

# The Grand Tradition and People's Tradition of Malay Textile Culture Are Geared Towards Meeting the Local Demand for Textiles in the Malaysian Textile Market

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## Abstract

The history of Malaysian textiles gives much colour to Malaysian local textile demand, which started from the early era till the modern day of Malaysia. Malay traditional textiles are considered fundamental elements of Malaysian textile culture. The main issues of local demand and changing of textile culture happened into Malaysian local market, and it was worsted by imported fabric from India and Pakistan into Malaysian market. This paper aims to discuss Malay grand tradition and people's tradition culture influencing the local Malaysian textile market. The researcher deeply studied the theory of this textile tradition to evaluate the research findings and conclusion.

## 1. Introduction

The history of textiles is a wide-ranging subject that may embrace the study of archaeology, anthropology, social and economic history, art, and design history (Harris, J., 2010). According to Harris, J. (2010), textiles are defined as types of cloths and fabrics used by humans to cover their body parts. This also makes textiles a main material culture among humans since the earlier stage of human history. This definition also supports Hoopen, P. T. (2019) that textiles show human achievement and development of their material history and cultures. In the context of Malaysia, textiles were suspended between the two great civilisations of India and China. Both civilisations were populated by culturally diverse groups of people's not only Malaysia but the Southeast Asia region as a whole.

Regarding the local Malaysian textile market, it was creating many elements of internal and external in the context of socio-cultural, economy, history, style, fashion, and purposes. As main hub for trade and maritime centre, Malaysia is a country that has been able to get many influences of textile culture practiced by Malays since the era of Malay-Malacca Sultane till the modern day of Malaysia (Leong, C., 2023). The Malaysian textile culture could be divided into two categories, which are grand tradition and people's tradition, and it has influenced the Malaysian local textile market. The problem of less demand for Malay traditional textiles amongst Malaysians was becoming worse after imported India and Pakistan textiles entered the local market. The survival of Malay traditional textiles in the local market needs to be a focus because it could make Malay traditional textiles tend to go extinct from the local Malaysian market while our local Malay traditional weavers and producers are getting harder to survive their business for the past and future (N. Agost, 2021).

## 2. Concept and Analysis on Grand Tradition and People’s Tradition Textile in Malaysia Culture

Based on this theory on grand tradition and people’s tradition textile culture in Malaysia, we were categorising types of Malay traditional textiles into two categories, which are: grand tradition textiles are practiced by royals, nobles, and high-class Malay society, and second, people’s tradition textiles are used by the middle to lower classes of Malay society (S. Z. Ismail, 1989). Table 2.0 below shows the categorisation of grand tradition and people’s tradition textiles.

**Table 2** *Textile Classification for Grand Tradition and People Tradition Textiles in Malay World Courtesy: Siti Zainon Ismail (1989)*

Grand Tradition Textile	People Tradition Textile
❖ Malay Songket	❖ Batik
❖ Malay Woven Textile (Chess design motif)	❖ Kain Pelangi
❖ Kain Limar	❖ Tie-Dye
❖ Kain <i>Telepuk</i> (Perada Emas)	❖ Malay Woven Textile ( <i>Kain Tenun</i> )
❖ Kelingkan	❖ Gold thread is prohibited from to use
❖ Tekat	
❖ All made from gold thread including <i>Tenggarung woven</i>	

Based on the theory of grand tradition and people’s tradition textiles, it is described by A. Aziz (2009) that grand tradition textiles are still practiced by Malay’s, especially in Malay-Royals states in Malaysia. This theory is also well followed by Malay royals and nobles in nine Malay royal’s states. Meanwhile, according to Hamdzun Haron, N. A. Y., Mohamad Taha, and Narimah Abdul Mutalib (2014), grand tradition textiles consist of high prices and expensive Malay textiles, even though they couldn't be affordable for many Malaysians, especially middle- to lower-class society in Malaysia. At the same time, N. M. Nawawi (2018) explained that many Malaysians need to realise the values and aesthetic elements of the Malay traditional textiles, namely Songket, Ikat Limar, Tenggarung, and many more, under the grand textile tradition theory. To revive the market of Malay traditional textiles for both traditions is most importantly because it could hold many Malay traditional textile producers and makers. According to Nasaie Zainuddin, A. A., Najua Tulos, Muhammad Hisyam Zakaria, and Nor Idayu Ibrahim (2021), many of the textiles under the list of grand traditions are practiced by Malay’s during their wedding ceremonies, but their number is still less because many Malay couples prefer lace and others import fabric for their wedding dresses and attire. Besides that, Nor Hanim Awang @ Mohd Noor, N. O., Norhayati Sa'at & Roslina Ismail's (2022) study on the Malay traditional market in the eastern coast of Malaysia found that many of the Malay traditional textile weavers and makers need more support in terms of promotion, market-wise, and innovation in their textile production. While many Malaysians prefer cheaper and easier-wearing textiles, it's mostly under people’s tradition. In facts, it is supported by C. Leong (2023), who explained that these two Malay textile traditions must be celebrated and made more aware by the Malaysians, and they must be practiced in a respectful manner, while it also creates more market platform and business opportunity for Malay weavers and textile makers.

## 3. Malay Traditional Textiles Market and Demand in Malaysia

Referring to textile demand in Malaysia, it shows that many Malaysian textile buyers prefer using the Malay traditional textiles following their needs for customs and cultural purposes, especially weddings. Many of the Malay brides and grooms are wearing Malay satchets for their main wedding attire (A. Aziz, 2009). But according to Hamdzun Haron, N. A. Y., Mohamad Taha, and Narimah Abdul Mutalib (2014), currently many Malay couples could make choices of their fabric for their wedding, either by choosing Malay traditional textiles like Songket or imported fabric, namely lace and brocket. For them, the much cheaper fabric was being their main choice to make their wedding attire. Price is one of the reasons for fabric choices amongst Malaysians, but for the high class of Malay society, namely Malay royals’ families, nobles, and Malay aristocracy, they are mainly choosing the Malay traditional textiles, namely Songket, for their cultural purposes, especially for Malay royal events and occasions. In fact, the design and quality of Malay traditional textiles have also been factors for the Malaysian market (N. M. Nawawi (2018). The knowledge and appreciation of Malay design and motifs also contributed to Malay traditional textile market demand. N. M. Nawawi (2018) explained that many Malaysians have less knowledge and appreciate the Malay traditional textile design and motifs, and they’re preferring

modern and updated design and motifs. The education of the Malay traditional design and motifs is important to spreading out amongst Malaysians for them to have more appreciation for the Malay traditional textiles.

Nasaie Zainuddin, A. A., Najua Tulos, Muhammad Hisyam Zakaria, and Nor Idayu Ibrahim (2021) say that amongst Malay's, they're still wearing songket as the main fabric for their wedding attire, but imported songket from India and Pakistan is becoming their main choices in reason of lower prices and being easy to get at mainstream textile stores. While referring to Nor Hanim Awang @ Mohd Noor, N. O., Norhayati Sa'at & Roslina Ismail (2022), the Malay traditional textile weavers and producers need more exposure and funding for their textile production and wise promotion and market but be crated for their survival and business opportunity. Small demand on the Malay traditional textiles, namely Songket, makes Malay weavers and textile producers must be able to find other jobs for their economic income. C. Leong (2023) views that the Malay traditional textiles market is becoming worse and slow because of less exposure and respect by Malaysians for Malay traditional textiles. The fashion designers must step forward to make their creations use Songket or other Malay traditional textiles. Table 2.1 shows the factors of demand amongst Malaysians for the Malay traditional textiles.

**Table 3** *The Factors on Demand of the Malay Traditional Textiles*

Malay Traditional Textiles	Demand factors
❖ Malay Songket	• High prices
❖ Malay Woven Textile (Chess design motif)	• Times consuming for production
❖ Kain Limar	• Consumer behaviour (preferred cheaper fabric)
❖ Kain <i>Telepuk</i> (Perada Emas)	• Understanding value
❖ Kelingkan	• Unappreciated
❖ Tekat	• Unrespectful
❖ Batik	
❖ Kain Pelangi	
❖ Tie-Dye	
❖ Malay Woven Textile ( <i>Kain Tenun</i> )	

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

As a conclusion, this paper is focussing on the factors of the Malay traditional textile market demand based on the Malay grand tradition and people's tradition of Malay traditional textiles. This paper also found six factors are influencing Malay traditional textile market demand in Malaysia. These six factors were found through secondary approaches by authors, and they have much influence on the Malay traditional textiles market and demand in Malaysia. The most important elements to make the Malay traditional textiles market wider are promotion and innovation. These two elements were making change on the Malay traditional textile demand through promotion initiatives by government agencies or non-government organisations (NGO). Otherwise, the innovation is also important to create more variety in design and materials using technology approaches in Malay traditional textile making and production.

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#### Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

#### Author Contribution

*The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** Mohd Jamil Muhamad Amin, and Arba'iyah Ab Aziz; **data collection:** Qistina Arsyad and Mohd Jamil Muhamad Amin; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Mohd Jamil Muhamad Amin, Arba'iyah Ab. Aziz, Nor Azlin Hamidon; **draft manuscript preparation:** Mohd Jamil Muhamad Amin, and Nor Azlin Hamidon reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.*

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