



"It will benefit the clothing industry."
Haziyah Hussin

Baju kurung at a click

Associate Prof Dr Haziyah Hussin uses tech to give new life to a traditional attire, writes **Izwan Ismail**

SHE loves baju kurung and wants to encourage more dressmakers to continue to make the traditional attire. Associate Prof Dr Haziyah Hussin's aim is to make baju kurung a popular choice for many, especially the younger generation.

There are 16 types of traditional baju kurung. Sadly, some have gone out of fashion because not many wear them today. There are also fewer people who know how to make them," she says.

As researcher and expert in traditional Malay attire at Institute of Malay World and Civilisation (Atma) in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Haziyah feels she has to do something and one way, she says, is to cut the learning curve,

making it easier and faster to design the baju kurung. With her knowledge in AutoCAD design and years of expertise in clothing and textiles, Haziyah has created the Hazi Attire solution.

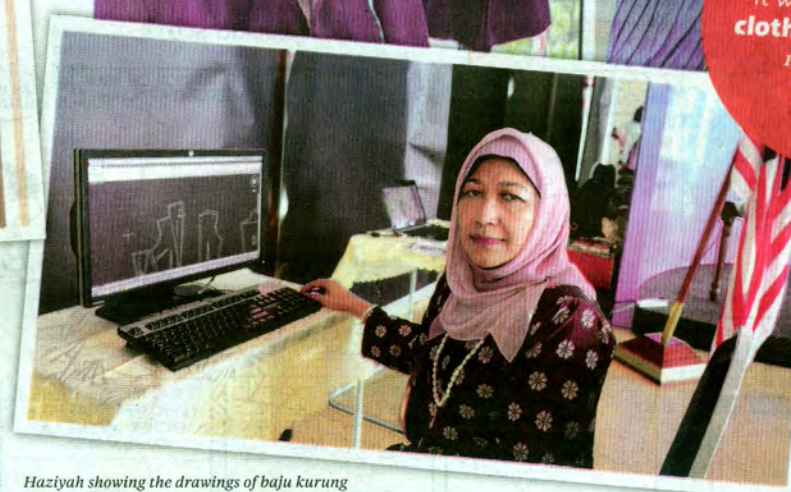
"I received a RM140,000 fund from the Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation (Mosti) in 2012 and I began developing the software," she says. Hazi Attire makes drawing and cutting the traditional outfit faster and easier.

"With individual body measurement input provided, the process, which used to take a few hours, can be done in five seconds using the software," says Haziyah.

"The software is created using AutoCAD engine and is able to draft various patterns from fitted, semi-fitted and loose silhouettes."

Hazi Attire software (www.hazi-attire.my) is used for pattern drafting of baju kurung pesak buluh, baju cekak musang, baju kebaya pendek Kelantan, baju kebaya pendek, baju kebaya lama panjang, baju kurung

pesak gantung, baju kebaya labuh, baju belah Terengganu, baju kebarung, baju Kedah, baju Pahang and baju Kota Baru.



Haziyah showing the drawings of baju kurung cutting produced by the Hazi Attire software.



Haziyah with samples of the traditional baju kurung.

the market since it is fully automatic, user-friendly and able to print selected patterns quickly and accurately. "It will benefit the clothing industry by reducing manufacturing lead time and cycle time," she explains.

Kota Baru-born Haziyah says although the software uses AutoCAD engine, it is straightforward to use. "Just input the body measurements and the software will sketch the patterns quickly," she says.

However, the software is not targeted at individuals, only businesses. A body scanner, costing around RM500,000, can be of great help as it can scan the body in a matter of minutes.

Haziyah has been interested in fashion designing for a long time. She started in 1979 when she entered UiTM for her Bachelor of Arts. She then continued with a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Moore College of Art Philadelphia.

"I've always been interested in fashion. During my teenage years, I loved to draw and design clothes," she says.

Her interest in traditional Malay attire started when she realised it only attracted a certain group of people.

Her goal is to breathe new life into almost forgotten traditional Malay attire and make them popular again with the people.

"I hope to make these beautiful traditional attire popular for all ages," she says, adding that to do this requires a new mechanism to help people get these traditional designs back with ease.

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The software took three years to develop and is said to be able to generate traditional Malay dress patterns in seconds, depending on the speed of the computer plotter (a seamstress would require 4-5 hours normally).

Haziyah feels that the different traditional baju kurung have a uniqueness that needs to be preserved.

"The traditional baju kurung refers to the pattern cutting and special way of sewing the dress which sets it apart from the modern baju kurung. The cutting of the traditional baju kurung needs to have pesak, kekak and loose rounded neck design with a slit and a loose dress. Other traditional traits include jahit sembat and tulang belut," she says, adding that traditional baju kurung is no longer worn by women today.

Other factors include the fact that the younger generation feels these outfits are only for the older generation.

Haziyah says traditional baju kurung can be given new life, but changes are needed in terms of fabric and colours.

Before developing Hazi Attire, she studied the techniques of making traditional baju kurung by visiting exhibitions and from her own collections.

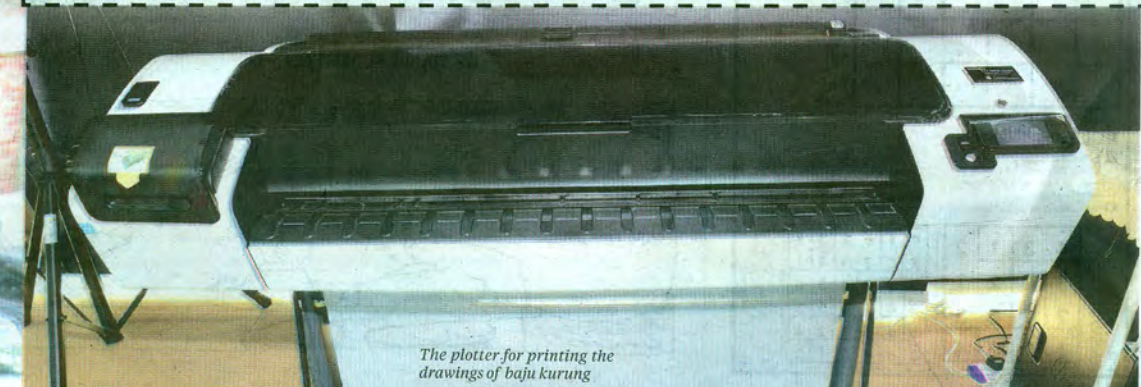
"I also learnt drawing techniques from a traditional seamstress. There are some differences but the basics are the same," she says.

The challenges today lies in the specific types of seam, such as tulang belut and sembat. Modern seamstresses do not know how to do these anymore.

However, baju kurung can still be made with the same cutting but with a more general type of seam.

"In future, we need to create a tool which can make tulang belut and sembat seams," says Haziyah.

For now, these traditional dresses can be made faster with the availability of the Hazi Attire software.



The plotter for printing the drawings of baju kurung