

## The Significance Influence of Zapin Dance on The Development of Malay-Nusantara Culture (Zapin Johor)

*(Kepentingan Pengaruh Tarian Zapin Terhadap Perkembangan Kebudayaan Melayu-Nusantara Zapin Johor)*

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### ABSTRACT

Zapin dance, recognized as a cultural heritage of Johor, is known for its unique traditional characteristics. While it is popular among the Malay community, its origins trace back to the Middle East, influenced by the Arab Peranakan community. Initially performed solely by men, Zapin has evolved to include both men and women, with movements symbolizing their respective qualities. The dance features various styles, including Zapin Pekajang, Zapin Tenglu Mak Usu, and Zapin Lenga, each based on its region of origin but maintaining the core elements of Zapin Johor. Beyond Johor, states like Kelantan, Sarawak, and Kedah have their own versions of Zapin, such as Zapin Salor, Zapin Sindang, and Zapin Ghalit. However, the influence of foreign cultures has led to a decline in the appreciation of Zapin in Malaysia, particularly among the younger generation. This decline is partly due to stereotypes associating men who dance Zapin with being "sensitive." The study aims to assess Malaysians' knowledge of Zapin culture, focusing on its history, variations, and traditional costumes, through a quantitative survey methodology. The findings, analyzed using SPSS, reveal the level of knowledge among Malaysians regarding Zapin. These results can serve as a valuable resource for stakeholders to address this issue and promote Zapin as an enduring cultural heritage of the Malay community.

Keywords: History, Types of Zapin and Costumes, cultural heritage, traditional

### ABSTRAK

*Tarian Zapin, yang diiktiraf sebagai warisan budaya Johor, terkenal dengan ciri-ciri tradisional yang unik. Walaupun ia popular dalam kalangan masyarakat Melayu, asal-usulnya dapat dikesan kembali ke Timur Tengah, dipengaruhi oleh komuniti Arab Peranakan. Pada mulanya, ia hanya dipersembahkan oleh lelaki, tetapi Zapin telah berkembang untuk melibatkan lelaki dan wanita, dengan gerakan yang melambangkan kualiti masing-masing. Tarian ini mempunyai pelbagai gaya, termasuk Zapin Pekajang, Zapin Tenglu Mak Usu, dan Zapin Lenga, masing-masing berdasarkan wilayah asalnya tetapi mengekalkan elemen utama Zapin Johor. Selain Johor, negeri-negeri seperti Kelantan, Sarawak, dan Kedah mempunyai versi Zapin mereka sendiri, seperti Zapin Salor, Zapin Sindang, dan Zapin Ghalit. Walau bagaimanapun, pengaruh budaya asing telah menyebabkan penurunan dalam apresiasi terhadap Zapin di Malaysia, terutamanya dalam kalangan generasi muda. Penurunan ini sebahagiannya disebabkan oleh stereotaip yang mengaitkan lelaki yang menari Zapin dengan sifat "sensitif." Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai pengetahuan rakyat Malaysia tentang budaya Zapin, dengan fokus pada sejarahnya, variasi, dan pakaian tradisional, melalui metodologi tinjauan kuantitatif. Dapatan kajian yang dianalisis menggunakan SPSS menunjukkan tahap pengetahuan rakyat Malaysia mengenai Zapin. Keputusan ini boleh menjadi sumber yang berguna untuk pihak berkepentingan dalam menangani isu ini dan mempromosikan Zapin sebagai warisan budaya yang kekal bagi masyarakat Melayu.*

*Kata kunci: Sejarah, Jenis Zapin dan Pakaian, warisan budaya, tradisional*

## INTRODUCTION

Zapin dance, which means rapid foot movements following the beat, is a type of traditional Malay dance known for centuries. This dance was inspired by Arab influences and is said to have originated from Yemen. Zapin has spread widely among dance enthusiasts in the Nusantara region. Initially, it was performed only by men, but today, women also participate, adding grace to the dance.

Zapin can be classified as a prominent dance form because it is not only found in Johor but also in other states of Malaysia, such as Zapin Salor in Kelantan, Zapin Ghalit in Kedah, and Zapin Sindang in Sarawak. Additionally, Zapin exists in neighboring countries like Singapore (Traditional Zapin, Heritage Zapin, and Zapin Teluk Belanga), Brunei (Zapin Laila Sembah, Zapin Tar), and Indonesia (Zapin Tongga, Zapin Tembung, and Zapin Tamiang). This clearly shows that we are a unified community that shares the same cultural heritage, which is Zapin. The main differences in Zapin across Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Indonesia lie in the costumes, dance patterns, movements, and accompanying music.

### Brunei

In Brunei, the Zapin dance comes in various forms, each with its own distinct rhythms and movements. Locally, it is often referred to by the dialect term "Jipin." Among the most popular types of Zapin in Brunei are:

- i. Zapin Laila Sembah (Jipin Laila Sembah)
- ii. Zapin Tar (Jipin Tar)

The origin of the Zapin dance in Brunei is believed to be influenced by the culture brought by Arab traders who arrived in the Borneo islands, particularly in Brunei. Although there is no definitive evidence, it is thought that these traders introduced cultural elements, including dance, to the region. Notably, Sultan Sharif Ali, the third Sultan of Brunei, was of Arab descent

from Taif. The word "Zapin" is derived from the Arabic word "Zafn," meaning quick foot movements in time with the beat. Sometimes, this dance is performed while singing or chanting religious verses, known in Brunei as "dikir" or "selawat" in praise of the Prophet. In Brunei, musical instruments commonly used to accompany the Zapin dance include the gambus, rebana, gendang tabur, and other traditional instruments.

### Singapore

#### *Zapin Asli-Traditional*

The Zapin dance was introduced in Singapore in the early 1950s by a teacher from Medan, Indonesia. This dance serves as the foundational dance for all Malay dance students and encompasses five basic types of dances.

#### *Zapin Warisan*

To diversify the appearance of the Zapin dance, props such as the tepak sirih, shawls, and kompang are used, each carrying symbolic meaning. In Zapin Warisan, the basic movements are preserved, while the use of space and various floor patterns are highlighted.

#### *Zapin Teluk Belanga*

Zapin Teluk Belanga was specially choreographed for a grand cultural heritage performance in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the People's Association on August 27, 2000. The movements in Zapin Teluk Belanga start with the first pattern and continue to the final pattern, each given a fresh interpretation. The dance also incorporates movements from Zapin Arab, reflecting the history of Zapin in Singapore, which began with Arab immigrants. Traditionally, men performed Zapin at festive gatherings as a sign of joy and celebration.

### Indonesia

The Zapin dance originated in 1811 and gained popularity in 1919. Initially performed as a palace dance during the era of the Sultanate of Yemen, it gradually spread and integrated with local cultures, evolving into a royal ceremonial art form. Arab traders introduced the dance to the Riau Archipelago as a means of disseminating Islam. Over time, the dance was adapted to local traditions, and by the 1960s, women were permitted to perform it.

In Indonesia, Zapin is represented in two primary forms: Zapin Melayu and Zapin Arab, each characterized by distinct styles and variations. These forms have become a significant part of Indonesia's cultural heritage, symbolizing unity and strength. The dance is recognized by different names across various regions of Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### History of Zapin

In the 15th century, Middle Eastern missionaries, who were primarily from Arab and Persian nations, are believed to have introduced Zapin, a performance that is deeply rooted in tradition, to the Malay world. This performance, which was only performed by male performers, was originally referred to as "Zaffana" in the Yemeni dialect. Nevertheless, it expanded to encompass women as well over time. The most basic form of Zapin entails synchronised movements that adhere to the cadence of the music, which is counted in

a constant 1, 2, 3, 4 pattern. The fourth beat is marked by a graceful extension of the foot. Dancers maintain an upright posture with a modest elevation of the torso, regardless of whether they are standing still or moving forward and backward.

The dance is frequently accompanied by traditional instruments, including the violin, marwas (a type of percussion), and the gambus (a plucked string instrument). The melodies are frequently from the Samrah genre. Zapin is frequently performed in pairs or groups, which facilitates vivacious interactions through humorous gestures, challenges, or simply appreciating each other's movements, despite the absence of a strict rule regarding number of dancers.



FIGURE 1. Marwas



FIGURE 2. Gambus



FIGURE 3. Akordion



FIGURE 4. Bedok

There are numerous variations of Zapin, each of which contributes its own unique character to the original design. One well-known variant is Zapin Tenglu, which is derived from Mersing. This version was influenced by the undulating of the waves, which fishermen imitated by dancing on their vessels. Watching this dance, one can almost feel the cadence of the sea, as the dancers sway left and right, holding the ship's cords, with unanticipated turns and abrupt pauses that demonstrate their agility.

Zapin is more than just a dance; it is a cultural treasure that reflects the complex tapestry of Malay and Arab influences. It functions as both an educational and entertaining medium, often used to convey

Islamic teachings through its lyrical content. The music, led by the gambus and the rhythmic marwas, creates a captivating ambiance. Originally an all-male performance, Zapin has evolved to include female and mixed gender performers. Despite the variety of migrations, the fundamental elements of Zapin remain consistent across regions, from the eastern and western coastlines of Sumatra, Peninsular Malaysia, the Riau Islands, and the coast of Kalimantan to Brunei Darussalam.

The origins of Zapin can be traced back to the Arab lands of Hadhramaut, where the arts of music, dance, and poetry spread to Johor, transported by Arab settlers along coastal and river routes. In Johor, Zapin

assimilated these Arab influences while developing a distinctly Malay character, imbued with Islamic philosophy. Traditionally, Johor Malay Zapin was performed not only in residences and courtyards but also in mosques to celebrate Islamic occasions like the Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

Several varieties of Zapin are present in Johor,

including Zapin Pekajang, Zapin Tengelu, and Zapin Lenga. Performances often commence with a gambus solo known as "Taksim," establishing the stage for the performance. Each variety, from Pusau Belanak Besar to Lompat Injut, Kopak, Titi Batang, Ayam Patah, Pusau Belanak Kecil, and Wainap, lends its own unique flavor to this enduring art form.



FIGURE 5. Type of Zapin Johor

#### Type of Zapin

##### *Zapin Padang Sari*

The late Haji Saim Bin Ros, originally from Kampung Parit Haji Rasul in Batu Pahat, Johor, became the key figure in continuing the Zapin Padang Sari dance, which also has its roots in Batu Pahat. He was trained by two teachers, Wak Muh Benjol and Tuan Haji Surjat. Unlike other Zapin styles, Zapin Padang Sari is unique in that the first step starts with the foot moving backward at a 45-degree angle, rather than forward. This distinctive movement, along with a scooping hand gesture on the sixth count, gives the dance its graceful flow. Typically performed by male dancers, the dance incorporates playful elements that are especially captivating when danced by men. It is often accompanied by songs such as "Habibilah," "Alunan Zikir Ya Rabbi," and "Ya Rasulullah."

##### *Zapin Tanjung Labuh*

Zapin Tanjung Labuh, originating from Kampung Tanjung Labuh in Batu Pahat, Johor, has been preserved by Puan Salmah Binti Ahmad, a resident of the village. This dance is ideally performed by female dancers due to its graceful and delicate movements, which resemble the flowing curves of a river. The dance includes four main variations, each requiring refined footwork, with the initial step involving a gentle lift of

the foot—a distinctive feature of this style. Although Zapin Tanjung Labuh is primarily for women, it can be performed alongside Zapin Kores by men, as both styles share similar origins. The key difference between them is that Zapin Tanjung Labuh uses a hand movement at waist level, while Zapin Kores has hand movements at shoulder level, making the combination of the two dances visually appealing.

##### *Zapin Pat Lipat*

Zapin Pat Lipat, which originated in Parit Bugis, Muar, Johor, later spread to Parit Yusof Darat (Mukim Sungai Balang). Initially, this Zapin was performed by imams after tahlil recitations at events like weddings and circumcision ceremonies. It was developed by Tuan Imam Nasir bin Mahmud Sulaiman, a religious teacher who passed the dance down to the third generation. To prevent the dance from fading into obscurity, En. Mohd Amir formed the group "Zapin Sri Serumpun." Originally, the dance was accompanied by Arabic songs like "Sollu 'Alal Hadi Soffi" and "Ya Barqul Sami," but it has since also been performed with Malay songs such as "Lagu Terang Bulan" and "Lagu Bunga Mawar."

##### *Zapin Mahpom*

Zapin Mahpom originated in Parit Tengah Sarang Buaya, Muar, and later spread to Parit No. 2, Parit Yusof



Darat (Mukim Sungai Batang). The name "Mahpom" comes from the distinctive marwas drumbeats that set it apart from other Zapin styles. The dance's founder passed down the tradition to his nephew, En. Suhairi bin Adam, known as Pakcik Turiman. A key feature of the dance is a six-count foot movement that involves dragging the foot across the floor, and if not done correctly, the dance is considered incomplete. Dancers often endure foot pain while performing Zapin Mahpom. It is traditionally accompanied by songs like "Anak Ayam." During performances, dancers typically wear Baju Melayu Teluk Belanga with an outer garment and a songkok, and some may also wear a tarbus.

### *Zapin Tenglu*

Zapin Tenglu is a traditional dance from Johor, divided into three types: Zapin Tenglu Mak Usu, Zapin Tenglu Pak Akob, and Zapin Tenglu Pak Othman. However, the most popular and well-known versions are Zapin

Tenglu Mak Usu and Zapin Tenglu Pak Akob, both known for their simple yet unique steps. While Zapin Tenglu Mak Usu is better suited for female dancers due to its graceful and refined movements, Zapin Tenglu Pak Akob is more suitable for male dancers as its movements are more robust and lively. Zapin Tenglu Mak Usu was founded by a woman named Puan Habsah binti Mohamad, affectionately known as Mak Usu, from Kampung Tenglu, Jalan Haji Omar, Mersing, Johor. She developed a passion for Zapin dance at the age of 14 and learned it from a dance teacher from Banjarmasin, Indonesia. The dance steps of Zapin Tenglu Mak Usu are inspired by the movements of women playing or walking along the beach. As such, the dance steps require the dancers to move as if they are walking on a wet and sandy shoreline. This uniqueness is reflected in Mak Usu's choreography, where dancers must slightly lift their sarongs with their left hand while their right hand mimics a rowing motion, with occasional shoulder movements.



FIGURE 6. Costumes and Accessories

### Costumes and Accessories

"*Busana*" is defined by the Kamus Dewan Edisi Ketiga (1996) as "something that is worn." Siti Zainon Ismail (1997) explains that the term "*busana*" originates from Javanese Sanskrit, meaning dressing fully with complete and beautifully arranged adornments. In contrast, the Kamus Melayu Nusantara (2003: 412) defines "*busana*" as both clothing and adornments. This dictionary definition does not include equipment or accessories as part of clothing.

According to Mohd Rosli Saludin (2004), "*busana*" or costume includes not only clothing and fabric but also jewelry, cosmetics, and head decorations. "*Busana*" also implies wearing in an orderly, ethical,

and dignified manner in accordance with customs and cultural settings. Malay clothing extends beyond just fabric and shirts; it encompasses the traditional attire essential for reflecting Malay values, norms, and cultural beauty. The aesthetic of traditional Malay clothing has been practiced for centuries (Siti Zainon Ismail, 2009). The next aspect of clothing is adornments, which are used to beautify and decorate oneself. From head to toe, various adornments are used depending on the event and customs (Siti Zainon Ismail, 2004). Examples of adornments include necklaces, rings, bracelets, brooches, belts, earrings, hairpins, and pendants.

Additionally, equipment or accessories refer to items used to complete one's attire perfectly. These

include kris, swords, and khandar, which are used in ceremonial occasions such as weddings, coronations, and awards. At certain times, these accessories also served as weapons for protection against enemies (Adilah Hj. Jusoh & Fazilah Husin, 2016).

Originally, traditional attire did not carry any specific meaning, whether explicit or implicit. Its primary role was simply as decoration to complement the costumes worn by male and female dancers, enhancing their appearance and elegance during

performances. This is because Zapin was not initially a dance but a form of play. At that time, Zapin was not associated with any particular costume or accessories. It only began to emphasize certain attire and adornments after it became commercialized. For male dancers, the traditional costume includes the Johor Malay shirt (known as "teluk belanga"), sampang (a type of traditional waistcloth), a high songkok (a traditional cap), and brooches. Below are example images of male attire.



FIGURE 7. Baju Melayu Johor Lelaki



FIGURE 8. Sampang



FIGURE 9. Songkok Tinggi



FIGURE 10. Kerongsang

Unlike male dancers, the attire and makeup for female dancers are more elaborate and striking. The typical ensemble includes a traditional baju kurung (either Teluk Belanga or Sejari style), a sarong, a sampang (waistcloth), a necklace, a hairpin, flowers, and earrings. These elements enhance the appearance

of female dancers, highlighting the modesty and grace that are characteristic of Malay women. However, for hijab-wearing female dancers, the hairpin, flowers, and earrings are not worn, as they are not suitable for those who cover their hair.



FIGURE 11. Baju Kurung Teluk Belanga/Sejari



FIGURE 12. Kain Sarung



FIGURE 13. Kain Dagang Figure



FIGURE 14. Rantai Seutas



FIGURE 15. Cucuk Sanggul



FIGURE 16. Bunga



FIGURE 17. Subang/anting-anting

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study uses a quantitative approach, specifically a survey method, to gather data on participants' knowledge and attitudes towards the Zapin dance, a traditional Malay dance form.

### Participants

The survey was conducted among Malaysians of various demographics, including different age groups, genders, employment statuses, and ethnic backgrounds. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling, which involved sharing the survey link via email and social media platforms to maximize outreach.

A total of 40 respondents participated in the study.

## Data Analysis

### Data Collection

Data was collected using an online questionnaire, which was designed to capture information on the participants' demographic profiles (gender, age group, employment status, and ethnicity) and their knowledge of Zapin, including its history, variations, cultural significance, and related accessories. The survey contained both multiple-choice questions and Likert-scale items to assess levels of agreement or disagreement with various statements about Zapin.

### Survey Instrument

The survey instrument included questions such as:

- i. Knowledge of the origin and types of Zapin dance.
- ii. Awareness of the cultural and religious significance of the dance.
- iii. Opinions on the relevance of Zapin in contemporary society.
- iv. Perceptions Regarding government and educational roles in promoting traditional dances.
- v. Factors contributing to the declining interest in Zapin among the younger generation.

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the participants' demographic characteristics and their responses to the survey questions. The analysis was performed using SPSS software to calculate frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistical methods were also applied to examine the relationships between demographic variables and participants' knowledge and attitudes toward Zapin.

### Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent before participating in the survey. The study ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents by not collecting any personally identifiable information beyond basic demographic details.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey conducted utilized a quantitative method, where data was collected through field research involving the gathering of respondents according to predetermined criteria.

TABLE 1. Respondents' Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	16	40	40	40
Female	24	60	60	100
Total	40	100	100	

The gender distribution of the participants in the study reveals that out of a total of 40 individuals, 16 (40%) are male, while 24 (60%) are female. This data

indicates a higher representation of female participants in the study, with women comprising the majority.

TABLE 2. Respondents' Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
12 – 19	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
20 – 29	33	82.5	82.5	90
30 – 39	3	7.5	7.5	97.5
50 – 59	1	2.5	2.5	100
Total	40	100	100	



The age distribution of the study's participants shows that the majority, 33 individuals (82.5%), fall within the 20 to 29 years age group. Smaller percentages are observed in other age groups, with 3 individuals (7.5%) each in the 12 to 19 years and 30 to 39 years

age brackets. Only 1 individual (2.5%) is within the 50 to 59 years age range. This data highlights that the respondent pool is predominantly composed of young adults in their twenties, with minimal representation from other age groups.

TABLE 3. Respondents' Employment Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Working	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
Study	18	45	45	87.5
Retired	1	2.5	2.5	90
Not Working	4	10	10	100
Total	40	100	100	

The occupational status of the respondents shows that 17 individuals (42.5%) are employed, 18 individuals (45%) are currently studying, 1 individual (2.5%) is retired, and 4 individuals (10%)

are unemployed. This distribution suggests that the majority of the participants are either working or pursuing education, with a minimal proportion being retired or not working.

TABLE 4. Respondents' Race

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Chinese	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
Indian	1	2.5	2.5	5.0
Others	2	5	5	10
Malay	35	87.5	87.5	97.5
Sabah Sarawak	1	2.5	2.5	100
Total	40	100	100	

The ethnic composition of the participants indicates that the majority are of Malay ethnicity, with 35 individuals (87.5%) identifying as Malay. Other ethnicities are represented in much smaller proportions: Chinese and Indian participants each account for 1 individual (2.5%), those identifying as

'Others' constitute 2 individuals (5%), and Indigenous groups from Sarawak, such as Iban and Bidayuh, are represented by 1 individual (2.5%). This data underscores the predominance of Malay ethnicity within the sample.

## OBJECTIVE

Zapin dance is a traditional dance originating from the state of Johor Darul Takzim				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	5	5	5
Yes	38	95	95	100
Total	40	100	100	
The Zapin dance was once a form of dawah delivered with the accompaniment of selawat				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	No	No	No	No
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
The following are types of Zapin found in the state of Johor, except.				
xxxx	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Zapin Koris	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
Zapin Pat Lipat	5	12.5	12.5	45
Zapin Pekajang	7	17.5	17.5	62.5
Zapin Salor	15	37.5	37.5	100
Total	40	100	100	
Which types of Zapin are found in states other than Johor?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Zapin Cokoh and Zapin Dayong	14	35	35	35
Zapin Koris and Zapin Ghalit	6	15	15	50
Zapin Salor and Zapin Ghalit	10	25	25	75
Zapin Salor and Zapin Parit Mastar	10	25	25	100
Total	40	100	100	

The following are accessories worn by female dancers, except				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bunga	10	25	25	25
Cucuk Sanggul	5	12.5	12.5	37.5
Kain Samping	13	32.5	32.5	70
Rantai Seutas	12	30	30	100
Total	40	100	100	

Based on the survey conducted, 68% of the respondents answered incorrectly, while only 32% answered correctly out of the 40 respondents who participated in this survey. The survey consisted of five objective questions about the Zapin dance. Meanwhile, it has been observed that the understanding of the Zapin dance among Malaysians remains unsatisfactory, and this issue needs to be addressed, considering it is a part

of our cultural heritage. Activities or programs focused on raising awareness and educating the public about the Zapin dance should be expanded by the responsible stakeholders to prevent this issue from worsening. The government must play a crucial role in ensuring that the Zapin dance remains a part of the knowledge and love in the hearts of Malaysians, so that it can be preserved for future generations.

TABLE 5 . Objective Questions

One of the reasons for the lack of interest among young people in the Zapin culture is the limited exposure to and encouragement from their families				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Uncertain	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
Agree	36	90	90	97.5
Not Agree	1	2.5	2.5	100
Total	40	100	100	

  

Traditional dance should ideally be nurtured from childhood by incorporating it into the school curriculum, where students are required to take it and are awarded credit or marks				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Uncertain	4	10	10	10
Agree	32	80	80	90
Not Agree	4	10	10	100
Total	40	100	100	

The government needs to revitalize the Zapin culture more holistically by enhancing the tourism sector so that more foreign tourists become acquainted with Zapin culture				
Uncertain	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
Agree	37	92.5	92.5	100
Total	40	100	100	
The Zapin dance is considered irrelevant today because the era is rapidly evolving				
Uncertain	6	15	15	15
Agree	7	17.5	17.5	32.5
Not Agree	27	67.5	67.5	100
Total	40	100	100	
Zapin is one of the most popular traditional dances among the Malaysian community				
Uncertain	4	10	10	10
Agree	35	87.5	87.5	97.5
Not Agree	1	2.5	2.5	100
Total	40	100	100	

Zapin is often considered irrelevant in today's rapidly changing times. According to the survey, only 17.5% of respondents agreed with this view, while a significant 65% disagreed, indicating that many still see value in this traditional dance. Zapin remains one of the most popular traditional dances among Malaysians, with 87.5% of respondents agreeing with this statement. Only 2.5% of respondents disagreed, showing a strong recognition of Zapin's cultural significance. There is also a strong belief that the government should promote the Zapin culture more holistically, particularly through the tourism sector, to increase international awareness. This view is supported by 92.5% of respondents, with only 7.5% being uncertain.

Traditional dances like Zapin should be nurtured from a young age by integrating them into the academic curriculum in schools, where students would be required to take part and be graded on their performance. This idea is supported by 80% of respondents, with minimal disagreement. One of the main reasons for the lack of interest among young people in the Zapin culture is the lack of exposure and encouragement from families. This perspective is shared by 90% of respondents, indicating that family influence plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the purpose of this research was to examine the cultural knowledge of Zapin among

Malaysians through the lens of The Significance Influence of Zapin Dance on the Development of Malay-Nusantara Culture (Zapin Johor). The Zapin dance, with its roots in Arab influences and a history spanning centuries, has evolved into a key cultural symbol across the Nusantara region. Initially performed exclusively by men, the inclusion of women has brought added grace and diversity to the dance. Zapin is not only prominent in Johor but also in other Malaysian states, such as Kelantan, Kedah, and Sarawak, as well as in neighboring countries like Singapore, Brunei, and Indonesia. This widespread presence highlights the shared cultural heritage among these nations.

Each region has developed its own unique interpretation of Zapin, with differences in costumes, dance patterns, movements, and accompanying music. For example, Brunei's versions, such as Zapin Laila Sembah and Zapin

Tar, reflects local traditions influenced by Arab culture. Similarly, Singapore's variations, like Zapin Asli-Traditional and Zapin Teluk Belanga, demonstrate how the dance has been adapted to fit local contexts. In Indonesia, Zapin has been integrated into the cultural fabric, with distinct forms like Zapin Melayu and Zapin Arab.

The broad dissemination and adaptation of the Zapin dance underscore its lasting importance as a unifying cultural practice, connecting communities across borders while preserving the rich heritage of the Malay world. As a result, Zapin continues to symbolize unity, cultural pride, and artistic expression that transcends generations and geographical boundaries.



To further this study, 40 participants completed an online survey, with data collected via a Google Form. SPSS software was used for all data analysis, ensuring that the results are reliable and supported by research. The data from the study also supports the acceptance of this idea, showing a strong relationship between the elements studied and the cultural knowledge of Zapin among Malaysians through The Significance Influence of Zapin Dance on the Development of Malay-Nusantara Culture (Zapin Johor).

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