

A Review: The Transformation Of The Meaning Of Kebaya From National Clothing To A Media Of Self-Representation And Lifestyle

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As a cultural product of the Indonesians, Kebaya has become a national dress that sticks with its philosophical principles and values. However, along with the times and the influence of popular culture, the kebaya changed its design lines. It caused a transformation of the meaning of the Indonesian national dress into a medium of self-representation and the lifestyle of modern women. This review aims to analyze the transformation of the meaning of kebaya as a medium of self-representation and lifestyle. The method used is a narrative review by analyzing several articles using the PRISMA method. The analysis results show that the kebaya, as Indonesia's national dress, has design characteristics, materials, and accessories that contain philosophical meanings that reflect the personality of Indonesian women. The design transformation of the traditional kebaya gave birth to a modern kebaya far from the standard of the conventional kebaya. Modern kebaya is interpreted as a symbol representing the wearer's self-image and social class. The modern kebaya, as a medium of self-image and social class, gives birth to a new lifestyle in society, namely a consumptive lifestyle, because someone will carry out consumption activities continuously without considering the use value of the item. Besides being able to complete references related to kebaya, the results of this review are also expected to be input for related parties to maintain the traditional kebaya standard and consider ethics in buying kebaya so as not to create a consumptive lifestyle.

Keywords: kebaya, meaning transformation, self-representation, lifestyle.

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INTRODUCTION

Culture and Indonesia are closely related to each other. Among the various Indonesian cultural products, one of the cultural products that visually becomes a national identity is kebaya. As a national dress, kebaya becomes an effective communication medium representing the nation's cultural identity. This condition shows that kebaya is essential in constructing personal identity and today's lifestyle. This phenomenon allows someone to represent their identity, social status, and lifestyle through kebaya.

Representation is something related to describing, bringing up images in one's mind, or placing the resemblance of objects in the mind (Luthfiana et al., 2019). The fundamental reason a person represents herself is to form an impression, influence, and sympathy, also an attempt to receive recognition from others (Indainanto & Nasution, 2020). It can mean that a person will work on how people see her, see others, and see herself. A tangible example is that many people are willing to spend money to buy branded clothes. Thus, clothing can represent the wearer's identity (Ratuannisa et al., 2020).

The representation process is closely related to identity because a person acquires an identity when others interpret her existence. Self-identity is a crucial aspect that needs to show when living in a society where individuality is a benchmark for assessment in an interaction (Trisnawati, 2016). Identity can interpret through signs such as tastes, beliefs, attitudes, and even lifestyle. Several factors can influence self-identity: the social environment, reference groups, and idol figures.

Efforts to form one's identity in a certain way to look different from other groups are closely related to lifestyle. Lifestyle is a picture of a person's behavior and activities in daily life (Suasmini, 2017). The lifestyle occurs because of the influence of society or the environment. Lifestyle includes the pattern in which people live, use money and time, and affects all aspects of consumer behavior (Ashoer et al., 2019). Body, clothing, way of speaking, entertainment, food and drink choices, houses, vehicles, and even the choice of sources of information are seen as indicators of individualistic tastes and a person's lifestyle.

Lifestyle characterizes the modern world. In the modern age, self-appearance will experience aesthetics, so self-representation becomes the connotation of the term lifestyle (Hendariningrum et al., 2008). That is why the lifestyle industry for some people is the appearance industry. At the end of

modernity, everyone wants to be a spectator and to be watched, wanting to see but simultaneously seeing (Suasmini, 2017). From here, lifestyle characterizes the existence of modern society, such as 'you are stylish, then you are there. If you are not a stylist, you are considered non-existent' (Hendariningrum et al., 2008).

Talking about modern lifestyles must be distinct from culture. As one of Indonesia's fashion products, kebaya is essential in representing the nation's cultural identity. Kebaya is a women's top dress with long sleeves and long cloth (Suciati et al., 2016). (Garlufi & Nursasari, 2018) explain the same thing, kebaya is a piece of clothing that is open in the front, used by a woman, and the length of the kebaya ranges from the top of the hip to the knee. Based on this explanation, the kebaya is a blouse with a front opening and uses traditional fabrics. Indonesian women began wearing kebaya to cover their shoulders, which shifted from the habit of only wearing kemben (Ratuannisa et al., 2020)

In various regions in Indonesia, kebaya can be found with various characteristics that respective regions, including bejee plah dada (Aceh), kebaya anchor (Riau), kebaya landoong (South Sumatra), long kebaya (Bengkulu), kebaya (Lampung), kebaya encim (DKI Jakarta), kebaya (Central Java and East Java), kebaya (Bali), tangkong kebaya (NTB), and takwo (East Kalimantan). Kebaya, originally a traditional dress from a developing area, has been recognized as a national dress and has become a cultural display for the Indonesian nation.

There have been many discussions about kebaya, starting from its ideological and cultural position. Kebaya, in ideological discourse, has a position as a national dress that reflects Indonesia's ideology (Trismaya, 2018). Kebaya has long been known by the Indonesian people not only as a national dress but also worn in various events such as graduations, weddings, parties, and official state events. It is in line with (Ratuannisa et al., 2020), kebaya was used initially for daily purposes, but these days that was used only for particular purposes such as weddings, carnivals, or Kartini Day. Kebaya has a standard as a product of the nation's culture and ideology.

Furthermore, (Trismaya, 2018) explained that the standard of the kebaya from the Javanese tradition was an opening at the front (no zipper), traditional textile (jarik), and a hair bun. Andre Frankie, in an interview with Kompas.com (2011), stated that the standard of kebaya is its 'simplicity,' which is the soul of the kebaya. It means that the standard of kebaya cannot change for whatever reason.

However, advances in technology and information have eroded local culture and created a new culture currently known as popular culture. The emergence of popular culture in urban society is increasingly eroding traditional culture, including the kebaya.

The phenomenon of kebaya transforms its design. This kind of transformation is not merely a change in the traditional kebaya design to a modern kebaya. If explored more deeply, this design transformation caused the kebaya to experience a transformation of meaning, even the loss of the traditional values contained in the kebaya. Indeed, the kebaya contains a narrative about Indonesian women related to the values of femininity, personal identity, class identity, social and cultural norms, economics, and politics (Trismaya, 2018). Furthermore, Trismaya explained that kebaya is not only in the traditional realm, which is faithful to its standards but also carries an urban lifestyle. The dominant factors that affect the transformation of meaning are physical, economic, and cultural.

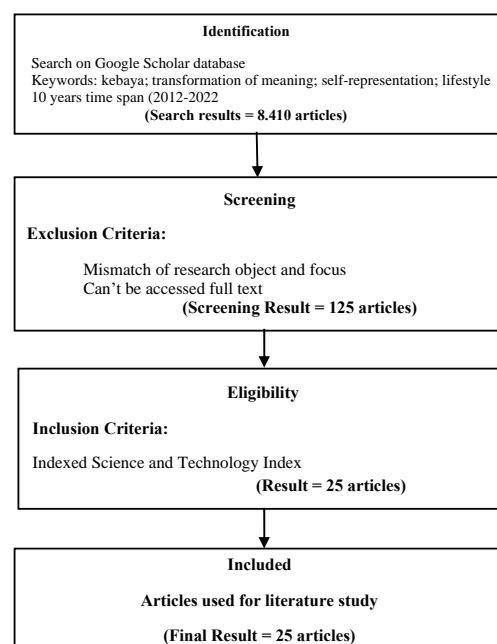
The high intensity of using kebaya followed the emergence of various modern kebaya designs. It makes modern society, especially women, need to have many kebayas. They will continue to buy new kebaya to complete their collection. The characteristics of modern women related to the formation of self-identity and consumptive lifestyles reflect in the activities of those who continue to consume new kebaya. This phenomenon shows a

transformation of the meaning of the kebaya as Indonesia's national dress into a medium of self-representation of Indonesian women.

Problems related to the transformation of the meaning of kebaya in modern society today become the background of this review. This review aims to describe more deeply what kind of self-representation women want to show when wearing a kebaya and their lifestyle. Recognizing the values and philosophical meanings contained in the kebaya as Indonesia's national dress, the transformation of meaning that occurs in the kebaya and its impact is important to study more deeply. The results of the review will not only be used to complete references on kebaya but also can be input for related parties such as designers as an agent of kebaya development in Indonesia and Indonesian women as kebaya users.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used is a narrative review analyzing selected articles according to keywords and drawing conclusions, and providing criticism on the topics studied. This study uses the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method to conduct a literature review through four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The literature search flow chart is carried out on the Google Scholar database, as shown in Picture 1.



Picture 1. Literature Search Flow Chart

The identification stage is done by searching for articles in the Google Scholar database using the keywords kebaya, meaning transformation, self-representation, and lifestyle. The year range of articles identified is 2012-2022. Articles published before 2012 were omitted because the topics relevant to the research were books with limited access. The search results for articles at the identification stage yielded 8.410 articles.

objectives and the research focus, which could not be accessed by full text. The screening results yielded 125 articles. The eligibility stage refers to the inclusion criteria, namely the indexing of articles in the Science and Technology Index. In the end, this research obtained 25 articles that met the inclusion criteria. Then the number of literature declared relevant for analysis is 25 articles. The list of articles that have fulfilled the inclusion criteria can be summarized in

Table 1.

The screening stage was carried out referring to the predetermined exclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria used were the discrepancy between the

Table 1. Articles That Meet The Inclusion Criteria

No	Author (Year)	Title	Research Purposes
1.	Trismaya (2018)	Kebaya and Women: Narrative About Identity	Analyzing the relationship between kebaya and women
2.	Suasmini (2017)	Kebaya as Clothing to the Temple in Representation of Contemporary Women in Denpasar City	Understanding the development of the kebaya to the temple can change the way contemporary women dress and live.
3.	Suciati, et al (2016)	Visual Characteristics of the Indonesian First Lady's Kebaya Dress	Describe the visual characteristics of the first lady's kebaya as a national dress.
4.	Trismaya (2020)	Reinterpreting the Use of Fabric-Kebaya Sneakers	Describing sneakers in a kebaya style as part of a fashion trend that carries an Indonesian identity
5.	Khoirnafiya (2020)	Marginal Community and Their White Kebaya: Sapta Darma and The Purity Discourse in Jakarta	Describe the kebaya in the case of the Sapta Dharma community
6.	Annisa, et al., (2014)	Reasons for Consumer Lifestyle in Consuming Kebaya as Luxury Items	Exploring in depth the reasons for consumer lifestyle in consuming party kebaya as a luxury item for female consumers at Channisa Boutique Malang.
7.	Tuasikal, et al ., (2017)	Analysis of the Meaning of Kebaya Clothing at the Ruwatan Traditional Ceremony in Jati Sumber Village, Trowulan District, Mojokerto	Analyzing the icon signs, indexes, and symbols of the kebaya as clothing in the Ruwatan traditional ceremony
8.	Chandra, et al (2013)	The Views of Four Chinese Literature Alumni Petra Christian University Against Kebaya and Qpao as Self-Identities	Knowing how the desire of the alums of Chinese Literature at Petra Christian University to show their identity as Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent.
9.	Sariyati (2013)	Kebaya In The Cultural Arena	Seeing the role of kebaya as an art item in society and its appreciation as a capital to wrestle in an arena
10.	Santoso, et al (2019)	Changes in Values and Philosophy of Kebaya Clothing In Central Java	Knowing what changes in values and philosophies have happened to the

			kebaya, especially those used in the Central Java region.
11.	Agista, et al (2019)	Social Movement and Kebaya Design Trends in Borderless World	Describe the factors that influence the shift in kebaya design trends.
12.	Karyaningsih (2015)	Factors Affecting the Selecting of Kebaya on Mothers and Young Women	Knowing the factors that influence the selection of kebaya for mothers and young women
13.	Rositadewi (2020)	Kebaya: Shackless of Conservative Muslim Women	Describing changes in the existence and use of the kebaya form the basis of values and norms.
14.	Pratiwi, et al (2015)	The Influence of Cultural, Social, Personal, Psychological, and Marketing Mix Factors on the Purchase Decision of Embroidered Kebaya at Jegeg Ayu Boutique in Kuta	Knowing the influence of culture, social, personal, psychological, and marketing mix on purchasing decisions of border kebaya at Jegeg Ayu Boutique in Kuta.
15.	Suciati (2016)	Visual Effects Of The First Ladies' Kebaya Clothing On The Image Of Indonesian Women's Appearances	Revealing the effect of visualizing the style of the Indonesian First Lady's kebaya on various state occasions on the image of Indonesian women's appearance
16.	Oscario (2014)	Simulation of Nationalist Image Through Fashion: A Case Study of Batik Printing in the Post Modern Lifestyle of Urban Society	Describe the lifestyle of the urban community as represented through the popularity of batik printing.
17.	Iriaji (2019)	Socio-Cultural Characteristics, Shifts and Patterns of Adaptation of Malang Pottery Crafts	Studying the phenomenon of socio-cultural characteristics, shifts in various forms, techniques, and functions, as well as adaptation patterns of the community of performance potters.
18.	Nasruddin (2020)	Haji in the Culture of the Bugis Barru: A Shift in Meaning	Knowing the shift in the symbolic meaning of Haji in the Bugis Barru community.
19.	Trisnawati (2011)	Fashion as a Form of Self-Expression in Communication	Determine the self-expression that people want to show in the consumption of clothes and explain how to overcome the obstacles that arise in expressing people self through fashion.
20.	Hendariningrum, et al (2008)	Fashion and Lifestyle	Analyzing fashion and lifestyle as identity and self-communication.
21.	Bakti, et al (2019)	Consumerism in the Perspective of Jean Baudrillard	Examining consumerism from the perspective of Jean Baudrillard
22.	Suciptaningsih (2017)	Hedonism and Consumerism in Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy Perspective	Knowing the dramas performed by students who have a lifestyle of hedonism and consumerism through the front and back stages.
23.	Octaviana (2020)	Modern Society Consumerism in the Study of Herbert Marcuse	Knowing modern society and various forms of consumerism in modern

			society in the study of Herbert Marcuse.
24.	Zaman (2017)	Consumptive Patterns of Urban Society in Semiotic and Cultural Perspectives	Explaining the consumptive behavior of urban society as a form of semiotic action in social practice.
25.	Suasmini (2017)	Kebaya Fashion, a Traditional Blouse-Dress Combination, to Pura (Balinese Temple) Are Affecting the Contemporary Women's Lifestyle In Denpasar City	Describing the influence of kebaya on the lifestyle of contemporary women in Denpasar City

In this study, after passing the identification to the inclusion stage, the article analysis was carried out by combining data that met the inclusion requirements using qualitative techniques. In this study, researchers will use qualitative data analysis techniques. Analysis activities are comparing (looking for similarities), contrasting (looking for dissimilarities), criticizing (giving views, synthesizing, comparing), and summarizing to be able to conclude each opinion from various articles.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Many people have studied the meaning shift of kebaya as a national dress. This article will describe the shift in the meaning of kebaya in the modern century, which is used from the results of article reviews.

Kebaya as Indonesian National Dress

Kebaya grows and develops as the identity of a nation inhabiting a specific area with one idea of a view of life, history, and life aspiration. Kebaya, as the identity of Indonesian, has been recognized as a national dress since the 1978 workshop in Jakarta. The event presented delegates from all provinces in Indonesia by nationally establishing the kebaya dress as one of the identities of the Indonesian nation, which has the characteristics of select clothing with long fabrics that stitch as subordinate clothing ([Suciati et al., 2015](#)). Using kebaya can show the user's identity as an Indonesian ([Chandra & Christiana, 2013](#)). There are two types of kebaya, including the Kebaya Kartini and Kebaya Kutu Baru. These kebayas eventually developed into other kebayas.



Picture 2. Kebaya Kartini (left), Kebaya Kutu Baru (right)
(Source: [instagram.com/yunishara36](https://www.instagram.com/yunishara36))

Noble women used the Kebaya Kartini model during the R.A. Kartini era. Javanese kebaya is also synonymous with Kebaya Kartini. The design of this kebaya is similar to the Kebaya Encim. The only difference is the beff (the folds on the chest). Another characteristic of Javanese Kebaya is the length of the kebaya that covers the hips and the folds of the collar with a vertical line, which makes women look tall and slim. Kebaya is not solely

owned by Javanese culture because it is also found in other regions like West Java, Madura, Bali, Lombok, Maluku, and West Sumatra when viewed from the fundamental similarities of the fashion designs ([Suciati et al., 2016](#)).

Apart from pattern pieces or designs, the materials used for making kebaya have a smooth texture, such as cotton, lace, brocade, silk, and chiffon ([Suciati et](#)

al., 2016). (Fitria et al., 2019) also explained that the materials used for kebaya are lace, organza, silk, chiffon, and woven fabrics. Kebaya using brocade material can be observed in Balinese kebaya, while kebaya using chiffon material can be observed in Kebaya Encim.

The result of culture is complex and contains symbols, meanings, knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and other abilities that someone can obtain as a member of society, one of which is the kebaya (Tuasikal et al., 2017). (Suciati et al., 2015) and (Astarini, 2018) describe the meaning of the kebaya as the national dress of Indonesian, which is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The Meaning of The Kebaya Component

No	Kebaya Component	Suciati (2015)	Astarini (2018)
1.	Kebaya	Harmonization of soul, toughness, modesty, firm stance, and communicative	Women must be able to adapt and take care of themselves.
2.	Stagen (Corset)	Women as the earth where humans live	Women must be human beings who are patient.
3.	Wiru/lipit-lipit (Pleats)	Harmonization, beautiful, neat, careful, diligent, orderly	Soft and gentle
4.	Selendang (Scarf)	Responsibility, hard work, forgiving, protective.	-
5.	Selop (Shoes)	Be careful, alert, smart	-

Based on Table 2, the kebaya contains values that reflect Indonesian women, such as being easy to adapt, flexible, gentle, patient, and independent in taking care of themselves. The research results by (Agista et al., 2019) show that kebaya has been conventionalized and involved with power, religion, and tradition. It is reflected in the kebaya used as clothing for prayer clothes. According to research by (Tuasikal et al., 2017), the kebaya is a piece of clothing that must be worn at the Ruwatan Traditional Ceremony Jati Village. The kebaya used is black and white. The black kebaya symbolizes eternal happiness and freedom. In contrast, the white kebaya symbolizes holiness, so it describes the Ruwatan Ceremony.

Other research by (Khoirafiya, 2020) discussed the religious aspect of kebaya used by *Penghayat* (the name of the devotees). The kebaya used by the *Penghayat* is the white kebaya. The white kebaya becomes an essential part of the identity of their beliefs and as a narrative to represent the positive connotation that the color white is as white as the teachings of Wewarah Pitu. They use white kebaya at every event, such as weddings and funerals. (Suasmini, 2017) describes kebaya from the religious aspect, where Balinese kebaya is used as a prayer dress by Hindus in Bali. The Balinese kebaya has agreed socially as a dress used to attend various religious ceremonies, customs, and other ceremonial parties. The kebaya used by Balinese women is a kebaya with simple motifs and bright colors. Also, the kebaya design should have long sleeves and not a low neck.

Based on the various explanations above, the existence of the kebaya in Indonesia is not only a type of clothing but has a function and meaning more than that. The function of kebaya is not only as a national dress but also has become part of a tradition or religious system. The philosophical values contained in the kebaya describe the obedience, subtlety, and behavior of women who must be gentle. It is in line with the explanation of (Ramdhani et al., 2021) that kebaya has been legitimized into a cultural identity with philosophical meanings and life values that reflect the personality of Indonesian women.

Modern Kebaya

Along with modern society's times and demands, kebaya underwent a design transformation. It is due to the demand for practical, comfortable kebaya according to the times without forgetting the roots of a tradition (Murdaningsih et al., 2013). The results of (Trismaya, 2020) research (2020) prove that the demand for sneakers has shifted the position of slippers as a component in using kebaya. This condition is related to the emergence of modern kebaya in response to the demands of modern society.

(Fitria et al., 2019) explained that modern kebaya has a modern touch. (Karyaningsih, 2015) further explains that modern kebaya is a kebaya that has changed from the standard. There is even an assumption that modern kebaya is more fashionable than traditional kebaya, looks luxurious, and keeps up with the times. It is in line with the explanation of (Stephanie et al., 2021) that the modern kebaya design does not match the standard of traditional kebaya but relies heavily on each designer's creations.

([Shioya, 2020](#)) explained that although kebaya is interesting to study, especially related to its philosophical background, the kebaya design is currently influenced by the market. Reality shows that the market's designs, patterns, materials, and kebaya decorations have followed the existing trends. It is in line with the presentation of ([Ratuannisa et al., 2020](#)) that Indonesian women's clothing has a long development history and has been influenced by various influences originating from outside Indonesia that produce various functions, shapes, silhouettes, and characters in Indonesian women's clothing. ([Sariyati, 2013](#)) explained that modern kebaya currently comes with

various variations in neckline cuts, long subordinate pieces, sleeves with various shapes, a combination of fabrics on the sleeves formed in stacks, and others. Modern kebaya has a high artistic power because it has various luxurious decorations such as lace, embroidery, pleats, twists, quilts, and shiny ornaments such as sequins. Characteristics like this can attract women to use modern kebaya. It is evidenced by research conducted by ([Karyaningsih, 2015](#)) that most teenagers and young mothers tend to be interested in wearing modified kebaya because the models are up to date, the materials are varied, and they look luxurious.



Picture 3. Modern Kebaya (Source: Pinterest.com)

This change is inseparable from social factors, which is the community will experience sociocultural changes caused by the creativity in innovating (Dewi et al., 2021). Designers have an important position as part of a society that always creates and innovates in the fashion industry. It is in line with ([Sariyati, 2013](#)) explanation that a designer is one of the agents of change in Indonesian kebaya. ([Fitria et al., 2019](#)) explained that many traditional fashion designers use modern kebaya as an alternative to their designs. Based on research conducted by ([Agista et al., 2019](#)), Anne Avantie is one of the Indonesian designers who changed the position of the kebaya from traditional to popular and fashionable clothing. Other designers who changed the kebaya were Dhea Panggabean, Amy Atmanto, and Edward Hutabarat. ([Trismaya, 2018](#)) explained that these designers play a role in creating the latest trends and often take the tastes of the past and then mixed with today's tastes. As a cultural product of the past, designers redesigned kebaya

according to people's tastes so that various modern kebaya emerged on the market.

Based on the explanations above, the kebaya has undergone a design transformation that produces modern kebaya. The design transformation includes design, pattern, material, and decoration changes. Modern kebaya adapted to the needs and demands of today's society. It makes the modern kebaya far from the standard of the traditional kebaya. The existence of a design transformation in this kebaya cannot be separated from the agents involved, one of which is the designer. They are competing to create kebaya to suit market trends and interests.

Kebaya as a Self-Representation Media

Transformation of kebaya does not only mean a change in the design but also implies a shift in meaning and even the elimination of traditional values. It is in line with the theory presented by Wahidin et al. (2016) that physical factors are one of

the factors that cause meaning transformation. Modern women finally interpret the use of kebaya as their symbol to represent their identity. Various explanations regarding the relationship between kebaya and self-identity are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Result Source of Kebaya and Self Identity

No	Author	Result
1	Trismaya (2018)	The kebaya worn by urban women narrates a multi-identity that is not only national and regional clothing but also reflects personal identity, gender identity, class identity, and multicultural identity.
2	Suasmini (2017)	Contemporary women always want to look after the development of kebaya in the temple and pay attention to aesthetics over ethics.
3	Annisa, dkk (2014)	The reasons behind the consumer's lifestyle are the role of reference groups, achievement motivation, self-confidence, and self-image.
4	Sariyati (2014)	In their struggle in the cultural production arena, Kebaya shows where he occupies the class. Through Bourdie's thought, it can be seen how a person's social status is produced through the Kebaya and how the artistic taste of individuals and society can change the Kebaya.
5	Santoso, dkk (2019)	Kebaya, made initially to cover the body, developed into a status indicator. Furthermore, clothing is also part of a commodity related to market needs.
6	Suciati (2016)	The style of the First Lady's kebaya in every period of their husband's presidency has characteristics in clothing or hair style to show their self-image.

Based on Table 3, women interpreted kebaya as a medium to convey their identity. Kebaya has a close relationship with self-image, which is believed to be a sign of communication to convey meanings that cannot be conveyed verbally. It is in line with Goffman's theory that, in fact, every human being always wants to represent themselves in their environment.

([Trismaya, 2018](#)) through the results of his research, explains that the value of self-actualization is one of the important things women want to show because a woman will gain confidence when showing her existence in society. It is in line with the reality where modern women use kebaya as a medium of self-representation of 'who she is' so they can distinguish themselves from others. This reality is

proven by the research of Dewi et al. (2015), where women who use kebaya want to represent themselves and are considered beautiful and ideal people. Similar to that research, ([Annisa et al., 2014](#)), through their research results, explains that using kebaya can form a self-image. Using expensive, updated, and attractive kebaya can make them get the attention of others so they can be more confident.

This phenomenon is something familiar and surprising. If traced back, the traditional kebaya worn by the First Lady of Indonesia in every state event always aims to show self-image ([Suciati et al., 2016](#)). However, what makes it different is the self-image displayed by the Indonesian First Lady as an Indonesian woman who is polite, graceful, and gentle. Meanwhile, the use of kebaya, especially modern kebaya, is currently more focused on showing an ideal and existing self-image.

Rachel et al. (2020) added that for women maintaining their appearance is the same as maintaining their image. In the end, the philosophical value of kebaya is no longer the background for modern women to use kebaya. Instead, they are only interested in the aesthetics of the kebaya design. It is evidenced by research conducted by ([Suasmini, 2017](#)) that women in Denpasar City using kebaya are more concerned with appearance than prayer ethics. The emergence of modern kebaya makes women in Bali compete to use the kebaya, even though the kebaya design is far from the standard of the prayer kebaya. Their motive for doing that is to show themselves as someone with an attractive and ideal appearance. Through an attractive appearance, they will gain attention and praise from others. ([Hendariningrum et al., 2008](#)), in their article, also agree that surface matters will be more important than substance. Appearance and design are becoming more critical. Appearance replaces substance, and the skin will overpower the contents.

Based on the explanation above, it is evident that the kebaya is no longer judged by its philosophical value but by the image it represents. Besides wanting to represent self-image, various studies also explain that using kebaya aims to represent a person's social status. ([Trismaya, 2018](#)) explained that women use kebaya to represent their social class. It is not surprising because if traced back, history says that since ancient times the kebaya has become a marker of the social class identity of women. ([Trismaya, 2018](#)) states that based on Javanese tradition, kebaya signifies class identity between the noble class and the ordinary people through its model. The noble

class wore Kebaya Kartini, while the ordinary people wore Kebaya Kutubaru. In addition, the material, the stitches, and the symbolism of the motifs on the batik cloth worn as subordinates are also markers of identity. (Murdaningsih et al., 2013) also explained that Kebaya Betawi, especially those made of silk, used only to be owned by the elite, and the high price made ordinary people unable to buy. (Tenaya, 2021) also explains that puri (noble) women in Bali generally use kebaya made from velvet, silk, or brocade, while ordinary women wear kebaya made of cotton.

In modern society, the kebaya becomes a marker of social class through the design and quality lines where the kebaya designed by the designer will determine the social level of the user. It is supported by the results of research by (santoso et al., 2019) that the initial function of the kebaya to cover the body is now developing as a need for status indicators. In line with this, research conducted by (Suasmini, 2017) explains that the current use of kebaya is not only related to using value but is also to represent a person's social status. It indicates that the motivation to use kebaya is not only for self-representation but also for social rewards.

This phenomenon makes sense because most designers are currently competing to create a kebaya, which mainly refers to the characteristics of a kebaya that looks luxurious. For example, Anne Avantie, in her works, creates various modern kebaya with full-beading Swarovski Crystals. It reflects the taste of the Indonesian women's market, which is that they do not want to use an 'ordinary' kebaya but prefer a kebaya that gives the impression of glamor and luxury. This phenomenon shows that the kebaya has become a luxury, glamor, and elegance symbol for Indonesian women.

Analyzing this phenomenon, (Sariyati, 2013) argues that the kebaya is not only the Indonesian national dress but kebaya in its arena of cultural production shows which class it occupies. Kebaya has indirectly produced a person's social status. (Hendariningrum et al., 2008) add that prestige is indirectly something that must be declared, celebrated, and paraded into the public sphere. Correlated with the kebaya as a self-representation, it has also become a medium for its users to express prestige. They drifted into the madness of trends and prestige without having time to internalize the philosophical values contained in the kebaya.

Kebaya as a Lifestyle

The previous presentation shows that the kebaya has become a sign, symbol, and even object for modern

women to show their self and social image. The use of kebaya as a medium of self-representation and social class reflects the identity of this modern woman through a way called lifestyle. Various research results that examine lifestyle related to self-identity are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Research Result of Lifestyle

N o	Author	Research Result
1	Hendariningrum, dkk (2008)	Most of the lifestyle industry is the appearance industry. Lifestyle will be transformed into a commodity consumed by people who consider appearance more than everything.
2	Bakti, dkk (2019)	The symbolic value of commodities, where the combination of the image is more important than reality itself, is the root of consumerism.
3	Suciptaningsih (2017)	The hedonism and consumerism lifestyle among students is a medium to show others that they are part of a group of communities they want.
4	Octaviana (2020)	The purpose of consumption has also changed. At first, consumption was done to fulfill basic human needs, and now, consumption has become something that must be done to achieve desires and find human identity through consumption.
5	Zaman (2017)	Consumptive behavior of urban society occurs when people buy material products that have the characteristics of modernity and internationality and are used by famous people to get meaning by buying symbols or signs inherent in society.
6	Oscario (2014)	Urban people live in the postmodern era with images unrelated to any reality that has dominated how urban people define themselves.
7	Suasmini (2019)	Women in Denpasar City do various ways to be stylish, one of which is by using a new kebaya according to the trend. It gives rise to a new lifestyle and creates a consumptive society.

The results in Table 4 show that the root of the lifestyle is the symbolization of an object in modern

society. (Hendariningrum et al., 2008) also explain that the aesthetics of an object to support self-appearance will produce a new lifestyle that replaces existing values. The phenomenon of kebaya as an object, the kebaya can give birth to a new lifestyle. The use of kebaya, which is more concerned with aesthetics than philosophical values, is enough to describe modern women's fondness for self-image. It is in line with research conducted by (Karuni et al., 2019) that behind the concentration on performing religious ceremonies, women in Bali always want to stand out with exotic looks through the use of kebaya with varied models to give birth to a variety of sexy and attractive kebaya fashion styles.

(Bakti et al., 2019), through their research, describe the meaning of the object of consumption as a 'sign' of identity and social status, causing changes in consumption orientation from biological needs to sociological ones. This presentation refers to the kebaya, a sign of the women's identity and social status. It is evidenced by research by (Suasmini, 2017) that nowadays, modern women always want to try new kebaya designs even though they have a kebaya because they want to be updated. They try to look attractive, but it is dynamic. In the end, appearing with a different kebaya every time they attend the event becomes important. Rachel et al. (2020) added that things like this were done to gain recognition from others that the most attractive and fashionable was herself.

Piliang (2011) explained that current consumption aims to show identity or social status through clothing or other products as symbolic communication and social meaning in society. (Zaman, 2017) also explains the same thing, that the consumption of objects that are considered high aims to obtain high social status as well. It is in line with the presentation of (Karuni et al., 2019) that many people use religious ceremonies to show social status by showing their appearance. This situation cannot be separated from the assumption that the object used is a representation of itself. This explanation makes sense when it is associated with the current conditions where modern women do various ways of consuming kebaya. It is evidenced by Dewi et al. (2015) that modern women buy kebayas by credit to get a new kebaya. This phenomenon shows that they are thirsty for consumption to meet needs that are not basic. As a symbol of social class, kebaya causes these modern women to do anything to look like an 'upper-class society. Not only buying kebayas by credit, but research conducted by (Trismaya, 2018) also shows that women who want luxury kebaya designs from

well-known designers will buy imitations in markets such as Tanah Abang at much more affordable prices.

Based on this phenomenon, the purchased kebaya is believed to be an expressive medium of the women's identity. It shows that consumption becomes an active symbol of identity construction. This mindset encourages someone to consume kebaya not because of need but because of desire. (Bakti et al., 2019) explained that the prioritization of self-image is the root of consumerism. (Suasmini, 2017) explained that consumerism is the mindset and actions of someone buying goods not because of need but satisfaction. Mahyudin (2019:121) explained that the growing consumerism culture is an arena in which some products become a medium for forming different personalities, images, lifestyles, and social status differentiation.

Kebaya in modern society has become an object that shows their unstoppable consumption desire. They compete to create a social impression and luxurious lifestyle through their kebaya. Thus, modern women buy, wear, or consume kebaya not only to spend the use value but to communicate their social identity and status and, at the same time, identify themselves as different from the general population. (Suciptaningsih, 2017), through her research, shows that consumerism is a medium to show others that they are part of the desired community. If associated with the modern era, kebaya, as an object of consumption, can determine the wearer's prestige, status, and social symbols. (Suksma et al., 2020) also highlighted this phenomenon and called it an everyday situation where the primary paradigm is body or matter. Prioritizing the body and the material will produce a culture of consumerism. Ultimately, consumerism expresses the desire to be someone else, the desire to occupy higher social strata, and the desire to be 'different.' When the act of consumption realizes the desire, identity labeling occurs.

(Octaviana, 2020), through his research, describe that the behavior of modern society today is a behavior that is difficult to avoid because they have been oriented towards a consumerist culture. These symptoms represent a reality that consumerism, lifestyle, and self-image are easy to find in our lives. It makes consumption the main characteristic of modern society.

CONCLUSION

As Indonesia's national cloth, kebaya has design characteristics, materials, and complementary

components such as traditional fabrics as subordinates containing philosophical meanings that describe the identity of Indonesian women who are polite, simple, gentle, and graceful. The transformation of the traditional kebaya also changed the design, materials, and components of the traditional kebaya and produced the modern kebaya. Modern kebaya designs are adapted to designers' creativity, so no standard limits the modern kebaya design. The use of glamorous and luxurious materials and decorations is the main characteristic of modern kebaya.

Modern kebaya is interpreted as a symbol to represent women's self-image and social class. The better design and the quality of the kebaya material will determine the identity and social status of the wearer. Modern kebaya, as a medium for self-image and social class, gives birth to a new lifestyle in society, namely a consumptive lifestyle, because someone will carry out consumption activities continuously without considering the use value of the item.

Based on these findings, the researcher gives recommendations to relevant parties, such as designers, so that in developing modern kebayas, they uphold the standards that should exist in a kebaya. In addition, researchers also give recommendations for kebaya users to consider ethics in buying kebaya, so they do not lead to a consumptive lifestyle.

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