

*Original Article*

## Investigating the Malay Traditional Jewellery: A Complementary Element in Malay Women's Costumes in Malaysia

Nazirah Mohamad Ba'ai<sup>1</sup>, Hanif Khairi<sup>1</sup> and Asliza bt Aris<sup>2,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Contemporary Metal Design, College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia; [nazir858@uitm.edu.my](mailto:nazir858@uitm.edu.my) (N.M.B.); [hanif@uitm.edu.my](mailto:hanif@uitm.edu.my) (H.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Fashion Design, College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

\* Correspondence: [arisliza@uitm.edu.my](mailto:arisliza@uitm.edu.my) (A.A.)

**Citations:** Ba'ai, N.M., Khairi, H., & Aris, A., (2023). Investigating the Malay Traditional Jewellery: A Complementary Element in Malay Women's Costumes in Malaysia. *International Journal of Global Optimization and Its Application*, 2(3), 154-164

Received: 17 May 2023

Accepted: 10 September 2023

Published: 30 September 2023

**Abstract:** This paper explores the significance of traditional Jewellery as a complementary element in Malay women's costumes in Malaysia. This study examines the factors associated with selecting Jewellery to complement Malay women's costumes. The approach of this study is qualitative, applying Malay aesthetic principles to understand how to design Jewellery in Malay culture. The study finds that traditional Jewellery serves multiple functions, including enhancing the wearer's beauty, expressing social status, and embodying cultural identity. The authors argue that the continued use of traditional Jewellery in Malay women's costumes reflects the enduring importance of cultural heritage and the value placed on maintaining traditional practices in contemporary Malaysian society. The authors found that traditional Jewellery serves multiple functions, including enhancing the wearer's beauty, expressing social status, and embodying cultural identity. The continued use of traditional Jewellery in Malay women's costumes reflects the enduring importance of cultural heritage and the value placed on maintaining traditional practices in contemporary Malaysian society. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the significance of traditional Jewellery in Malay women's costumes in Malaysia. It has provided a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing the selection of Jewellery to complement Malay women's costumes. The study provides insights into contemporary Malaysia's complex interplay between tradition and modernity.

**Keywords:** Malay traditional; Jewellery; Malay women's costumes.



Copyright: © 2022-2023 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

### 1. Introduction

Traditional Jewellery has always been an important part of Malay women's costumes in Malaysia. These Jewellery pieces are considered fashion accessories. The Jewellery pieces also signify cultural and religious symbols that reflect social status and identity. The influence of modern fashion trends has been

retained. The significance of traditional Jewellery continues to be integral to Malay women's costumes. Therefore, this study examines the factors associated with selecting Jewellery to complement Malay women's costumes. Several studies have explored the significance of traditional Jewellery in different cultures. For example, studies have examined the role of traditional Jewellery in Indian culture (Singh, 2023), the significance of traditional Jewellery in African culture (Nyati-Saleshando, 2016), and the symbolism of traditional Jewellery in Middle Eastern culture (Kaur & Joseph, 2012). However, in the study of Malay traditional Jewellery, there is a gap in the literature regarding the factors influencing Malay traditional Jewellery as a complement to Malay costumes. This study can contribute to developing a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical significance of traditional Malay Jewellery and its role in Malay women's costumes. The findings can also provide valuable insights into the factors that influence the selection of Jewellery to complement clothing in other cultures. Furthermore, the study can recommend promoting and preserving traditional Malay Jewellery in Malaysia.

## 2. Literature Review

The term cloth refers to whatever material is used to cover the body. "Clothing artifacts" refers to any object that covers the body. Clothing is distinct from fashion because it primarily covers the body without underlying cultural or religious values (Hassan, 2016). The Malay culture values tradition. In Malaysia, the Malay community's traditional culture is derived from various heritages, such as Chinese and Indian, which still survive today, albeit in a modern form. Since prehistoric times, clothing and Jewellery have been complementary and have contributed to human development. Consumption of clothing and Jewellery involves signs, symbols, beliefs, and values and should not be analysed solely as ornaments worn to decorate the body (Nicholas A Tetteh et al., 2021). Jewellery consumption varies and depends on an individual's class, style, and cultural habits (Rashidi, 2015). Mohamad Ba'ai, Aris, & Khairi (2022) and Amalanathan (2023) agree that Jewellery is a part of added value in the clothing aesthetic.

Most people dress up and adorn their bodies with Jewellery mainly to look beautiful. Jewellery has a special place in our daily life. Most individuals will match clothes with appropriate Jewellery to look more attractive and complement their attire (Jenkins & Jenkins, 2007). According to Momtaz & Asaduzzaman (2018) and Mustafa et al. (2022), Jewellery has implicit factors leading to ideology, social placement, culture, philosophy, possessions, and symbols of wealth. Traditional Jewellery has been essential to Malay women's costumes in Malaysia for centuries. These Jewellery pieces are worn for aesthetic purposes and hold cultural and religious significance. The following literature review highlights the different types of traditional Jewellery worn by Malay women, their cultural and religious significance, and the factors contributing to their popularity and evolution over time.

### 2.1. Traditional Jewellery in Malay Context

Traditional Jewellery in Malay is an integral part of Malay culture and heritage, with various types of Jewellery serving different purposes and symbolisms. It has been an important cultural symbol for centuries, adorning the wearer's social status, cultural heritage, and personal identity. In Malay culture, Jewellery serves both decorative and symbolic functions. It is worn to enhance the wearer's beauty and is often associated with wealth, power, and prestige. Traditional Malay Jewellery is also used to express religious and cultural beliefs. The Malay Archipelago is a vast region with diverse cultural influences reflected in the designs and materials used in traditional Malay Jewellery. For example, the use of floral motifs and intricate patterns in Malay Jewellery design reflects the influence of Islamic art (Mohamad Ba'ai, Aris, & Khairi, 2022). In contrast, the use of gold and silver reflects the influence of Indian and Chinese cultures. Also, specific gemstones, such as emeralds, rubies, and diamonds, are believed to have protective and healing properties in Malay culture. Traditional Malay Jewellery is categorized based on its function and design. The three main types of traditional Malay Jewellery are ceremonial, personal, and cultural (Hamzah & Kwön, 2018).

Ceremonial Jewellery is worn during important occasions such as weddings, engagements, and religious celebrations. It includes pieces such as the tengkolok, a headdress worn by Malay men during formal events, and the kerongsang, a set of brooches worn by Malay women to fasten their traditional clothing. On the other hand, personal Jewellery is worn daily and is usually smaller. It includes necklaces, earrings, bracelets, bangles, rings, anklets, and hair accessories. These pieces are often passed down from generation to generation and hold sentimental value for the wearer. Cultural Jewellery refers to worn pieces to express cultural identity and beliefs. These include the bunga emas, a golden flower worn (refer to Figure 1) as a symbol of the Islamic faith, and the keris, a traditional Malay dagger with deep cultural significance

(Hamzah & Kwön, 2018). Thus, traditional Jewellery in the Malay context is a multifaceted cultural symbol that reflects the region's diverse cultural influences. It serves various functions, from enhancing beauty to expressing religious and cultural beliefs. The designs and materials used in traditional Malay Jewellery testify to the region's rich history and cultural diversity. The following will describe the types of traditional Malay Jewellery of cultural significance.



**Figure 1.** Golden Flower (Bunga Emas)

Sources: National Museum, Kuala Lumpur.

**Hairpins (Cucuk Sanggul)** - Cucuk Sanggul is a type of hairpin commonly worn to secure hair in traditional Malay hairstyles. It can be made of gold, silver, or other materials and often features intricate designs and motifs. Cucuk Sanggul is to hold the hair in place while also serving as a decorative element.

**Earrings (Subang/ Anting-anting)** - Earrings or subang/ anting-anting is a type of Jewellery worn on the ears. They can be made of various materials, including gold, silver, or beads, and often feature intricate designs and gemstones. The function of earrings can range from being worn as a decorative piece to being used as a symbol of cultural or spiritual beliefs.

**Necklace (kalung, dokoh)** - Necklaces or kalung/ dokoh are a type of Jewellery worn around the neck. They can be made of various materials, including gold, silver, beads, or gemstones, and often feature intricate designs and patterns. A necklace can serve various purposes, such as being worn as a fashion accessory or representing cultural or spiritual beliefs.

**Pending (buckle)** - Pending or buckle is a type of Jewellery commonly used to fasten the ends of a traditional Malay garment called the baju kurung. It is typically made of gold, silver, or brass and features intricate designs and motifs, such as floral patterns or geometric shapes. The function of pending is to hold the garment securely in place while also serving as a decorative element.

**Brooch** - Brooch or kerongsang is a type of Jewellery often worn as a decorative piece on the chest or shoulder of a traditional Malay outfit. It can be made of various materials, including gold, silver, or enamel, and often features intricate designs and gemstones. A brooch makes an outfit look fancier and more refined. It is also a symbol of culture and identity.

**Bracelet** - Bracelets or gelang are a type of Jewellery worn around the wrist. They can be made of various materials, including gold, silver, or beads, and often feature intricate designs and patterns. The function of a bracelet can vary, from being worn as a decorative piece to serving as a symbol of cultural heritage or spiritual beliefs.

**Rings** - Rings or cincin are a type of Jewellery commonly worn on the fingers. They can be made of gold, silver, or other precious metals, often featuring gemstones or intricate designs. The function of a ring can vary, from serving as a symbol of marriage or engagement to being worn as a decorative piece or signifying social status.

Traditional Malay Jewellery plays an important role in expressing personal style and identity while indicating social status and cultural heritage.

## 2.2. Jewellery and Malay Women's Costumes

Malay women's costumes are an essential part of the cultural identity of Malay women in Malaysia. Malay women's traditional attire is Baju Kurung, which consists of a loose-fitting, long-sleeved blouse worn over a long skirt, usually made of silk or cotton. The traditional costume is completed with a headscarf and a tudung, worn to cover the hair and neck. The costumes are often adorned with traditional Jewellery, vital in expressing personal style and indicating social status and cultural heritage (refer to Figure 2). According to [Muhamad et al. \(2023\)](#), Malay women's traditional costumes are worn by Malay women of all ages for various occasions such as weddings, religious festivals, and other cultural events. The Baju Kurung symbolises modesty, femininity, and cultural identity among Malay women. The authors also noted that traditional Malay costumes are essential to Malaysia's national identity and cultural heritage, reflecting the country's multicultural history.

Furthermore, the traditional costumes of Malay women have evolved, reflecting changes in social and cultural practices. As [Gazali \(2018\)](#) noted, modern Baju Kurung has emerged, featuring contemporary designs, styles, and materials catering to modern Malay women's changing needs and preferences. However, traditional Jewellery remains an integral part of the Baju Kurung and continues to be valued for its cultural and religious significance. Jewellery has played a significant role in Malay women's costumes in Malaysia for centuries. Traditional Jewellery serves an aesthetic purpose and holds cultural and religious significance. The utilization of Jewellery serves as a significant medium for showcasing individual style and identity and simultaneously conveys social position and cultural legacy.

The study finds that traditional Jewellery serves multiple functions, including enhancing the wearer's beauty, expressing social status, and embodying cultural identity. The selection of Jewellery is influenced by various factors such as the body's appearance, the dress's color, gemstone, style and shape, hair style, occasion and purpose of use, garment, and the dress's neckline. Carefully considering these factors ensures that the Jewellery complements the outfit and enhances the wearer's overall appearance. The continued use of traditional Jewellery in Malay women's costumes reflects the enduring importance of cultural heritage and the value placed on maintaining traditional practices in contemporary Malaysian society. Over time, the evolution of traditional costumes reflects changes in social and cultural practices. The continued use of traditional Jewellery reflects the enduring importance of cultural heritage and the value placed on maintaining traditional techniques in contemporary Malaysian society. As such, the study contributes to the growing literature on the role of material culture in shaping social identities and provides insights into the complex interplay between tradition and modernity in contemporary Malaysia.

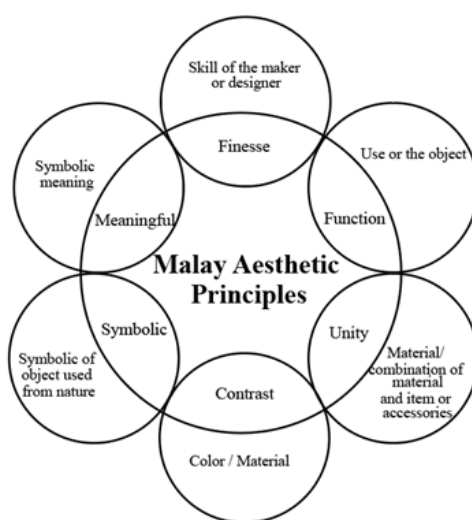


**Figure 2.** Lady of Perak royal display their pieces of Jewellery complete from top to toe with cucuk sanggul, earring, necklace, pendant, brooch, bangle, bracelets, ring, and anklet.

Sources: Reshoot by Nazirah Mohamad Ba'ai, National Museum, Kuala Lumpur

### 3. Materials and Methods

Traditional Jewellery is a unique and exclusive product with a high aesthetic value and can be seen in the subtlety of its manufacture by skilled goldsmiths. The observation method has been used for this study. This research approach focuses on samples of traditional Jewellery artifacts that refer to the National Museum's Kuala Lumpur collection. The Jewellery designs chosen are from various collections such as head ornaments (cucuk sanggul), ear ornaments (anting-anting), neck ornaments (necklaces, pendants), body ornaments (brooches, buttons and pendants/buckles) and hand ornaments (bracelets and rings) which are used as primary data. The theory of Malay aesthetic principles is used to support the findings of this study. According to [Zakaria & Merman \(2021\)](#) and [Aris \(2014\)](#), the beauty of Malay art is based on six principles: finesse, function, unity, contrast, symbolism, and meaning. Researchers use these six principles of beauty in Malay art to interpret the aesthetics of Jewellery in the context of Malay culture. This paper aims to identify the selection factor of Jewellery as a complement to Malay women's clothing. Figure 3 shows the six principles of Malay aesthetics applied to traditional Jewellery design.



**Figure 3.** The six principles of Malay aesthetics applied to traditional Jewellery design, developed from (Aris, 2014).

## 4. Results

### 4.1. The Function of Traditional Jewellery

Jewellery is a personal adornment that humans have worn for thousands of years. It can be made from various materials, including precious metals, gemstones, and natural materials such as shells or beads. In traditional Malay culture, Jewellery is important in expressing personal style and identity and indicating social status and cultural heritage (refer to Table 1). The functions of Jewellery in traditional Malay culture can be broadly categorised into three main areas: aesthetic, symbolic, and social. Aesthetic functions refer to the visual appeal of Jewellery and its ability to enhance personal appearance and style. For example, earrings, necklaces, and bracelets can serve as statement pieces, adding a touch of elegance and sophistication to an outfit. Symbolic functions refer to the meaning and significance of Jewellery, which can vary depending on the type of Jewellery and the cultural context in which it is worn. For example, using certain gemstones or motifs may symbolise spiritual or cultural beliefs, while choosing designs or materials may reflect personal values or preferences.

Social functions refer to the role of Jewellery in indicating social status and cultural heritage. More elaborate and expensive Jewellery is often associated with higher levels and may be reserved for special occasions such as weddings or religious festivals. Certain types of Jewellery may also be specific to cultural or regional traditions, expressing cultural identity and heritage. Generally, the functions of Jewellery in traditional Malay culture are multifaceted and complex, serving both practical and symbolic purposes. By wearing Jewellery, individuals can express their style and identity while indicating their social status and cultural heritage.

**Table 1.** The Categories of Traditional Jewellery with Their Functions

Types of Traditional Jewellery	Function
Hairpins (Cucuk Sanggul)	Adornments for hair also used for fastening hair and also as a weapon
Earring (Subang, anting-anting)	Adornments for the ears complement the style and colour of the traditional garment.
Necklace (Dokoh/ Rantai/ Kaulung)	Adornments for the neck and chest are also believed to provide spiritual and mystical powers.
Brooches	Complement or contrast with an outfit.
Buckle (Pending)	Adornments for traditional garments are also used for fastening clothes, particularly at the neckline or front opening.
Bracelets	Adornments for the waist, keep the sarong or other garment in place and prevent it from slipping down.
Bracelets	Adornments for wrists and arms are also believed to provide spiritual and mystical powers. It is a symbolic or sentimental item.
Ring	It symbolizes marital status or is used for religious purposes, such as a graduation or wedding. Used for fashion purposes or as a statement piece.

## 4.2. Traditional Women's Costumes

Traditional women's costumes in many cultures include their function as complementary elements that enhance the outfit's overall appearance. In Malay culture, traditional women's costumes are often complemented with traditional Jewellery, including necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. These Jewellery pieces are worn for aesthetic and cultural purposes and hold significant cultural and religious importance. In addition to Jewellery, other complementary elements in traditional Malay women's costumes include using vibrant and intricate fabrics, such as batik and songket, and incorporating accessories, such as the cucuk sanggul or 3-tier dokoh. These elements express personal style and identity, indicate social status, and embody cultural heritage. It is important to note that various factors, including the occasion, purpose of use, dress color, gemstones, style, shape, and neckline, influence the selection of complementary elements in traditional women's costumes. These factors are considered to ensure that the complement elements complement the outfit and enhance the wearer's overall appearance. The 120 samples of traditional Malay women's clothes, such as baju kurung are collected from fashion magazines and the internet. The following key findings are based on the analysis.

## 4.3. The Factor of Selecting traditional Jewellery for Women's Costumes

In choosing Jewellery, several factors must be considered to ensure that the Jewellery complements the outfit and the occasion. These factors include the type of Jewellery, the materials used to create it, its colour appearance, style, occasion, garment, size, sex, and how the skin reacts. Dowling (2004) notes that these factors play a crucial role in determining the selection of Jewellery for different occasions. Therefore, it is imperative to understand these factors to make informed choices when selecting Jewellery to complement Malay women's costumes. Migliaccio et al. (2022) explain these factors in the context of traditional Malay Jewellery.

### 4.3.1. The appearance of the body

Appearance is crucial as it determines the physical look, material finish, design, and how it complements the wearer. Jewellery adorns the wearer, and the right piece can enhance their beauty or make them look unattractive. Geometric and long earrings and elongated necklaces are good choices for round-faced females, while fair skin complements bright colour Jewellery such as white gold, pink gold and silver Jewellery. Warm colour gemstones with gold or silver Jewellery suit tan skin tone individuals. According to a study on design principles and elements by Amenuke et al. (1991), an oversized earring can make a triangular face look longer, but one should avoid narrow earrings. Locketts and hoop earrings are appropriate for those with a square face, while virtually any Jewellery shape and appearance suit females with an oval face. Delicate Jewellery is ideal for elegant ladies, and large Jewellery is more suitable for ladies with a larger size.

#### **4.3.2. The colour of your dress**

The colour of the costume or outfit is an important consideration. The Jewellery must complement the clothing's colour to enhance the wearer's overall appearance. This factor is crucial in conjunction with other equally important factors in selecting Jewellery for an outfit. According to [Nicholas Addo Tetteh & Agyei \(2022\)](#), the colour of Jewellery is one of the factors that influences its selection. For example, blue, purple, and red Jewellery suits fair-skinned individuals. In contrast, warm- coloured gemstones with gold or silver Jewellery are ideal for individuals with tan skin tones.

#### **4.3.3. Gemstone**

Gemstones can be classified into natural, synthetic, and simulant or imitation. Natural gemstones such as diamonds and emeralds are costly, while synthetic gemstones are also pricey but not as valuable as natural ones. On the other hand, simulant or imitation gemstones are commonly used in costume Jewellery. Gemstones are associated with specific days of the week and months of the year, which is important to consider when selecting Jewellery. According to [Riding & Worley \(2022\)](#), for instance, Monday is associated with pearl, Tuesday with garnet, Wednesday with emerald, and so on. This knowledge is essential in making informed choices when selecting Jewellery.

#### **4.3.4. style and shape**

In selecting Jewellery for use, it is important to consider the design and appearance of the piece. Women are careful in choosing Jewellery that complements their style and personal expression. The design of Jewellery preferred by women tends to be intricate in youth but simpler in old age. Moreover, Jewellery used by women is not heavy but rather stunning and reveals different design expressions. Depending on the occasion, women may cover up to 25% of their bodies with Jewellery. Less extravagant Jewellery is preferred for business and office wear, and toned-down colours are mainly used. Simple styles of Jewellery that match colour combinations and brands are often selected. In the case of Malay traditional costumes or ethnic wear, the selection of Jewellery is based on a blend of colours and harmonised design principles. This choice applies to both generations, young and old.

#### **4.3.5. The style of your hair**

In selecting Jewellery, it is important to consider how it will complement an individual's hairstyle. The Jewellery's design and style should match the hair's shape, style, and cut. For instance, long earrings complement pulled-back hairstyles, while stud earrings may be more appropriate for short hair. The hairstyle and Jewellery should be harmonised to create a unified and cohesive look. Research by [Amenuke et al. \(1991\)](#) suggested that geometric and long earrings and elongated necklaces are good choices for individuals with round faces. Additionally, the study suggests that specific gemstone colours complement different skin tones.

#### **4.3.6. occasion and purpose of use**

In the fashion world, Jewellery is essential to complement outfits worn on various occasions. The type of Jewellery used depends on the occasion or event. Events such as weddings, puberty rites, entertainment, stage art performances, marriage, religious activities, culture, rank, and status require different types of Jewellery. These occasions and activities play a significant role in determining the Jewellery used for the day. For example, in a corporate setting, one may opt for minimal and straightforward Jewellery, while for a wedding or religious activity, one may choose more elaborate and intricate pieces.

#### **4.3.7. Garment**

In selecting Jewellery, costumes play a significant role as they cover the largest part of the body. This factor influences the length and size of the Jewellery, which one may choose to wear at a moment. Moreover, the colour of the costumes is a crucial aspect in determining the Jewellery selection due to its sexual signal and representation ([Kodžoman, 2019](#); [Koh, 2022](#)). Therefore, colours of costumes significantly impact the choice of Jewellery. In addition, the shape or style of the costumes is also a key factor to consider while making a Jewellery choice.

#### **4.3.8. The neckline of your dress**

When selecting Jewellery, it is crucial to consider the length and shape of the neckline and the projection of the dress across the neck to determine which area of the neck can best display the Jewellery. Ensuring that the Jewellery is not covered by clothing, particularly about almost all body parts, is essential.

#### **4.3.9. age of user**

Older people in the community prefer traditional or conceptual Jewellery. The design and results are more complicated. Meanwhile, young people are more attracted to simple and contemporary designs. Unlike the older women in our society, who wear a single ring on each finger and are more significant, young women prefer phalanx rings that can be used for multiple purposes. Young people often favour dangling earrings and pendants with prominent components. At the age of forty, they admire expensive Jewellery, intricate designs, and exquisite classics. Women like to wear jewelry with gemstones and ring sets at this age. Due to changes in skin elasticity, smaller earrings and less long and heavier Jewellery is suggested at this age and beyond.

#### **4.3.10. The size and length**

The proper measurement of the body part that accommodates the Jewellery is crucial to ensure the right fit of rings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and other Jewellery pieces. The size and shape of the Jewellery must correspond to the size and shape of the hand, fingers, neckline, head, ankle, wrist, and shoulder, among others. In addition, the shape of the body part where the Jewellery will be worn also affects the size of the Jewellery. The length of the Jewellery should be longer for bigger body parts to achieve a more pronounced effect, while smaller body parts require shorter Jewellery length. Resized or adjustable Jewellery is recommended to ensure comfort and proper fit. For individuals with pale skin, precious metal Jewellery like platinum, silver, pink, and rose gold are suggested, while those with dark or tan skin should opt for golden and deep contrast-coloured Jewellery. Furthermore, classic Jewellery styles are preferred by older individuals, while younger individuals favour modern and unusual Jewellery trends that suit their fashion and personal style (Kodžoman, 2019; Vaccaro et al., 2016).

#### **4.3.11. The weight of Jewellery**

In the selection of Jewellery, the weight of the Jewellery plays an important role in determining the wearer's comfort. The weight of the Jewellery is influenced by the materials used and the design of the Jewellery during production (Nicholas A Tetteh et al., 2021). The wearer needs to choose a weight that is comfortable for them. The comfort level can vary based on the individual's body mass. Those with higher body mass should choose lighter weight Jewellery, while those with lower body mass can opt for heavier weight Jewellery. Therefore, in selecting Jewellery, the Jewellery's weight must be considered to ensure the wearer's comfort and satisfaction.

#### **4.3.12. Gender of user**

According to Amenuke et al. (1991), Jewellery is distinguishable based on gender, with some items meant for males and others for females. Besides the appearance of the finished work of the Jewellery, the colour of the materials used in Jewellery making can also indicate which gender it is meant for. Yusof et al. (2018) explain that men can only use silver Jewellery in Malay culture. Gemstones are more commonly used in female Jewellery than in male Jewellery. Females prefer curvy shapes and intricate designs and use Jewellery on more parts of the body than males. Jewellery worn by females is often more pronounced and attracts attention. It is important to consider these factors when selecting and wearing Jewellery.

#### **4.3.13. Skin reaction**

According to Yu (2021), the compatibility of Jewellery materials with an individual's skin is crucial in determining its selection. The skin is the primary point of contact for any Jewellery. However, many people's skins react differently to various materials, causing sores, discolouration, and itching. The skin's reaction to metal or material may be diverse and depends on the individual's skin type, so it is necessary to consider this factor when selecting Jewellery. Materials such as enamel, beads, leather, glass, wood, metal, paper, and plastic should be carefully considered for compatibility with the skin. Thus, it is crucial to be aware of any allergic reactions to specific materials to avoid any adverse effects on the skin.



#### 4.3.14. Trends

Different materials and design technology have facilitated the production of various styles of Jewellery that complement fashion in Malay society. These styles encompass extravagant shapes and intricate designs and can be made from flexible or stiff, expensive or less expensive materials to accommodate body shape, clothing, textile, and fashion modelling. Today, enamel, bead, leather, glass, wood, metal, paper, and other materials have become a new trend in Jewellery design, complementing many clothing and traditional costumes and producing attention-grabbing Jewellery. The current jewelry trend is embedded in traditional, contemporary style, brooches (ibu dan anak) sets, and natural stones and materials that allow for an easy but simple style (Arimbi, 2021). New designs of Jewellery are created occasionally, depending on the target user. These individuals tend to follow fashion fads and trends, which often involve only accessories but retain traditional characteristics (Kaya & Epps, 2004; Mohamad Ba'ai, Aris, Khairi, et al., 2022).

On the basis of the factors discussed, it is important to make informed choices when selecting Jewellery to complement traditional Malay costumes. Factors such as the body's appearance, the dress's colour, gemstone, style and shape, the style of hair, occasion and purpose of use, garment, and the dress's neckline play a crucial role in determining the selection of Jewellery for different occasions. Careful consideration of these factors will ensure that the Jewellery complements the outfit and enhances the wearer's overall appearance.

### 5. Discussion

Traditional Jewellery has been essential to Malay women's costumes in Malaysia for centuries. These Jewellery pieces are worn for aesthetic purposes and hold cultural and religious significance. The following literature review highlights the different types of traditional Jewellery worn by Malay women, their cultural and religious significance, and the factors contributing to their popularity and evolution over time. Traditional Malay Jewellery is important in expressing personal style and identity while indicating social status and cultural heritage. Generally, the functions of Jewellery in traditional Malay culture are multifaceted and complex, serving both practical and symbolic purposes. By wearing Jewellery, individuals can express their style and identity while indicating their social status and cultural heritage. Based on the factors discussed, it is important to make informed choices when selecting Jewellery to complement traditional Malay costumes. The factors such as the appearance of the body, the dress's colour, gemstone, style and shape, the style of hair, occasion and purpose of use, garment, and the dress's neckline play a crucial role in determining the selection of Jewellery for different events.

Considering these factors will ensure the Jewellery complements the outfit and enhances the wearer's overall appearance. The findings of this study provide valuable insight into traditional Malay Jewellery as a complement to Malay women's clothing and its importance in Malay cultural heritage. Categorizing the types of Jewellery from head to toe highlights the diversity and richness of Malay culture and its influence on Jewellery's function and selection factors. However, this study only analyzes samples of Jewellery designs collected from fashion magazines and the internet. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the development of traditional Jewellery designs in Malaysia. In addition, there is an opportunity to expand this study by examining the evolution of traditional Malay Jewellery on new designs, motifs, and technologies.

### 6. Conclusions

This paper comprehensively analyses the factors influencing Malay traditional Jewellery as a complementary element in Malay women's costumes in Malaysia. The study examines the factors associated with the selection of Jewellery and applies Malay aesthetic principles to understand how traditional Jewellery is designed in Malay culture. Traditional Jewellery plays multiple functions, including enhancing the wearer's beauty, expressing social status, and embodying cultural identity. The continued use of traditional Jewellery in Malay women's costumes reflects the enduring importance of cultural heritage and the value placed on maintaining traditional practices in contemporary Malaysian society. This research contributes to the literature on the role of material culture in shaping social identities. It provides valuable insights into contemporary Malaysia's complex interplay between tradition and modernity. Further studies in this area can help promote preserving and appreciating traditional Malay Jewellery as an essential element of the country's cultural heritage. Overall, this study sheds light on the cultural significance of traditional Jewellery and its role in shaping social identities in Malaysia and beyond.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the significance of traditional Jewellery in Malay women's costumes in Malaysia. It has provided a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing the selection of

Jewellery to complement Malay women's costumes. The study has applied Malay aesthetic principles to understand how traditional Jewellery is designed in Malay culture. The authors have found that traditional Jewellery serves multiple functions, including enhancing the wearer's beauty, expressing social status, and embodying cultural identity. The continued use of traditional Jewellery in Malay women's costumes reflects the enduring importance of cultural heritage and the value placed on maintaining traditional practices in contemporary Malaysian society. The study contributes to the growing literature on the role of material culture in shaping social identities. It provides insights into contemporary Malaysia's complex interplay between tradition and modernity. The findings of this study can help promote the preservation and appreciation of traditional Malay Jewellery as an essential element of the country's cultural heritage.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, N.M.B. and H.K.; methodology, N.M.B.; software, N.M.B.; validation, H.K. and A.A.; formal analysis, N.M.B.; investigation, N.M.B. and A.A.; resources, N.M.B.; data curation, H.K. and A.A.; writing—original draft preparation, N.M.B.; writing—review and editing, N.M.B., H.K. and A.A.; visualization, N.M.B.; supervision, H.K. and A.A.; project administration, H.K. and A.A.; funding acquisition, N.M.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Acknowledgments:** The authors would like to thank Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia for supporting this research and publication. The authors would also like to thank the reviewers for all their constructive comments.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Amalanathan, S. (2023). *US Modest Fashion Industry: Critical Interpretations of Brand Positioning and Muslim Women Entrepreneurs* (pp. 1–145). Iowa State University.
- Amenuke, S. K., Dogbe, B. K., Asare, F. D. K., Ayiku, R. K., & Baffoe, A. (1991). *General knowledge in art for senior secondary schools*. Evans Brothers Limited.
- Arimbi, D. A. (2021). Beauty East, Beauty West: Muslim Beauty in Indonesian Islamic Magazines. In *(Re-) Claiming Bodies Through Fashion and Style: Gendered Configurations in Muslim Contexts* (pp. 21–39). Springer.
- Aris, A. (2014). *The evolution and transformation of Baju Kurung in the Peninsular of Malaysia*. Universiti Teknologi MARA.
- Dowling, G. (2004). *The Art and Science of Marketing*. Oxford University Press Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199269617.001.0001>
- Gazali, U. M. (2018). *Effect of Social Marketing Mix and Attitude on Farmers' Flood Preparedness Behavior in the East Coast of Malaysia* (pp. 1–83). Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Hamzah, A., & Kwōn, S. (2018). *Industri budaya Asia Tenggara dan Korea Selatan*. Universiti Malaya.
- Hassan, H. (2016). A Study on the Development of Baju Kurung Design in the Context of Cultural Changes in Modern Malaysia. *Wacana Seni Journal of Arts Discourse*, 15(1), 63–94. <https://doi.org/10.21315/ws2016.15.3>
- Jenkins, I., & Jenkins, I. D. (2007). Greek architecture and its sculpture. *Choice Reviews Online*, 44(10), 44–54. <https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.44-5454>
- Kaur, P., & Joseph, R. (2012). Women and Jewelry-The Traditional and Religious Dimensions of Ornamentation. *Coherence*, 3(1), 39–49.
- Kaya, N., & Epps, H. H. (2004). Relationship between color and emotion: A study of college students. *College Student Journal*, 38(3), 396–405.
- Kodžoman, D. (2019). The psychology of clothing. *Textile & Leather Review*, 2(2), 90–103. <https://doi.org/10.31881/TLR.2019.22>
- Koh, J. (2022). *Baju kurong*.

- Migliaccio, G., D', C. C., & Alelio, N. A. (2022). The profitability of Italian Jewellery between the two international economic crises. *International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business*, 13(1), 79–107. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGSB.2022.123351>
- Mohamad Ba'ai, N., Aris, A., & Khairi, H. (2022). Application of Nature in the Motif of Malay Traditional Jewellery in Malaysia. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, 7(S17), 141–147. <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v7iS17.3796>
- Mohamad Ba'ai, N., Aris, A., Khairi, H., & M.Hum, Y. D. (2022). Malay Traditional Motifs Character in Jewellery Design. *Asian Journal of Environment-Behaviour Studies*, 7(23), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.21834/aje-bs.v7i23.413>
- Momtaz, S., & Asaduzzaman, M. (2018). *Climate change impacts and women's livelihood: vulnerability in developing countries*. Routledge.
- Muhamad, N. A. M., Tahir, A., Ramli, I., & S. Abu Bakar, S. A. (2023). The Development of the Malaysian Cultural Elements Framework. *Ideology Journal*, 8(1), 176–202. <https://doi.org/10.24191/idealogy.v8i1.421>
- Mustafa, M. K., Sudarno, N., & Saleh, N. (2022). A journey to remember: Malay traditional costume inspired. *ARTE: Art & Expression*, 3(2), 2–5.
- Nyati-Saleshando, L. (2016). Cultural Diversity and African Language Education: The Role of Urbanization and Globalization. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 6(1), 160–170. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jse.v6i1.8243>
- Rashidi, H. (2015). Lifestyle and Youth: Identifying Lifestyle among Women in Mahabad, Iran. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences: Proceedings*, 4(1), 10–52.
- Riding, J. B., & Worley, N. E. (2022). The life and scientific work of Trevor D. Ford (1925–2017). *Mercian Geologist*, 20(1), 27–36.
- Singh, R. (2023). Designers Approach towards Traditional and Modern Jewellery Designs: A Comparative Study. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 5(1), 15–19. <https://doi.org/10.48047/jcr.05.01.09>
- Tetteh, Nicholas A, Agyei, I. K., & Nyante, B. (2021). Jewelry Selection to Match Clothing; Ghanaian's Perspective. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(7), 6154–6168.
- Tetteh, Nicholas Addo, & Agyei, I. K. (2022). Diversity Of Jewellery: The Account of the Northern, Middle and Southern Ghana. *Resmilitaris*, 12(4), 2566–2585.
- Vaccaro, K., Shivakumar, S., Ding, Z., Karahalios, K., & Kumar, R. (2016). The Elements of Fashion Style. *Proceedings of the 29th Annual Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology*, 777–785. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2984511.2984573>
- Yu, J. (2021). The Application of 3D Printing Technology in Sculpture. In *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education* (Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp. 755–759). Taylor & Francis. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62746-1\\_115](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62746-1_115)
- Yusof, Z., Nawawi, N. M., & Aris, A. (2018). Malay Kebaya: The History and Influences of Other Silhouette. *Proceedings of the Art and Design International Conference (AnDIC 2016)*, 445–452. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0487-3\\_49](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0487-3_49)
- Zakaria, M. S., & Merman, H. (2021). Exploring the Malayness of Mastura Abdul Rahman's Painting. *International Journal of Art and Design (IJAD)*, 4(6), 47–55.