



Design of Fauna Featured as a Motif in the *Cucuk Sanggul*

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Abstract

This study establishes the distinctiveness of the fauna motif used in the collector *cucuk sanggul*'s Perak Museum. We used motif tracing and digital photo compilation on *cucuk sanggul* to examine the fauna's characteristics. The relevant information was organized into *Cucuk Sanggul*'s motifs, which were then connected to the purpose and significance of various faunal elements. After closer examination, it was discovered that flora motifs had been included in the components of *cucuk sanggul* head. The unique early *cucuk sanggul* connected to the identity of the Orang Asli people in Perak was made by artisans using a range of animal inspirations.

Keywords: Cucuk Sanggul, Fauna design, Motif, Malay Art

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1.0 Introduction

This study is a component of a visual research project that is now underway to identify how the fauna quality is used as a design motif on *cucuk sanggul* arrays. We know that because of the nature of fauna, original humans have always lived among us. The designer or artist of the *cucuk sanggul* interprets the functional heart of the fauna into the suitable *cucuk sanggul*, particularly at the top of the *cucuk sanggul*. The design elements depict the physical beauty of the *cucuk sanggul* of Perak Museum since the shape and character are distinctive. Digital image compilation and pattern tracing were used to analyse and contrast several *cucuk sanggul* samples from the Museum Perak. These procedures were used to categorise and relate the themes to relevant literary works within the *cucuk sanggul* example. Then, the concept and connections between each design's motifs and function and, more significantly, the significance of the faunal elements were developed.

The utilisation of the faunal part motifs on the *cucuk sanggul* head followed the finding—one of the essential results of the emerging design elements in this research. The study aims to discover decorative motifs using the fauna as the inspiration sources found in women's head accessory items known as *cucuk sanggul*. This research was carried out because *cucuk sanggul*, a result of Malay art, has received little attention and has not much research compared to other Malay arts such as *Keris*, *Dokoh*, *Pending*, and others. In the modern environment, creativity relies upon whether society can expand. The problem began when modernity and creativity faced stigma from customs and traditions, which halted the development of creativity without recognising that the business itself was a mixture of many cultures (Hoed, 2014). By maintaining a custom based on sentimental values, many failed to understand the changes to the existing society. This effect may have shaped different cultural objects to suit current needs. For instance, the development of the modern '*Cucuk Sanggul*' was a mixture of aesthetic elements that may contradict the concept of "traditional beauty." Apart from wanting to improve the art of *cucuk sanggul*, this study also examines the meaning found in the Motif used by the craftsman in Cucuk Sanggul regarding religion, belief, clothing ethics, sociocultural, and others.

2.0 Literature Review

Historically, hair decoration was vital in the community, irrespective of an individual's social status. According to Mohd Kassim (2008), hair has evolved into one of the most significant aspects of personal appearance. It should be cared for and kept tidy because it is perceived as a person's crowning glory in a society where people naturally judge unique beauty by looking at the entire body, from the top of the head to the tips of the toes. *Mahkota* (a crown), *justar diraja* (a royal headdress), *tengkolok* (headcloths), *penutup kepala* (headgear), *sikat* or *sisir rambut* (combs), and *cucuk sanggul* are traditional head decorations in the Malay culture (hairpins). The usage of personal ornamentation has expanded following the pattern followed by people from the dawn of humanity. When ancient people first found gold and employed it in many aspects, this resulted in more difficult advances. Eventually, humankind refined their artworks by transforming them with gold according to their religious influences and beliefs. The Malay population has left two kinds of valuable and expensive metals, gold and silver, for personal decoration. Wealthy individuals also utilise these two costly metals as live collateral to get inheritances. One of the most significant accessories made by Malay craft artisans in the field of metallurgy is the *cucuk sanggul* accessory. This *cucuk sanggul* item exhibits the distinctiveness of the form and diversity of ornamentation and represents the wearer's individuality. *Cucuk sanggul* is a hair styling tool ornamented with many motif carvings, according to Siti Zainon (2000). This is the exquisite outcome of its fabrication. Aside from that, *cucuk sanggul* is regarded as the pinnacle of head-wearing Malay accessories. The former civilization used the *cucuk sanggul* ornament to decorate itself and to go with the traditional Malay apparel and ceremonial attire (Azah, 2009).

2.1 The Function of Cucuk Sanggul

The system in the Malay community is closely related to the *cucuk sanggul* status in traditional Malay. So, regardless of the size of the gathering, *cucuk sanggul* takes precedence. In Malay traditions like weddings, performances, worship, and others, the *cucuk sanggul* role is often employed. The Hikayat Seri Kelantan and Syair Dang Sirat classical writings, which were analysed using a textual approach, revealed that *cucuk sanggul* serves two primary roles in the Malay community, directly and indirectly. The primary purpose of a *cucuk sanggul* is to tighten a woman's hair bun, the Malay culture of the past. Women's long, silky hair from that time must be curled or twisted to create a hair bun. This is because the social norms of the town forbade ladies from having their hair cut short. *Cucuk sanggul* guarantees the hair knot will remain in place when used as a hairpin.

The term *cucuk sanggul* may also represent standing in society. At that time, a person's sense of self-worth was believed to be crucial in determining their standing in society. Many ladies from the higher classes, including members of the royal family, may use a *cucuk sanggul* made of gold or silver to secure their hairstyles. Due to the manufacturing of gold jewellery created in the palace, the creation of a *cucuk sanggul* in the Malay world is made of gold or silver material from the royal appearance. Therefore, only royalty can wear any personal jewellery made of gold. The *cucuk sanggul* on this head is also said to represent the enormous burden the bride or wife must shoulder.

2.2 Design and Motif on Cucuk Sanggul

According to Kamus Dwibahasa (2011), a motif is a design to create patterns on clothes and other items. It is the art object's design drawing. The Motif is a visual representation or picture that develops a decorative pattern on a metal surface to beautify and add value to metal carving. Motifs that develop their patterns are significant since they define the material's features and functions. This research comprises *Cucuk Sanggul* theme designs (Haziyah, 2006). Motifs defined by arrangement may form patterns and serve as decorations. Motifs and patterns relate to textile decorating and its significance. Malay carvers choose 'cut-out' designs and 'low relief' carvings to allow air and light. Malay art and crafts often use the 'Awan larat' Motif of coiling leaves and branches. It is practically identical from one end to the other (Wan Hashim Wan Teh, 1996).

Ab Aziz (2018) says Malay art's setting reflects its beauty and magnificence. Because of its many uses, *cucuk sanggul* is an item of art, beauty, and respect. The Malays explain Malay aesthetics via experience and observation of the surroundings. This can be seen in *cucuk sanggul*, where each theme is significant and is based on the environment, flora, and animals (Siti Zainon, 2018).

In Syed Ahmad Jamal's (2000) aesthetic interpretation of Malay art, nature is the starting point. Such assessments may be related to *Cucuk Sanggul*'s theme, although they depend on the plants. *Cucuk Sanggul*'s fauna design influences Hinduism and Buddhism instead of Islamic beliefs. This remark is backed by the *Cucuk Sanggul*'s floral decorations instead of animal imagery and doodles, except in Pahang. In *Cucuk Sanggul*'s, animal themes like birds and fantastical insects differentiate between royal and citizen shamans. Motifs include cosmic, flora, wildlife, geometric, and calligraphy. Pre-Islamic cultures used cosmic and fauna themes. Because Islam prohibits carving actual animals, Malay crafters seldom utilise the fauna theme (Wan Hashim Wan Teh, 1996). When constructing a theme, traditional Malays must be followed. New plant branches develop from behind or underneath the old branch. This reflects the Malay idea that the aged must take priority over the young. In Malay culture, older individuals have greater prestige than younger people due to their earlier life experience, which is linked with superior knowledge.

Animal themes are chosen based on distinctiveness, edibility, and Hindu influence. Uniqueness and symbolism were used to choose earth-sourced themes. Flora themes were employed more regularly technically (Haziyah Hussin, 2010). All ways of decorating may be distinguished by their commitment to Islamic tradition, which prohibits images of the human form or animals and replaces them with elegant curves of Arabic alphabets with natural branches, leaves, and lovely flowers (Mubin Sheppard, 2011). Several themes are said to have been inspired by Hinduism since Hinduism significantly affected Malay civilisation before Islam spread throughout the Malay

Peninsula, after which most Hindu patterns were changed because Islam banned animal and human-like compositions. Over time, nature-inspired themes and patterns were cleverly blended into Malay art (Mohd Taib Osman, 1997).

3.0 Methodology

This study uses a visual research methodology to examine the fauna motif in the *cucuk sanggul* art. In this research, Cucuk Sanggul Museum Perak's collection of animals is analysed and identified to determine which species most closely resembles the original group of humans, known as the *orang asli* (based on visual observation) tracking data). A museum collector gathered the information during a field visit. The design cataloguing was selected to recognise and examine the *cucuk sanggul*'s fauna characteristics. The study helped to arrange and identify the fauna's theme. The positioning of designs serves as the basis for motif analysis sources. The chosen *cucuk sanggul* example was collected and recorded through digital compilation, where the analysis of the themes and references to the relevant literature were mapped and connected with the purpose and significance of chosen faunal parts to produce a coherent whole.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The researcher thoroughly explains all the data and information gathered throughout the investigation. The four steps of Prof Dr Dzul Haimi's creative process, imitation, denaturalisation, stylisation, and abstract, were used to examine the *cucuk sanggul*. These four steps show how a design differs from the subject. The modifications frequently occur in a motif that focuses on abstracting the genuine image to avoid imitating God. Only three *cucuk sanggul* will be evaluated due to issues and recurring themes in the Cucuk Sanggul. The *cucuk sanggul* motifs will then be grouped for further classification and analysis. This research will continue to concentrate on how *Cucuk Sanggul* themes are represented or decoded in the Perak Museum's collection. The researcher will also mention the data acquired during the interview session as extra data for the study. These animal species were selected based on their significance as spiritual symbols in the cultural practices of the orang Asli *cucuk sanggul* community in Perak.

4.1 Cucuk Sanggul Lizard Motif

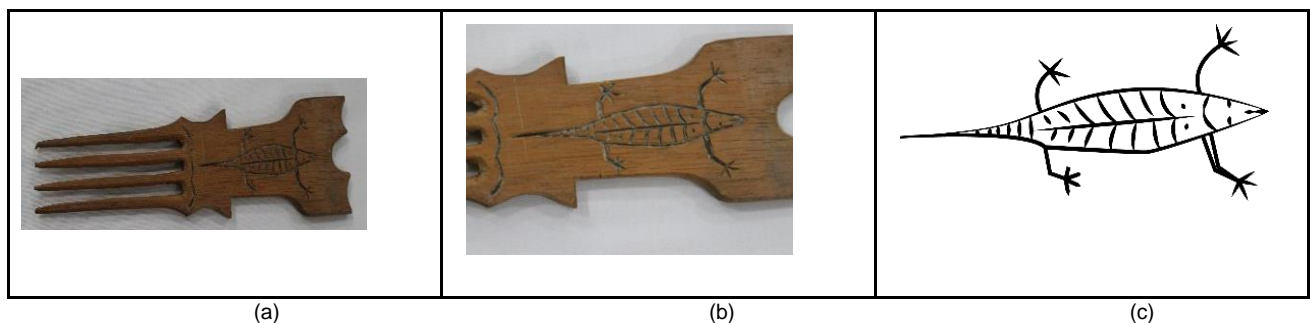


Fig 1: (a) Front view of bamboo *cucuk sanggul* (Source: Puteri); (b) Close-up of bamboo *cucuk sanggul* (Source: Puteri); (c) The Lizard fauna motif (drawing) (Source: Aiqah Afiqah 2022)

The Cucuk Sanggul seen in Figure 1 shows that the Cucuk Sanggul is made from bamboo and decorated with a pattern of animals. The lizard is one of the animal motifs that inspired the designs on the Cucuk Sanggul, as seen in Figure 1. This is because the lizard can be an animal that the creator or the wearer often encounters daily, with the logic that this orang asli used to reside in the jungle. This is one of the reasons why this is the case. Aside from that, it is possible that the Motif of a lizard was selected for its spiritual significance, which would explain why it was picked. Lizard and scorpion designs are carved onto the top of the Cucuk Sanggul's head. This might be because these creatures are the animals that the owner of the Cucuk Sanggul typically encounters during their everyday life, or it could be because the owner of the Cucuk Sanggul believes that these animals will protect them.

The level of imitation is the second stage of the creative process, and it can be seen that the Motif of a lizard carved on the Cucuk Sanggul went through this stage. In this stage, the person who carved the Motif attempts to imitate the shape and form of the animal the Motif represents by carving it on the Cucuk Sanggul. Because of this, the lizard theme is immediately recognisable, even with a cursory look. The design of the motifs is created using simple lines, which, when combined, form the outline of a lizard. Because no other design or theme is present, the Cucuk Sanggul focuses solely on the lizard motif.

4.2 Cucuk Sanggul Scorpion Motif

The scorpion motif is carved with the same level of simplicity as a lizard on the reverse side of the same *cucuk sanggul* Fig 2. Aside from the mystical connotations associated with choosing the scorpion as the theme, it is an animal notorious for its lethal venom. According to Zairul Hida Hamdan (2020), the Motif of the *cucuk sanggul* from the scorpion may have been developed because the creatures selected are considered defenders of the wearer. This may have been the motivation for the creation of the Motif. This helps to explain why both sides of the *cucuk sanggul* were painted with hazardous predatory animals, either as a warning to other people or as an amulet to protect the wearer from harmful spirits.

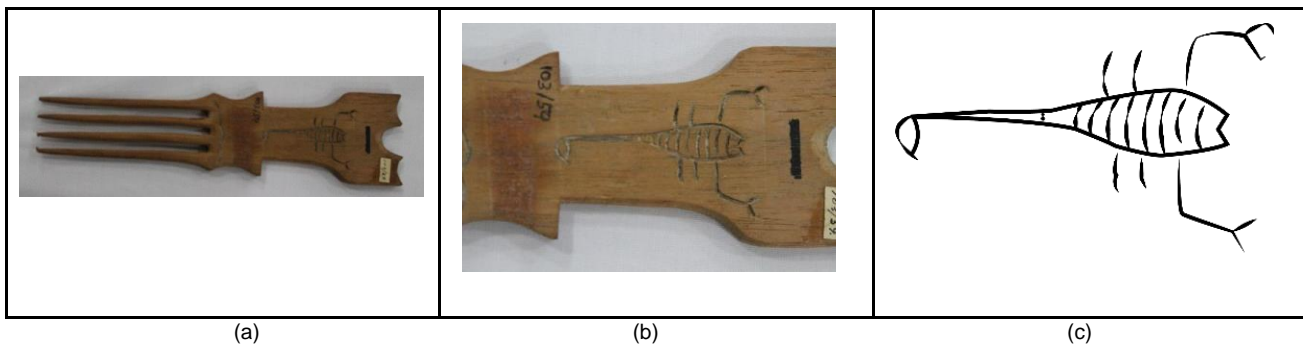


Fig. 2. (a) Front view of bamboo Scorpion *cucuk sanggul* (Source: Puteri); (b) Front view of bamboo Scorpion *cucuk sanggul* (Source: Puteri); (c) The Scorpion fauna motif (drawing) Source: Aiqa Afiqah

In the same way, as the Motif of the lizard may be classified in the degree of imitation from the four levels of the creative process described by Prof. Dr Dzul Haimi, the Motif of the scorpion can be as well. This is because the shape and form of the scorpion can be seen clearly without adding extra design to the Motif. This is one of the reasons why this is the case. Both designs on the *cucuk sanggul* are comparable in that both motifs were carved in the center of the *cucuk sanggul* without any border or supplementary motifs, except the animal design, which contrasted the other *cucuk sanggul*.

4.3 Cucuk Sanggul Owl Motif

An owl motif is also present in the *cucuk sanggul*, another animal motif that may be found there. Due to the original topic becoming unidentifiable, an abstract approach has been taken to develop this theme. This is because the procedure has been taken. Aside from that, the picture of the owl has been edited to include a geometric pattern that is extremely unlike the topic shown in the picture.

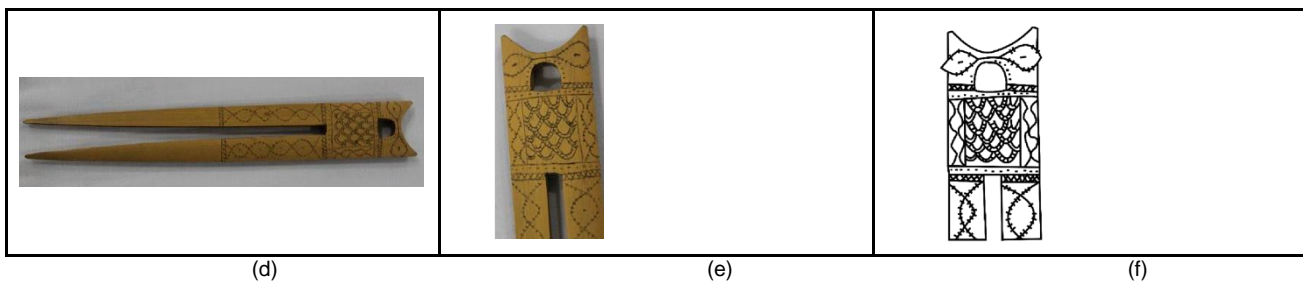


Fig. 3. (a) Front view of bamboo Owl *cucuk sanggul* (Source: Puteri); (b) Close-up of bamboo Owl *cucuk sanggul* (Source: Puteri); (c) The Owl fauna motif (drawing) Source: Aiqa Afiqah

The sole clues to the original topic are the large eyes on the top of the head of the *cucuk sanggul* and the pattern of feathers in the center of the design of the Motif, distinct from the scale motif. These are the only two features that hint at the original subject. The creator of the *cucuk sanggul* may have used the same thinking in selecting the owl as a theme for the *cucuk sanggul* as he or she did with the selection of the other predatory creatures that have been used in the past. This thinking might be another factor contributing to the possibility that the Orang Asli civilization has legendary beliefs about these creatures. Several beliefs are held by the Orang Asli, most of which are connected to their relationship with divination. They have a fear of the Owl theme because they believe it to be a representation of their religion's concept of the afterlife and rebirth. The indigenous people of Australia believe that if you discover an owl feather, you may use it for various uses. The people of this tribe believed that putting owl feathers in a baby's cot would ward off evil spirits and protect the child. Other groups believe that the owl is a carrier of good health, so its feathers may be put on the front entrance of a home to protect its inhabitants from disease. Like owls, which are connected with death and bad energy in the British Isles, feathers may be utilised to protect oneself from these harmful effects by acting as a barrier.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

To sum up, this study mainly focuses on the recognisable animals or fauna found in Perak Museum collector *cucuk sanggul* and makes no comparisons to other locations. The sort of animal chosen as the design motif by the humans or art maker is determined by physical qualities such as head, leg, body, and creeping stem shape. The type of the animals demonstrates the significance of the animals chosen as motifs regarding the local community's benefits in their daily lives. Therefore, it can be seen that the climbing flower motif is an essential element, especially on the head of *cucuk sanggul*. The design character and style, and interestingly the creeping fauna motifs, research is required to recognise and explore the other fauna motif design characteristics in *cucuk sanggul* or other types of *cucuk sanggul* to sustain the tradition as a significant heritage. However, most documented information needs to include specific categorizations physically justified by the Malay Craft field by the artefact. Research on similar contexts in design categorization is often based on referral extensions, whereas the lack of user and usage information has impaired detailed analytical elucidation. Similarly,

confusion caused by improper artifact classification has led to ambiguous information and a negative attitude toward preserving traditional knowledge.

Furthermore, the artefact anthropologist and design researcher often face situations where the design character and usage context are improperly classified during the artefact identification. For instance, the current younger generation of blacksmiths (pandai besi) needs help in justifying terminology for *cucuk sanggul* by its analytical detail (size, form, ornamentation, and intangible qualities such as philosophy, psychological context, However, most agree on the material usage. This study gives detailed insight into the design characteristics and intangible qualities of '*cucuk sanggul*' and constructs an artefact classification of this traditional weapon.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

My research on artefact data has significant potential for museum advancement. My work illuminates Museum Perak's artefacts' historical and cultural relevance and makes this information more accessible to scholars and visitors by rigorously analysing and contextualising artefact data. My new data-driven system for artefact categorisation, interpretation, and preservation can streamline curation and improve Museum Perak's teaching value. This study also allows for interactive digital exhibits, cataloguing enhancements, and richer artefact narratives, aligning with the museum's mission to engage and educate. I look forward to working with Museum Perak to apply these data-driven insights and deepen its appreciation of its collections.

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