCTION

Baju Kebaya stands as a quintessential emblem of intangible cultural heritage in Malaysia, serving as a complex repository of aesthetic, structural, and socio-cultural identity. While often romanticised as a static tradition, the garment has functioned for over a century as a highly responsive architectural form, capable of negotiating globalising forces without relinquishing its intrinsic "soul" or *Jiwa*. Historically, the *Baju Kebaya* has been worn by diverse communities, including Malay women and the Nyonya Peranakan, each adapting the form to suit evolving socio-political climates (Zubaidah Sual, 1994). Material culture is often most intimately expressed through the design and wearing practices of traditional dress. Within Peninsular Malaysia, the *Baju Kebaya* stands as a significant cultural artefact that not only reflects elegance, ethics, and feminine identity but also functions as a visual medium connecting diverse ethnic and cultural communities. Historically, the origins of the *Baju Kebaya* can be traced to the *Baju Belah* garment structure, which existed before the fifteenth century and flourished during the height of the Melaka Sultanate. Early forms of this traditional attire emerged through dynamic maritime cultural exchanges, where international trade networks facilitated the circulation of luxury textiles and introduced influences from Middle Eastern loose robes, particularly the *habaya* style, as well as South Asian garments such as the *kurta* (Abbas Alias & Norwani Md. Nawawi, 2003).

The rapid modernisation of fashion in the 21st century has threatened the structural integrity of traditional Malay and Nyonya Kebaya (Siti Zainon Ismail, 2006). Commercial hybridisation and mass production often disregard the foundational geometric construction techniques such as traditional panel cuts and specific bodice proportions in favour of fast-fashion silhouettes. This unregulated evolution risks diluting the garment until it loses its cultural recognizability and connection to its heritage identity.

Current literature on traditional Southeast Asian attire often focuses on surface ornamentation, such as batik motifs and embroidery techniques (Abbas Alias & Norwani Md. Nawawi, 2003). However, there is a lack of systematic, object-based research that bridges the "extrinsic" physical changes (Western tailoring adaptations) with the "intrinsic" cultural continuity (*Rupa dan Jiwa*) of the *Baju Kebaya* over the last century. This study fills this gap by utilising digital tracing analysis of heritage artefacts to map the transition from traditional cylindrical silhouettes to Western-influenced anatomical contours. To document the structural evolution of *Baju Kebaya* silhouettes (Malay and Nyonya Peranakan) in Peninsular Malaysia from 1910 to 2017. How has the physical architecture of the *Baju Kebaya* shifted across four distinct historical eras (1910–2017)?

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, object-based material culture research design. This approach prioritises the artefact as the primary evidentiary source, enabling a rigorous examination of the physical changes to the *Baju Kebaya* that are often absent from written historical records.

2.2 Sampling and Artefact Analysis

The dataset comprises 112 intact textile artefacts curated between 1910 and 2017, sourced from the National Textile Museum, the PERZIM archives, and private collections. The sample was stratified into three categories: 50 Malay *Kebayas*, 50 Nyonya Peranakan *Kebayas*, and 12 heritage undergarments (camisoles). This cross-sectional sample ensures a representative view of both cultural traditions over the century-long period.

2.3 Digital Tracing Analysis

To achieve objective structural documentation, digital tracing analysis was employed. High-resolution photographs of the artefacts were digitised to isolate external silhouette contours, panel geometry, and shoulder inclinations. By overlaying these tracings chronologically, the study maps the structural variables specifically the shift from the traditional cylindrical geometry to the modern anatomical "hourglass" form against distinct historical eras (1910–1957, 1958–1979, 1980–1999, and 2000–2017).

2.4 Trustworthiness and Data Triangulation

To ensure the rigour and validity of the qualitative findings, this study utilised data triangulation. This involved corroborating the physical artefact analysis with insights from semi-structured interviews with cultural custodians, museum curators, and master tailors (*tukang jahit*). This multi-methodological approach validates the physical observations with practitioners' tacit knowledge, ensuring that the study accounts for both the "what" (the structure) and the "why" (the cultural intention).

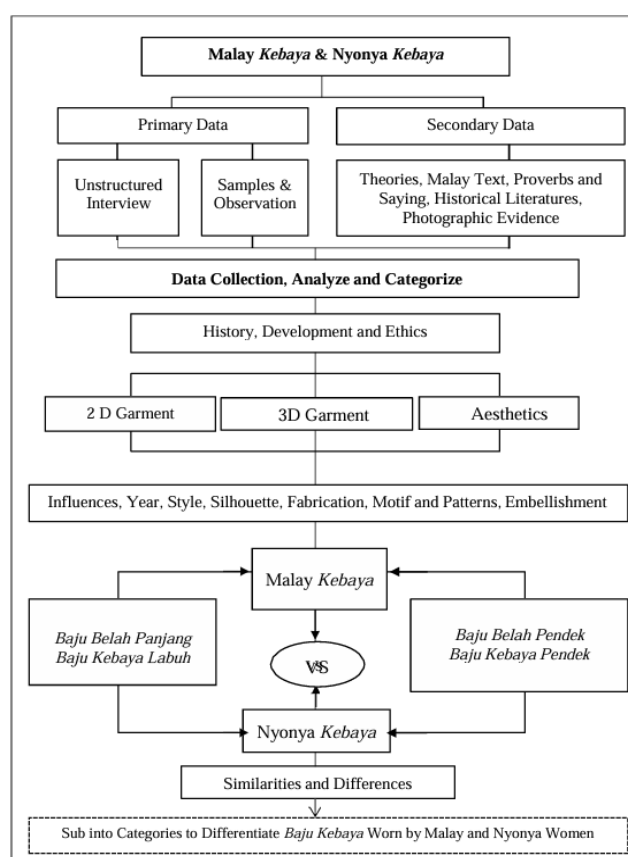


Figure 1. Research Design of the Process of Study, Analysis of Data and

Data Interpretation of Malay and Nyonya Kebaya in Peninsular Malaysia from 1910 – 2017. Source: Zarina Yusof (2016)

Table 1. Data Collection of Baju Kebaya

Types of Baju Kebaya	Quantity Overall	Quantity Selected
MALAY BAJU KEBAYA		
Baju Belah Panjang: All the state in Peninsular Malaysia	56	10
Baju Belah Pendek: All the state in Peninsular Malaysia	48	7
Baju kebaya Labuh: Baju Kebaya Perlis, Baju Kebaya Pulau Pinang, Baju Kebaya Perak, Baju Kebaya Selangor, Baju Kebaya Melaka	30	15

Types of Baju Kebaya	Quantity Overall	Quantity Selected
Baju Kebaya Pendek: Baju Selong, Baju Kebaya Tegak Separuh Tia, Baju Kebaya Kota Bharu, Baju Kebaya Bandung	38	12
Baju Riau Pahang, Baju Sejari Johor, Baju Kebaya Terengganu	12	6
Camisole	8	4
NYONYA PERANAKAN BAJU KEBAYA		
Baju Belah Panjang: Pulau Pinang & Melaka	46	20
Baju Belah Pendek: Pulau Pinang, Melaka dan Terengganu	12	10
Baju Kebaya Pendek: Baju Kebaya Renda, Baju Kebaya Biku, Baju Kebaya Sulam (Nyonya), Baju Kebaya in the Mourning	58	20
Camisole	22	8
Total	322	112

Source: Zarina Yusof (2019)

2.5 The *Baju Kebaya* as Material Culture

In the discourse of material culture, clothing serves as a reflexive index of societal identity (Hansen, 2004). Within the Malaysian context, the *Baju Kebaya* acts as a visual document of the dialectical relationship between tradition and modernisation. Scholars have frequently characterised the garment as a site of negotiation where local concepts of modesty (*kesopanan*) encounter globalised aesthetic standards (Siti Zainon Ismail, 2006).

2.6 Historical Evolution and Structural Shifts

The historical trajectory of the *Baju Kebaya* reveals a distinct shift from loose, geometric structures to more anatomically fitted contours. Historically, the *Baju Belah Panjang* and early *Kebaya* iterations utilised non-draped, straight-cut patterns that prioritised the textile's integrity over the wearer's physical form. As noted by Mohd. Said Sulaiman (1931), the ethos of traditional Malay dress was predicated on ease of movement and modesty. However, the mid 20th century marked a pivotal transition as the sartorial influence of Western tailoring most notably the introduction of darting and shoulder articulation, began to reshape the traditional silhouette.

2.7 Cultural Hybridisation and Western Tailoring

Cultural hybridisation in fashion is rarely a process of passive assimilation; rather, it is a deliberate negotiation of form. Maynard (2004) posits that globalised fashion influences are often synthesised with indigenous tailoring vocabularies to create new hybrid identities. The introduction of structural elements such as princess lines and precise bodice shaping fundamentally altered the *Kebaya's* volume, transforming it from a traditional cylindrical form into a contemporary "hourglass" silhouette.

2.8 The Theoretical Framework: *Rupa dan Jiwa*

To interpret these morphological shifts, this study employs the *Rupa dan Jiwa* (Form and Soul) framework established by Syed Ahmad Jamal (1992/2010). In this duality, *Rupa* represents the tangible form of the physical structure and geometry of the garment, while *Jiwa* embodies the intangible cultural identity and symbolic values. This framework is essential for evaluating whether the adoption of Western tailoring techniques constitutes a degradation of cultural identity or a resilient adaptation of *Rupa* to sustain the *Jiwa* of the *Baju Kebaya* in a modern context.

2.9 Summary of the Research Gap

While existing literature provides a foundation for understanding the socio-historical importance of the *Kebaya*, there is an insufficient body of empirical data regarding its technical evolution. By integrating object-based material culture research with digital morphometric analysis, this study provides a novel evidence-based approach to documenting the technical history of the *Baju Kebaya*.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the dialectical tension between *Rupa* (Form) and *Jiwa* (Soul). As illustrated in Figure 1, the transformation of the *Baju Kebaya* is not viewed as a linear progression of aesthetic trends, but as a multi-layered negotiation between three primary drivers:

- Indigenous Sartorial Architecture (the traditional geometric structure- *pesak and kekek*),
- Western Tailoring Mechanics (the introduced anatomical fitting techniques)- (darts, princess lines, shoulder padding), and
- Socio-Cultural Identity (the sustaining *Jiwa*) of the Malay and Peranakan communities.

The framework posits that while the *Rupa* (silhouettes, dart placement, and shoulder structure) has undergone profound morphological shifts, the *Jiwa* persists through the symbolic preservation of garment components like the *pesak* and *kekek*, thereby maintaining the cultural essence of the wearer's identity.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The longitudinal analysis of 112 artefacts reveals that the *Baju Kebaya* has undergone a significant morphological shift, transitioning from a loose, geometric construction to a structured, anatomical form. This evolution is categorised into four distinct historical phases.

3.1 Preservation of Traditional Cylindrical Silhouette (1910–1957)

During this foundational period, the *Baju Kebaya* (particularly the *Baju Panjang* and early *Kebaya*) adhered to a traditional "non-draped" construction. Analysis of the artefacts confirms that the garment relied on the natural width of the textile, utilising the *pesak* (side panel) and *kekek* (gusset) to achieve volume. The silhouette was essentially cylindrical, prioritising modesty and ease of movement over anatomical fit. The *Jiwa* of the garment during this era was rooted in its geometric purity, reflecting the agrarian and domestic socio-cultural landscape of the time.

3.2 Westernisation and the Emergence of the Hourglass Form (1958–1979)

Post-independence, the influence of Western fashion paradigms became more pronounced. This era marked the introduction of "structural engineering" into *Kebaya* production. Artefacts from this period demonstrate the integration of *darts* (*lisu pemadan*) and the gradual adoption of *princess line* construction. These technical interventions served to contour the garment to the wearer's torso, effectively creating an "hourglass" silhouette. While the *Rupa* (form) shifted towards a Western-influenced anatomical fit, the *Jiwa* remained intact through the preservation of traditional lace (*kerawang*) and the symbolic use of the *kerongsang* (brooch) as a closure mechanism.

3.3 Corporate Modernity and the Rise of Kebarung (1980–1999)

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the professionalisation of the *Kebaya*. As more women entered the corporate workforce, the garment had to reconcile traditional aesthetics with the requirements of a modern professional environment. This led to the emergence of the *Kebarung* a hybrid silhouette that merged the long structure of the *Baju Kurung* with the open-front design of the *Kebaya*. Findings show an increase in the use of shoulder padding and structured sleeves, signalling a move towards a "power suit" aesthetic while maintaining the cultural signifiers of the Malay identity.

3.4 Global Fashion Influences and Industrial Production (2000–2017)

In the final phase of the study, the influence of global industrialisation and mass-market fast fashion is evident. The *Baju Kebaya* in this period reflects an era of extreme stylistic fluidity. While industrial production techniques have facilitated widespread accessibility, they have also led to a "homogenization of form," where regional nuances in cutting are increasingly replaced by standardised, computerised pattern grading. Despite this, the study identifies a resilient counter-movement where bespoke artisans continue to uphold traditional construction techniques, ensuring that the *Jiwa* of the garment survives amidst the pressures of globalised fashion.

3.5 Negotiating Rupa and Jiwa

The findings suggest that the evolution of the *Baju Kebaya* is a testament to the concept of *Rupa dan Jiwa*. The adoption of Western tailoring (a change in *Rupa*) has not functioned as a dilution of identity, but rather as an adaptive mechanism that allows the garment to remain relevant. The *Jiwa* of the *Kebaya* its function as a vessel for cultural values is preserved not through the stagnation of its form, but through its ability to negotiate and synthesise external influences into a cohesive, locally rooted identity.

3.6 Theoretical Contribution

This study extends the application of Syed Ahmad Jamal’s *Rupa dan Jiwa* (Form and Soul) theory within the discourse of *Material Culture Studies*. The primary theoretical contribution is the introduction of the "Techno-Cultural Negotiation" model, which elucidates how Western tailoring techniques have been integrated with indigenous aesthetic values without eroding cultural identity. This model provides a new analytical framework for fashion researchers to understand how heritage garments maintain their essential "Soul" (*Jiwa*), even as their "Form" (*Rupa*) undergoes morphological adaptation in response to evolving socio-cultural landscapes.

Table 2. Anatomy of Form, Shape, Style of Evolution of *Baju Kebaya*

Types of Silhouttes	Total of Bodice Panel	Panel		Form and Shape		Slave	Accesories
		Back Bodice	Front Bodice	Length	Shape of Bottom		
MALAY KEBAYA							
Baju Belah	1 Bodice 2 Kekek 2 Sleeve	1 (no shoulder and panel cuts)		3 Inch from Ankle/Knee line	Straight Across	Rectangle	Keronsang Ibu & Anak

Types of Silhouttes	Total of Bodice Panel	Panel		Form and Shape		Slave	Accessories
		Back Bodice	Front Bodice	Length	Shape of Bottom		
Baju Kebaya Perlis	1 Bodice 2 Kekek 2 Sleeve	1 (no shoulder and panel cuts)		Below the Knee Line	Straight Across	Rectangle	Soket & Conet Keronsang Ibu & Anak
Baju Kebaya Kedah	1 Bodice 2 Kekek 2 Sleeve	1 (no shoulder and panel cuts)		Below the Knee Line	Straight Across	Rectangle	Soket & Conet Keronsang Ibu & Anak
Baju Kebaya Perak	3 Bodice 2 Kekek 2 Sleeve	1	2	Below the Knee Line	Straight Across	Rectangle	Soket & Conet Keronsang Ibu & Anak
Baju Kebaya Selangor	3 Bodice 2 Kekek 2 Sleeve	1	2	Below the Knee Line	Straight Across	Rectangle	Soket & Conet Keronsang Ibu & Anak
Baju Kebaya Sejari, Johor	3 Bodice 4 Pesak Gantung 2 Pesak Kembang 2 Sleeve 1 Collar	1	2	Knee Length Below the Knee Line	Oblique	Rectangle	Button and Buttonholes 5,7 or 9 Button
Baju Riau Pahang	3 Bodice 4 Pesak Gantung 2 Pesak Kembang 2 Sleeve 1 Collar	1	2	Knee Length Below the Knee Line	Oblique	Rectangle	Button and Buttonholes 5,7 or 9 Button
Baju Kebaya Terengganu	3 Bodice 4 Pesak Gantung 2 Pesak Kembang 2 Sleeve 1 Collar	1	2	Knee Length Below the Knee Line	Oblique	Rectangle	Button and Buttonholes 5,7 or 9 Button
Baju Kebaya Tegak Separuh Tiang	5 Bodice 2 Kekek 2 Sleeve	1	4	Below Hipline & Knee Line	Oblique	Padanan Rata Sleeve	Soket & Conet Keronsang Ibu & Anak
Baju Kebaya Kota Bharu	5 Bodice 1 Lidah 2 Sleeve	1	4	Below Hipline	Oblique	Padanan Rata Sleeve	Soket & Conet
Baju Kebaya Bandung	5 Bodice 1 Lidah 2 Sleeve	1	4	Below Hipline	Oblique	Padanan Rata Sleeve	Soket & Conet
NYONYA PERANAKAN KEBAYA							
Baju Panjang	1 Bodice 2 Kekek 2 Sleeve	1 (no shoulder and panel cuts)		1 Inch from Ankle	Straight Across	Rectangle	Keronsang Ibu & Anak Paired with Anak Baju
Baju Kebaya Sulam Nyonya	5 Bodice 2 Sleeve	1	4	Hip Length	Oblique	Padanan Rata Sleeve	Keronsang Ibu & Anak
Baju Kebaya Biku	5 Bodice 2 Sleeve	1	4	Hip Length	Oblique	Padanan Rata Sleeve	Pin or hair pin
Baju Kebaya Renda	5 Bodice 2 Sleeve	1	4	Hip Length	Oblique	Padanan Rata Sleeve	Soket & Conet
Baju Kebaya for Mourning	5 Bodice 2 Sleeve	1	4	Hip Length	Oblique	Padanan Rata Sleeve	Soket & Conet
Baju Kebaya Moden (Contemporary)	5 Bodice 2 Sleeve	1	4	Below Hipline or 2 Inch Before Knee Line	Straight Accros Oblique	Diversity of Sleeve Shapes	Invisible Zip

Source: Zarina Yusof (2019)

The findings suggest that the adoption of Western tailoring does not constitute a loss of identity but rather a resilient adaptation, where the *Rupa* evolves to keep the *Jiwa* relevant in a modern context, such as:

3.8 Practical Implications

This research advocates that stakeholders including museum curators and fashion education institutions prioritise documenting traditional patterns as a "Digital Heritage Archive." A comprehensive understanding of original geometric construction is vital to mitigate the "degradation of form" frequently caused by the homogenising effects of mass production and fast fashion.

3.9 Heritage Implications

The *Baju Kebaya* transcends its status as a static artefact; it represents a *masterclass* in cultural resilience. This study demonstrates that a society can successfully evolve the external form of its heritage dress without relinquishing its core cultural essence. By negotiating these changes, the *Baju Kebaya* continues to function as a vibrant, living testament to the adaptability of Malay identity.

Table 3. A Sample of Fabric Use in the Structural Evolution of Kebaya from 1910-2017

Name	Fabric Samples	1900-1957 (Before Independence Era)	1958-1979 (Early Independence Era)	1980-1999 (Moden Malaysia)	2000-2017 (Millenium Era)
Kain Tenun		a. Available in stripes and checks b. Gold Thread for motifs c. Natural dyes d. Dark Color	a. Available in stripes and checks b. Gold Thread for motifs c. Dark Color	a. Available in stripes and checks b. Gold Thread for motifs c. Dark and soft Color	a. Available in stripes and checks b. Gold Thread for motifs c. Dark and soft Color
Songket Bertabur		a. Scattered motifs in gold and silver threads with traditional motif b. Motif corak catur c. Motif bunga tanjung	Scattered motifs in gold and silver threads with traditional motif and stripe motifs	Scattered motifs in gold and silver threads with traditional motif and geometry motifs	Scattered motifs in gold and silver threads with traditional motif and geometry motifs

Source: Zarina Yusof (2019)

Table 4. An Analysis of Malay Baju Kebaya from 1910-2017

ITEM	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017
FORM												
Loose	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shape/Curve	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
BLOUSE LENGTH												
Shoulder to Hip Line and Below	R	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shoulder to Knee Line and Below	R	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shoulder to Ankle Length	Y	Y	Y	R	R	N	N	N	N	N	N	R
SLEEVE												
Rectangle	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Padanan Rata	R	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Various of Sleeves	N	N	N	N	R	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NECK												
V Shape	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
U Shape	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Heart Shape	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Boat Shape	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mosque Dom Shape	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tegak Collar	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lepel	U	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shawl Collar	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Decorative Finishing	U	U	U	R	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SPLIT FRONT OPENING												
Lidah (Tongue)	U	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
HEM												
Even	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Uneven	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Facings	N	N	N	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
EMBELLISHMENT/FINISHING												

N=No, Y=Yes, R=Rare, U=Unknown

Table 5. An Analysis of Nyonya Baju Kebaya from 1910-2017

ITEM	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017
FORM												
Loose	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	R	R	R	R	R	R
Shape/Curve	R	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
BLOUSE LENGTH												
Shoulder to Hip Line and Below	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shoulder to Knee Line and Below	N	N	N	R	R	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shoulder to Ankle Length	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SLEEVE												
Rectangle	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Padanan Rata	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Various of Sleeves	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
NECKLINE												
V Shape	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
U Shape	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Heart Shape	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Boat Shape	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Mosque Dom Shape	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Tegak Collar	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Lapel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shawl Collar	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Decorative Finishing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
SPLIT FRONT OPENING												
Lidah (Tongue)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
HEM												
Even	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Uneven	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Facings	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
EMBELLISHMENT/FINISHING												

N=No, Y=Yes, R=Rare, U=Unknown

Source: Zarina Yusof (2019)

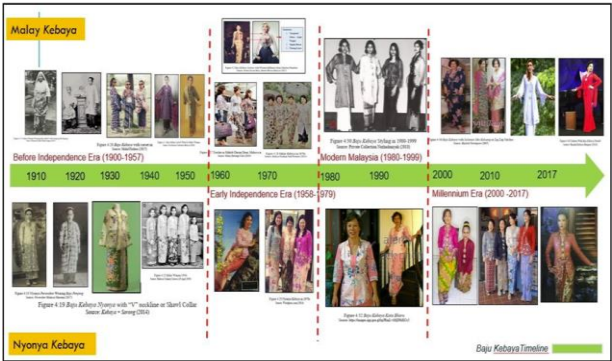


Figure 2. The Historical Timeline and Evolution of Malay Kebaya and Nyonya Kebaya in Malaysia, Source: Thesis Zarina Yusof (2019)

4. CONCLUSION

The *Baju Kebaya* is a masterclass in civilizational adaptability. Practical Implications: The establishment of a Digital Pattern Archive is essential to safeguard the structural integrity of traditional patterns. Theoretical Contribution: This study introduces a model of "Techno-Cultural Negotiation," providing a new lens for *Fashion Studies* to understand the persistence of heritage identity in the face of globalised form. While this study provides a robust dataset based on 112 artefacts from museum archives and private collections, the findings are primarily focused on mainstream Malay and Nyonya Peranakan variations. Consequently, the study does not fully capture the nuance of regional hybridisations, such as the *Kebaya Chetty* or *Jawi Peranakan* styles, which warrant further specialised investigation to achieve a more holistic understanding of the garment's evolution. It is recommended that future scholarship utilise 3D Pattern Drafting analysis to map silhouette transformations with greater precision. Such digital methodologies would not only facilitate a deeper understanding of volumetric changes but also significantly advance the state of national heritage digitalisation and preservation.

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