

# The Aesthetic Value of Sabung Impit of Tombonuo Ethnic in Paitan Sabah

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## ABSTRACT

*The Aesthetic Value of Sabung Impit of Tombonuo Ethnic in Paitan Sabah is a study conducted to observe the characteristics of Sabung Impit for men and women for every part of the traditional costume and personal decoration of Sabung Impit. In this study, the researcher uses Adobe Illustrator CC to resketch Sabung Impit. The research method employed in this study is qualitative research design which is based on field-work oriented. The researcher has classified its decoration according to different parts mainly head, neck, arms, waist and leg decorations for the purpose of the process of analysing the data. The findings show that the decorations of Sabung Impit which are Banglu for women's head and Sapu Tangan and Seput for men's head and arms respectively. These decorations have become the main symbol of a complete traditional outfit of Sabung Impit. Every personal decoration has its own philosophy behind it which reflects the culture of the Tombonuos of Paitan. The research is hoped to be able to preserve Sabung Impit in efforts of enriching culture and as a reference for teachers in teaching and learning as well as researchers in the future.*

**Keywords:** *Sabung Impit, Personal decoration*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Visual arts education which has been created in school is to build the students' potential towards producing a knowledgeable and skilful individual in Visual Arts so as to appreciate the aesthetic value that contributes to the development of individuals, society and economy in our country (KSSM Visual Arts Education Form 3). There are eight objectives outlined in the KSSM which include pupils are able to explain and interpret the field of History and Visual Arts Appreciation, Fine Arts, Art Design, Art and Crafts and Visual Communications.

This study includes the field of History and Visual Arts Appreciation in which it focuses on the Traditional Costumes and personal decorations. Our multi-ethnic nation consists of different ethnic groups with their unique heritage that need to be highlighted and one of them can be found in Sabah. Sabah's population is very diverse comprising many ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. The largest indigenous groups in Sabah is Kadazandusun with sub-ethnics of Kadazan, Dusun, Rungus, Bisaya, Lotud, Liwan, Murut, Sungai including Tombonuo (Dayu Sansalu, 2016). The Tombonuo group is one of the largest populations in Sabah. The name Tombonuo itself is originated from the combination of words in Tombonuo language which are Tombo and Nuo. The word Tombo in Tombonuo language of Paitan means place where Nuo is shortened from the word Vonou which means world or continent and later known as Borneo.

Tombonuos are known for their fine handicrafts and variety of motives that can be found in hand-woven crafts such as tudung saji, mengkuang mat and pillowcase with fine and different types of embroidery, lace and weave. Serimpak is one of the art decorations for bride and it is made up of colourful patchwork that can be used to decorate the wall and ceiling of a house during wedding ceremony.

One of the main symbols of the Tombonuo people can be seen from their traditional costumes called *Sabung Impit*. This somehow makes them different from the other ethnics group in Sabah. It has its own aesthetic value and reflects the identity of The Tombonuos. From this view, every part of the costume reflects the life and culture of the Tombonuo people. Their creative thinking can be seen through the unique motives and patterns of the traditional costumes. At the same time, they possess a great hands-on skill to produce their own Sabung Impit making them as great as the other ethnics in Sabah

Nowdays, the middle-aged and the young generation do not know the name of each part of their jewelry and the philosophy behind their production. Even worse, the young generation of Tombonuo etnchic in Paitan are unaware of the existence and the type of their traditional clothes. Hopefully this study will be able to assist teacher in getting referral to be example,that can be shared with high school students on traditional sub-topic in Visual Art Education. Especially for the lost costume of Tombonuo etchnicity.

## 1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research was aimed to:

- i. Highlight the type of *Sabung Impit* costume for Men and woman Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan Sabah.
- ii. Illustrate and label the *Sabung Impit* Costume for men and woman Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan Sabah.
- iii. Classified type of personal decoration according the different part for woman Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan Sabah.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Its hard to require the specific reference for *Sabung Impit* for Tombonuo ethnic. Beside the previous literature focused on the education and the origin of Tombonuo ethnic. The book entitled *Pluralisme: Etnisiti Sabah dan Sarawak* by Dayu Sansalu (2016) present about the Tombonuo ethnic such as the delimma of their race name. Dayu Sansalu (2008) in book entitled *Kadazandusun Di Sabah Pendidikan dan Proses Pemodenan*. Studied about the origin of the Tombonuo ethnic and the education transformation following the modern era. Also, a study about the social life of Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan Sabah by Dayu Sansalu (2014) in paper *Kajian Budaya Masyarakat Tombonuo Di Sungai Paitan*. Kota kinabalu kementerian pelancongan, kebudayaan dan alam sekitar. The another reference became guideline for the author for transcribe the finding such as, Siti Zainon Ismail. (1986). *Rekabentuk Kraftangan Melayu Tradisi* and Mohd Johari Ab. Hamid. (2008). *Apresiasi dan Kritikan Seni Visual*.

## 3. RESESRCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study was field-work oriented. The sample consisted of the *Sabung Impit* for woman and man Tombonuo etchnic in Paitan Sabah. The photos of *Sabung Impit* and the personal decoration for woman were taken using a camera Nikon D5300. The image of *Sabung Impit* man and woman were digitally visualized using Adobe Ilustrator to labelling the part of *Sabung Impit*.

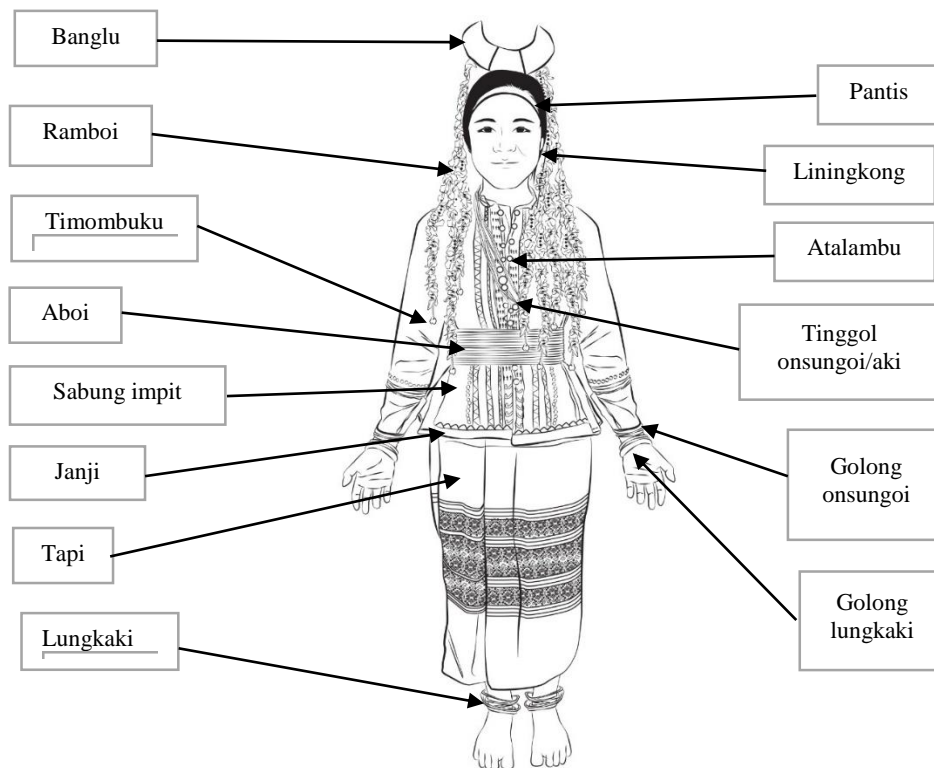
## 4. RESEARCH FINDING

On the basic of study on *Sabung Impit* man and woman for Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan Sabah, this traditional costume were designed to show the esthetic of the body shape wearer and also had philosophy behind it. The personal decoration not only to decorate the *Sabung Impit* and add the esthetic value, also had the function such as cure the eye related diseases.



**Figure 1: Women Sabung Impit**  
**Source: Dayang binti Kassim**

**Figure 1 : shows a complete set of women's Sabung Impit of the Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan.**



**Illustration: Women Sabung Impit**

**Source: Researcher's Collection**

Illustration 1 above shows the traditional costume of *Sabung Impit*, in which *Sabung* means shirt or blouse whereas *Impit* means fit. Hence, *Sabung Impit* of the Tombonuo people in Paitan is designed according to the body shape of the wearer. The special feature of the *Sabung Impit* is that it has a pattern on the chest part called *Atalambu* whereby there is a philosophy behind every motive designed on the *Sabung Impit*. Another feature of *Sabung Impit* is that it is a long sleeve with a small piece of cloth called *Janji* which is cut and then stitched back on its bottom part adding on the aesthetic value of *Sabung Impit*. *Tapi biru* or blue cloth is used together with *Sabung Impit*. The wearer is free to choose the *Tapi's* colour based on the *Sabung Impit* as a complete set of the traditional costume wear.

*Banglu* is a moon-shaped crown. It is made up of a coconut shell that is covered with black cloth. There is a piece of moon-shaped cloth in red, yellow, white and green called *Ramboi* on its side. The length measurement is based on the wearer's knees. At the end of *Ramboi*, there is a *Tinombuku* or *sanggul kain*. Every *Tinombuku* is matched with the colour of the *Ramboi*.

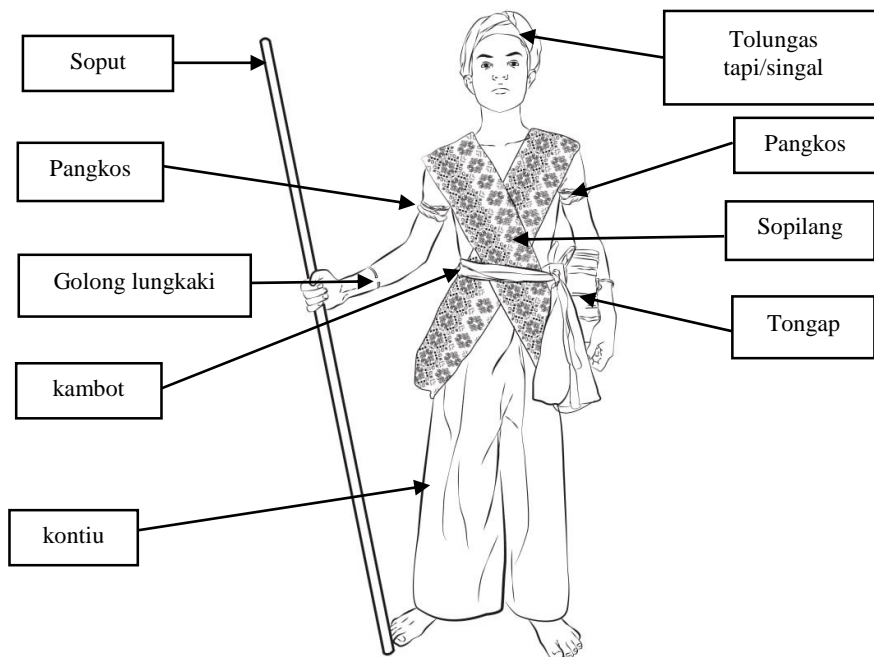
As for earrings decoration, *Liningkong* or *Anting-anting* used is made up of steel. For the neck part, the decoration is called *Golong Onsungoi* which is made up of beads and *Golong Lungkaki*, an ankle bracelet is made up of copper. Other than that, *Aboi* is used on the waist and it is made up of rattan or *Tangau*. *Aboi* comes in three colours which are red, black and the original colour of the materials used.



**Figure 2: Men's Sabung Impit**

*Source: Meijin Mayabing*

**Figure 2: shows a complete set of men's Sabung Impit of the Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan.**



**Illustration 2: Men's Sabung Impit**

**Source: Researcher's Collection**

Illustration.2 above shows a complete set of men's *Sabung Impit* of the Tombonuo ethnic in Paitan started from the head called *Telungas/Sigal* that is made up from *Tapi*, a patterned cloth or white-coloured *Janji*. *Tolungas* or *Singal* wear symbolises the standard of living or the position of men or the wearer.

There is a slightly difference from the women's *Sabung Impit* features. The Paitan Tombonuo men wear pants called *Kontiu* that is made up from a black-coloured *Janji* and the way of wearing it is the same with *kain sarung*. Besides that, on the shoulder part there is a *Sopilang* or *tapi* can also be used. It is neatly folded in x-shaped on the chest and pinned on the shoulder. *Tapi* can be used freely as *Sopilang* based on the wearer's *tapi*.

In the middle part of men's *Sabung Impit*, there is a *Pangkos* which is made up of *Janji* or cloth with red, black and white colour. Red colour symbolises courage or ready to sacrifice whereas white colour symbolises holy and patience and black colour is related to religion. The function of *Pangkos* is important to the wearer. *Pangkos* is a cloth with the knowledge of inner being related to invisibility and courage learnt by the wearer. The Tombonuos of Paitan believes that a man with *Pangkos* wearred on his arms will make him a strong and respected one.

*Soput* is also an important item in wearing the Tombonuo men's traditional costumes in Paitan. *Soput* or *Sumpit* symbolises the strength of the Tombonuo men. The Tombonuos Paitan believe that a man that owns a *Soput* is strong and brave, a hunter and capable to protect women because they have skills in *Monyoput* or *menyumpit*. *Soput* is made up of *kayu belian* or a good type of wood. On the men's waist, there is a *Tongap*, a storage place to keep *Ramok*, a bamboo-based gun. It is very dangerous as it contained poisonous materials made up of the mixture of the roots. There is also *Kombot* or belt made up of *Janji* which has the same colour with *Pangkos* that is red, white and black.

## 4.1 PERSONAL DECORATION OF SABUNG IMPIT

### Neck Decoration



**Figure 3: Tinggol Aki on Seen**

Source: Jorah Punoh



**Figure 4: Tinggol Onsongoi**

Source: Ramliah Meijin



**Figure 5: Tinggol Onsongoi Wulan**

Source: Urani Kambai

Figure above shows the personal decorations of women's *Sabung Impit*. These decorations are made up of *Onsongoi* or small colourful beads that are weaved by using thread. The Tombonuos of Paitan believe that *Tinggol Aki Om Onsongoi* in Figure 3 are able to heal eye related diseases.

## Arms Decoration



**Figure 6: Golong Onsungoi**

Source: Ramliah Meijin



**Figure 7: Sulou**

Source: Jorah Punoh



**Figure 8: Golong Lungkaki**

Source: Juria Karim Meijin

The decorations in Figure 36 are bracelets made up of onsungoi or small black, orange, white and green beads. These personal decorations are woven with thread or strings whereas in Figure 7 the decorations are called Sulou which are made up of shell of snails or tusks of an elephant. The Tombonuos of Paitan wear the Solou bracelets as amit or on wedding demands.

In Figure 8 the decorations are known as Golong Lungkaki which are made up of copper and steel and can be adjusted according to the arm circumference of the wearer. The Tombonuos of Paitan do not only wear these bracelets as personal decorations but also as medicines to heal diseases such as *kuam so Tian* or Peptic Ulcer. Other than that, the Tombonuos wear golong lungkaki for *Pulanut* that will be paid to the Bolian or Sharman that leads the *Mugagu* ceremony or to heal the patient. The Bolian are not allowed to start the *murinait* ceremony or to heal the patient before Golong lungkaki is given to the Bolian because of *sukud* or else the Bolian's life will be demanded by the world of spirit and eventually will die for this reason.

## Legs Decoration



**Figure 9: Lungkaki**

Source: Research's Collection



**Figure 10: Liningkong**

Source: Research's Collection



**Figure 11: Sincin**

Source: Research's Collection

Figure 9 shows a *Lungkaki* and this personal decoration is worn on the leg and are adjustable according to the ankle circumference of the wearer. The amount of *Lungkaki* used is dependent on the ability of the wearer. Normally, the wearer will be wearing five to twelve *totok* or pieces on the leg. *Lungkaki* can be worn every day and it symbolises the standard of living of a family of the Tombonuos. This ankle bracelet's functions are the same with those shown in Figure 8 which are to heal *Uoam so Tian* disease and *Pulanut* to be given to the *Bolian* before the *Murinait* ceremony to be done by him.

Figure 10 shows a *Liningkong*, a pair of earrings which is worn by the Tombonuos of Paitan. The *Liningkong* is made up of steel and its size depends on the occasions of the wearer. In Figure 10, the personal decoration is known as *Sincin* by the Tombonuos of Paitan which is worn on the waist of the wearer in order to show the *Orikos* or slim body shape. Its size depends on the waist circumference of the wearer and it is worn during special occasions such as wedding ceremony.

## 5. SUMMARY

This study is conducted to observe the aesthetic value of the traditional costumes of the Tombonuos known as Sabung Impit. There is a philosophy related to the life and culture of the Tombonuos of Paitan behind every design of the traditional costumes Sabung Impit that is unique enough to distinguish them from other ethnic groups found in Sabah. The main symbols of the Tombonuos in women's Sabung Impit and the personal decorations are as unique as the Tombonuos of Paitan proverb that says "Osiow pugikolan nu tinaih no" which means the womens are slim and possess a good body shape. Other than that, the Atalambu pattern on the chest part and Banglu on the head are the main symbols of the Tombonuos of Paitan that makes them different from the other ethnicity in Sabah.

As for the men's traditional costume wear, the main findings show that there is a slightly difference from the women. There is no Sabung or shirt for men and they wear Kontiu or pants only. The main characteristic for men's traditional costume is Tolungas or Singal which is made up of tapi or white coloured Janji. Besides, the Tombonuos men wear sapu tangan or handkerchief created based on the proverbs or poem recited during wedding ceremony. The Soput or sumpit on the arms means courage, strength, patience and hard work.

In order to preserve our country's valuable culture, the researcher suggests that future researchers will continue to conduct a deeper research on the designs and patterns of the Sabung Impit as it is very unique and different from other ethnic groups in Sabah.

### **Cross Disciplinary Study**

Research through cross disciplinary study is hopefully will added to written text of cultural treasury that give absolute focus on Tombonuo traditional costume based motif. As such, research towards highlighted type of motif and philosophy can be studied to identify its sources of benefits by future researcher.

### **Evolution of Material and Content**

This paper will contribute towards evolution of material and content in decoration's context by focusing on plant motif in Tombonuo traditional costume. Hence this study also contribute towards acquisition of new knowledge cutting through multiple disciplinary study.

### **Preserving the Sabung Impit of Tombonuo etchnic in Paitan Sabah.**

Hopefully this research will preserve the *Sabung Impit* of Tombonuo etchnic in Paitan Sabah as part of the effort to explore and uncover the secret of cultural treasury in Tombonuo etchnic in Sabah. Hence, this research seen as continuous effort to preserve the existence of *Sabung Impit* among Tombonuo etchnic in Paitan Sabah.

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