

# Riau Malay Traditional Clothes: Functional, Symbolic, Aesthetic, and Cluster State Studies

Muh Fakhrihuh Na'am, Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, Erna Setyowati, Wulansari  
Prasetyaningtyas, Arasinah Kamis, Moh. Rusnoto Susanto

*Abstract – In general, Riau Malay traditional clothes consist of different types. This type of clothing is subject to the wearers' situations, conditions and the activities. For example, certain clothes are worn in official events or for daily activities. Clothing is a cultural symbol that marks the development, acculturation, and distinctiveness of certain cultures. Clothing can also be a marker for people's thinking including traditional clothes from the Riau Malay community. Riau traditional clothes are typically daily clothes and traditional clothes. The method of this research is the research and development (R& D) through a process of reviewing the model, and study type of the philosophical forms and meanings of traditional Malay clothing in Riau. This type of research used a qualitative descriptive that describes the findings in the form of visual data, interviews, and literacy studies to support and analyze the subject of this study. The influence of traditional Malay clothing in Riau influences the way of thinking in two communities in the region. Understanding the ancestral history based on the territory to develop an understanding and theory to emerge is called a cognate spirit.*

*Keywords – Traditional clothing, Malay, Riau, symbolic study, cognate*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Although Riau Malays mostly live in Sumatra, some others inhabit on different islands. The two most developed islands are Batam Island and Bintan Island. The Melaka becomes a very busy strait, densely meeting the western and eastern hemispheres. Yusmar Yusuf says that Malay culturalist is in Riau. The culturalist, Rustam S. Abrus calls the Straits of Melaka the "Playground of all Migrant Children". This insight shows how close Riau is to Malaysia. The Malay culture develops rapidly in the past and it was inherited as an invaluable civilization. One of the heirs to the culture is the Malay community in Riau. One of the relics of traditional clothes is the current Riau's traditional attire.

In general, the daily behaviors of people are influenced by mores or customs, especially in the remote regions. Riau Malay customs presented through Riau Malay traditional attire are an integral part of the customs of Islamic law Effendi[1].

Islam and Malay customs influence each other to form a new culture, one of which is reflected in the clothes. In addition to clothing, jewelery is not only intended to fulfill the aesthetic needs, but also a certain spirit, encompassing the values of thoughts and honesty in life Ismail [2]. Each

island or region has its own customs or culture, including each traditional dress that has a variety of forms, differences, and similarities, but it has its own characteristics. One of the differences is diversity that emanates its basic form, which is original from prehistoric times Riyanto[3].

The Malay History and Hikayat Hang Tuah have many descriptions stating that someone succeeded in carrying out the king's order and he "was given a complete dress delivery" and "wore beautiful clothes" However, it was difficult to find out what the beautiful clothes were given. The first article of the Malacca Act discusses the clothes of kings, with the Royal Color called yellow, and they were prohibited from wearing thin fabrics. In the Customs of the Malay Kings, a lot of information about assembly clothing (in the first sense referring to beauty) should be brought to the assembly politely Sudjiman[4]. The work originating from the Riau Islands is Black Khalid's Anuar al-Qulub Tsamarat al-Mathlub fi in the section on customs and great work [5].

Malay clothing from the toe to the Malay tip has meanings and functions related to social norms, religion, customs, so that the meaning is diverse. Malay clothing is associated with its functions, namely clothing as a cover for shame, picking up the mind, upholding customs, repelling reinforcements, and upholding the nation. Symbols in Malay clothing show the identity of Malay people, and reflect statuses such as kings, warriors, and ordinary people, reflecting identity and personality, and symbols that show values of civilization. Influenced by Islam, it is the majesty of the peak of Malay culture that we are witnessing today.

## II. METHOD

The research method used by Research and Development (R & D) through a process of reviewing the model, and study type, and various studies of the philosophical forms and meanings of traditional Malay clothing in Riau. This type of research used qualitative descriptive by describing the findings of the field in the form of visual data, interviews, and literacy studies that support to analyze the subject of this study. In this research, various research steps were taken as follows: literature study, observation, documentation, experiments, data, and visual data used as a basis of results of research on traditional clothes of the Riau Malay community.

**Revised Manuscript Received on May15, 2019.**

**Muh Fakhrihuh Na'am**, Family Welfare Study Program, Semarang State University, Semarang, Indonesia.

**Sri Endah Wahyuningsih**, Family Welfare Study Program, Semarang State University, Semarang, Indonesia.

**Erna Setyowati**, Family Welfare Study Program, Semarang State University, Semarang, Indonesia.

**Wulansari Prasetyaningtyas**, Family Welfare Study Program, Semarang State University, Semarang, Indonesia.

### III. DISCUSSION

Clothing is a cultural symbol that marks the development of acculturation and specific culture. Clothing and beauty are an inseparable mix, therefore, we must both pay close attention to it Moerjati[6]. Modernization of clothing is parallel to changes in functions in society. Many technical jobs require more physical dynamics, so traditional clothing is considered impractical. New habits, such as sitting chairs, riding bicycles, riding a motorbike, traveling far away, all in a more practical manner that requires modern clothing Purwadi[7]. Indonesia consists of several islands, which are bordered on the west by the island of Sumatra and in the east by Papua.



**Fig 1: Bridal Clothing in the City of Pekanbaru Riau, Bridal Clothing in Indragiri Hulu Regency (Sang Nila Utama Museum Riau) (Photo: Na'am, 2014)**

Clothes are split on the front to the bottom, loose long sleeves. The back is straight, the waist is slim, and the front part is squeezed and cackled under the arm. Loose arms, stretch your arms to the wrist. The bottom of the leg is made fast, and there is also a crooked and sharp part at the corner of the front. To use it, the split part is pinned by using three seeds or dough. Malay Clothes smack weasel and side cloths and Kurung Clothes with shawls and sarongs. Malay shirt is men's general clothing worn publicly by Malays and their families in Nusantara, Riau. A pair of clothes and pants are made of the same type of fabric silk, cotton, or a mixture of polyester and cotton. Complementary side cloths are combined with Malay clothes, both made from songket or sarong. For women, Kurung clothes are long loose dresses, consisting of skirts and blouses. For Malay people, clothing in addition to functioning as a cover of genitals and body armor, also implies symbols. The symbol of noble values is upheld considerably. There is a cultural symbol embedded in Malay clothing, an important clothing position in the lives of Malay people. Customary provisions govern the form (motive), color, usage, and function of clothing applied to educate users' moral standards. This traditional dress has various meanings and philosophies. Traditional Malay clothing in Riau may vary. This type of clothing depends on the situation and condition of the wearer and the activities carried out at official events or in daily activities.

In terms of absorption effects, Malaysia's coastal areas and islands are a kingdom, all of which consist of Riau, Brunei, Singapore, and Malaysia. In the past their ancestors were Sriwijaya, which was the largest kingdom of the

archipelago. People in Sriwijaya embraced Hinduism, the next period of Islam united the island, coastal and land areas (the Malay Peninsula) with the presence of Arab traders to widespread Islam, so that it became the dominant religion in Malay society. Grass-rooted clumps with royal history, *alkurur* clothing, food, and language originating from the Malay Linga, and Johor. Indonesian language was used as the National language in Riau Islands, and Johor in Malaysia.

1. Customs and habits that have rules or agreements with a community regulate the activities of its members in relation to creators, fellow human beings, and the environment, which must be obeyed. There are sanctions inherited from generation to generation, thus becoming the identity of the community.
2. Color of clothing, the dominant color in Riau Malay society is golden yellow, green moss and red blood of birds, and the color has been inherited from generation to generation since the ancestors of Malay people on the Lancang Kuning Earth. (a) The Green Moss symbolizes fertility and loyalty, and obedience to religious teachings. (b) Golden Yellow symbolizes greatness and authority, (c) Black symbolizes loyalty, fortitude, responsibility, and honesty, and (d) Red Color of Bird Blood symbolizes heroism and courage, obedience and loyalty to the king and the people.
3. In terms of types, clothing for Malays in Riau area is divided into several types according to their functions. Some types of Malay clothing according to O.K. Nizami Jamil[8], consist of (a) daily wear, daily clothing is clothing worn in daily activities. Based on the wearers' groups, daily clothes are divided into children's, adult, and parental clothing, (b) the clothes of young boys are called romper. Growing up and boys wear the Teluk Belanga Shirt or the Civet Shirt, whereas immature girls wear floral or one-color floral brackets with the cloth. (c) The clothes of an adult boy are called Baju Kurung Cekak Musang, which is equipped with a cloth beside an adhesive sarong and a skullcap. Women wear Kurung Laboh shirts, short kebaya shirts, and eel bone brackets.
4. Formal dress, official clothing is used to attend official royal meetings. Now official clothing is subject to government events.
5. The customary ceremony, king coronation ceremony, inauguration, guest reception ceremony, reception ceremony, and grace. Traditional clothing worn during traditional ceremonies can be divided into two types, clothing for women and clothing for men.

Malay clothing is influenced by several factors. This process is not only internal but also external, namely the influence of Indian, Chinese, Arabic and European traders. All of these influences succeeded in becoming a beautiful and unique form of authentic Malay clothing, so that up to now it remains sustainable without Western fashion's effects. Women's clothes are still popular including baju kurung, long kebaya, short kebaya, kedah brackets and Pahang clothes. Other clothes are considered classic, which are not suitable for wet clothes. These classic clothes such as

Puteri Perak clothing, Cik Siti Wan Kembang Ismail[2], Menora clothes and Minangkabau clothes Imran & Syarif[9], are only suitable for certain meetings such as dance shows or fashion shows. For men, clothes that remain popular are Malay clothes Ismail[2]. This traditional outfit is a symbol of the grandeur of traditional art inherited from a long time ago. Clothing can measure the character of a nation Alias & Nawawi[10].

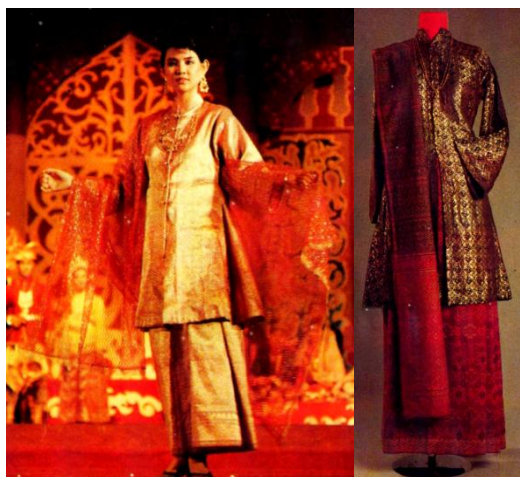


Fig 2: Riau Pahang Shirt (Zubaidah Shawal, 1994, ms, 81-82)

The presence of Riau Pahang clothes in Malay dress culture is not as good as the presence of Telok Beiang Kurung clothes and Labuh Kebaya clothes. Riau Pahang clothes are only worn by a small portion of the community. Until now not all old groups in Malaysia have known and seen Riau Pahang clothes. Half of the people refer to Riau Pahang Shirt as a Turkish Shirt or Kebaya Shirt. There is an opinion that Riau Pahang Shirt is a mixture of Kurung Shirt, Bat, Weasel and Labuh Kebaya Shirt. As far as the view holds, Riau Pahang clothes are indeed like the high collar kebaya Labuh shirt Shawal[11].

As a form of heritage representation, Malay clothing is continually inherited through customs giving rise to the award of palace customs because out of the palace it has a high value that makes people admire at it [6], The distinctive feature of the Johor-Riau Malay Kingdom is 'kuntum' clothing as a king's dress, long-sleeved clothes among ministers or hulubalang Panuti[4], or the taqwa, clothes for the king's son who becomes the palace head and the clothes for the palace chief and the daughters of the king Samad[5].

1. The personal function is related to traditional Malay clothing that is influenced by personal factors. The role of artisans, designers, observers of customs, academics, government agencies, the private sector and the surrounding community is vital because each individual, group, and agency has the role of supporting, initiating, or conceptualizing.
2. Riau's traditional Malay clothing has an aesthetic value related to beauty. This aspect pertains to skills, thoroughness, perseverance, and seriousness to create a work and produce beautiful and fascinating arts. This aesthetics is a universal function that beautifies and enriches. Traditional Malay clothing in Riau with all its aesthetic values, symbolic, and allied regions is the easiest communication to achieve beauty. This is based on its shape, regular arrangement of motive patterns,

pleasant colors and great and varied shapes and distinctive technical appearance.

3. The function of Social Arts, to find out how social functions can refer to the opinion of Feldman[12] which explains that works of art show social functions, namely (a) the artwork looks for or tends to influence the collective behavior of many people; (b) the work was created to be seen or worn, especially in general situations; and (c) the artwork expresses or explains aspects of social or collective existence as opposed to various individual personal experiences. Some functions of traditional clothing for Malay people in Riau area are stated as follows:

- a. Shutting a shame, the first function of Riau traditional clothing is to cover a shame. The term shame here can be interpreted as clothing that functions as a cover of genitals.
- b. Menjempu, the function of Riau's next traditional clothing is to form character, shape personality and character.
- c. Upholding customs, the third function of Riau's traditional clothing is to uphold customs.
- d. Refusing *Bala*, Clothing is a repellent, which means to dress in the right way and should avoid the wearer from getting danger or disaster (*bala*).
- e. Upholding the nation, the function of Riau's traditional clothing is to uphold the nation. Clothing is a tool to show the identity of a nation.
- f. The function of culture deals with clothes to cover the body. However, various accessories and characteristics distinguish between a community and another society.
- g. The aesthetic function, the style of Riau Malay clothing appears in various forms of decorations.
- h. The religious function, the influence of Islam in the procedure of dressing has a little effect on the clothes of the Riau region where the function of clothing is to cover the genitals. We can see that woman's clothing is in the form of a kurung shirt and a veil that cover almost all of her limbs.
- i. Social functions, Riau's traditional clothing is worn by people in the community, both those from the nobility and ordinary family and it is called *baju kurung*.
- j. Symbolic functions have symbolic values associated with traditional clothing, jewelry, and their accessories in costumes worn in traditional ceremonies. Some of the meanings in the traditional dress of the Riau Malay community such as betel clothing worn by Riau Malays show that almost everything they wear refers to certain symbols Effendi[1].

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Traditional Malay clothing in Riau may vary. This type of clothing depends on the situation and condition of the wearers and the activities they carry out, for example, for official events or in daily activities. It has an aesthetic value related to beauty. Based on a long history of interactions and

acculturation with other nations, Malay clothing has unique and beautiful characteristics, and similarities in the perception of the allied region. The symbol of traditional Malay clothing in Riau is a noble value that is highly upheld by the people. The existence of cultural symbols embedded in Malay clothing has a position and the role of clothing is important in the lives of Malay people. The existence of customary provisions governs the form, (motive), color, usage, and function of clothing. The provision is applied to educate users' morals.

## V. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank my colleagues Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, Erma Setyowati, Wulansari Prasetyaningtyas, Arasinah Thursday, and Moh. Rusnoto Susanto for the synergic collaboration in the translation process and the arrangement of this manuscript. Our gratitude goes to the leaders of the institution (Semarang State University, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malem Malaysia, and the Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa Yogyakarta) for institutional support in the scientific publication cooperation. Consequently, we can dedicate knowledge according to scientific disciplines through wider and more beneficial scientific publications globally.

This research has been carried out in cooperation with Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malem Malaysia, which is a tertiary institution in Malaysia as a cognate country that has historical, ancestral and geographical studies. Activities in this research include literature study, observation, documentation, interviews, experiments, understanding Riau traditional clothing, knowledge of the process of embodiment, background and history, analysis, processing data, and compiling reports.

## VI. REFERENCES

1. M. Effendi, *Busana Melayu, Pakaian Adat Tradisional Daerah Riau*. Pekanbaru: Yayasan Pustaka Riau, 2004.
2. S. Z. Ismail, *Busana Melayu Melaka dalam Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar dan Mohd. Nefi Imran, Busana Melaka Bukit Peringgit*. Institut Seni Malaysia Melaka, 2004.
3. A. Riyanto, Arifah, *Teori Busana*. Semarang: Unnes, 2003.
4. P. Sudjiman, *Adat Raja-Raja Melayu*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 1982.
5. Ayatrohaedi, *Kepribadian Budaya Bangsa (Local Genius)*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1986.
6. S. Moerjati, *Seni Berhias Ngadi Salira Ngadi Busana*. Jakarta: Mustika Ratu, 1984.
7. Purwadi, *Busana Jawa Jenis-Jenis Pakaian Adat, Sejarah, Nilai Filosofis dan Penerapannya*. Yogyakarta: Pura Pustaka, 2007.
8. O. . Nizami, Jamil, *Pakaian Tradisional Melayu Riau*. Pekanbaru: LPNU Press dan Lembaga Adat Melayu Riau, 2005.
9. I. S. Imran, Mohd Nefi., *Falsafah Adat Pemakaian Pengantin Minangkabau*. Melaka: Institut Seni Malaysia Melaka, 2004.
10. N. Alias, Abas., Norwani Md., *Pakaian Melayu Sepanjang Zaman*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2003.
11. Z. Shawal, *Busana Melayu. Jabatan Muzium dan Antikuiti Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur, 1994.
12. R. T. Papalia, D. E., Old, S. W., & Feldman, *Human development*. The McGraw Hill Companies, 2008.