



# Evolution of Architectural Heritage through Typology of Traditional Houses in Negeri Sembilan

Noor Hayati Ismail<sup>1\*</sup>, Mastor Surat<sup>2</sup>, Shahrul Kamil Yunus<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Architecture, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Nilai 71800, Negeri Sembilan, MALAYSIA.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Architecture, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, MALAYSIA.

<sup>3</sup> Politeknik Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan, MALAYSIA.

\*Corresponding Author (Email: [noorhayatiismail@usim.edu.my](mailto:noorhayatiismail@usim.edu.my)).

**Paper ID: 12A12U**

**Volume 12 Issue 12**

Received 29 March 2021

Received in revised form 14 June 2021

Accepted 05 September 2021

Available online 05 October 2021

## Keywords:

House identity; House design; House typology; Traditional Malay House; Suku; Serambi; House pillar; Serambi; Perpatih; Identity formation; Traditional Malay house typology; Age of house; Architectural culture feature.

## Abstract

Traditional Malay houses in every state of Malaysia were built with various customs and cultures. Each state has its characteristics, design, and concepts that form its distinctive identity. The uniqueness of their traditional houses is a symbol of their society. This paper introduces the differences of Negeri Sembilan traditional house typology. The differences in the design represent various purposes that are often associated with its own culture and customs practiced by the community. The study involves several villages in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. Data collection was obtained through a process of observation, interviews, questionnaires, and photography. This research provide awareness and reference to the younger generation to know more about their traditional architecture in Malaysia, especially in Negeri Sembilan. Protecting and maintaining the identity and uniqueness of the Negeri Sembilan traditional houses is increasingly difficult, and it is our duty to protect them from being vanished.

**Disciplinary:** Architectural Science, Southeast Asia History, Cultural Heritage Studies.

©2021 INT TRANS J ENG MANAG SCI TECH.

## Cite This Article:

Ismail, N. H., Surat, M., and Yunus, S. K. (2021). Evolution of Architectural Heritage through Typology of Traditional Houses in Negeri Sembilan. *International Transaction Journal of Engineering, Management, & Applied Sciences & Technologies*, 12(12), 12A12, 1-9. <http://TUENGR.COM/V12/12A12U.pdf> DOI: 10.14456/ITJEMAST.2021.252

## 1 Introduction

Traditional Malay House architecture creates an identity and charm of its own where the whole building was built with a purpose. Cultural elements such as customs, beliefs, religion, and social activities impact the uniqueness of the traditional architecture of the local community

(Misnat et al., 2018). The traditional architecture in Malaysia is often associated with the creative Malays' nature and their close relationship with the environment and the impact of globalization (Chieh, 2020). It also provides interpretation to the style and way of life, which constantly changes over time, then transforms and gives new meaning to the built form (Hosseni et al., 2016).

According to Surat (2020), three levels of identities affect the architecture: individual level, community level, and national level. The essence of the ethnic is more inclined to a community level, their livelihood patterns, and ethnic emphasis to their own culture. Like the other traditional architectures, the architectural design of the Malay houses is the result of the effects of daily life, beliefs, history, environment, and technical abilities (Nasir, 1996). Architectural features of traditional houses were used as the symbol of culture, which referred to the social status of individuals within a society. Therefore, culture or way of life is an important factor in realizing a traditional Malay house.

Therefore, the study of traditional Malay houses in Negeri Sembilan is unique because the house is influenced by several factors such as culture and customs. These factors have led to the formation of the traditional house typology or type of house in Negeri Sembilan. Typological studies can be done by categorizing some elements/approaches to describe vernacular architecture. Some aspects that can be considered in the study are the typology of the height, shape, layout, structure, etc. (Vellinga, 2004).

## 2 Issues and Problems

Among the issues of concern is the wrong interpretation and misunderstanding of the traditional house of Negeri Sembilan, where the houses are often associated as Minangkabau house from West Sumatra (Masri, 2012; Idrus, 1996; Shahminan, 2007). However, according to Majid (2014), the identity of the architectural features of traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan should be inherited and understood as a valuable cultural identity not to confuse the community. According to Hanafi (1996), the curved roof of traditional houses of Negeri Sembilan resembles the pointed curved roof (*bumbung bergonjong*) of the Minangkabau in West Sumatra. The term given to this traditional house was cumulated according to their understanding of the culture.

Due to times and assimilation of culture, traditional house identity has been increasingly marginalized (Hanafi, 1999). As a result, various identities have been adopted, and it has been a great debate among professionals and academicians (Kosman, 2009). As a result, multiple interpretations have been given to the traditional house with different understandings and perspectives. Therefore, to get the classification of this traditional house, the researchers have used Negeri Sembilan's traditional house as case studies throughout the research.

## 3 Methodology

The long-curved roof, or '*bumbung Panjang lentik*', is the roof identity of Negeri Sembilan traditional house and reflects the uniqueness of the '*Perpatih*' custom practiced by their community. Unfortunately, the image and identity of these features are often mistaken as an equivalent of the '*Minangkabau*' typologies in West Sumatera, Indonesia.



Figure 1: Location map of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia and West Sumatra, Indonesia.

House Nos.	Name: Kampung?
5	Kg. Relong
6	Kg. Pulau Mampat
18	Kg. Tengah
1	Kg. Durian Tunggal
2	Kg. Ampang
4	Kg. Perigi
10	Kg. Nerasau
3	Kg. Hj. Sulaiman
2	Kg. Pancang
6	Kg. Semin
4	Kg. Sg Timun
6	Kg. Nerambai
3	Kg. Titian Bitangor
6	Kg. Sawah Raja
7	Kg. Titian Akar

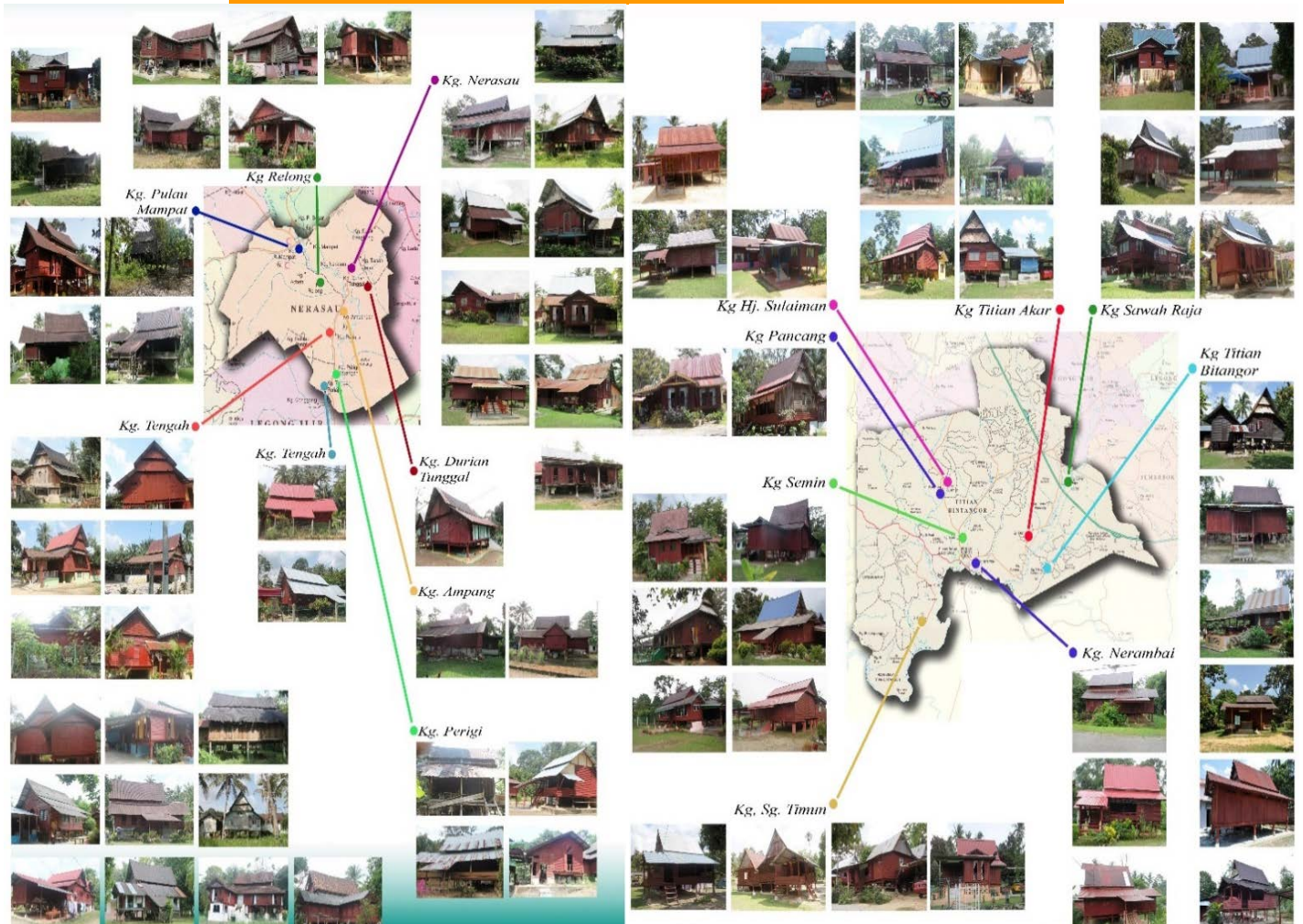


Figure 2: Negeri Sembilan Malay traditional house that has its identity formation.



This study intends to expose the evolution and diversity of traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan, which features designs based on traditions and cultural factors. This study revealed that traditions and culture had influenced the formation of traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan. The followings methodology was a literature review, reference on previous studies, a questionnaire to 82 residents of the house, and a field study on traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan, which involved 15 villages with a total of 82 houses which still preserved the authenticity of a traditional Malay house as shown in Figure 2.

#### 4 Case Study: Negeri Semsilan Traditional House

The uniqueness of the Negeri Sembilan culture compared with other cultures in the region is that the community practiced a custom based on the mother's lineage system, or as it is called, the matrilineal system (Masri, 2012). This system provides descent rights, economic autonomy, the inherited property such as land, rice fields, farms, and fields including cultural heritage as its traditional house to the women. According to Diradjo, (2012) the function and arrangement of spaces in Negeri Sembilan houses are designed to meet the needs and comfort of the population, which women and their families dominate. Therefore, cultural elements, ritual philosophy, religious beliefs, social and economic activities have been translated into the design of the house. According to Shahminan (2007), the Customs House or Rumah Adat in Negeri Sembilan reflects the customs system, 'Adat Perpatih', or matrilineal system. The interior space layout was designed based on the needs and comfort of the mothers and their children to carry out daily activities and customs. The influence of the cultural symbol of the community as the identity of Negeri Sembilan traditional house can be seen in Figure 3.






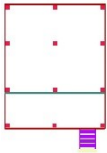
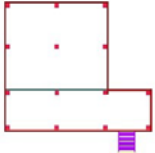
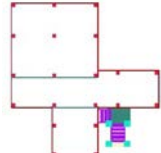
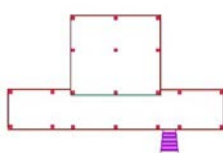
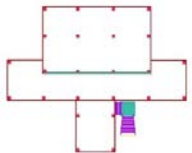


**Figure 3:** The diversity of traditional Malay house typology that is still found in Negeri Sembilan

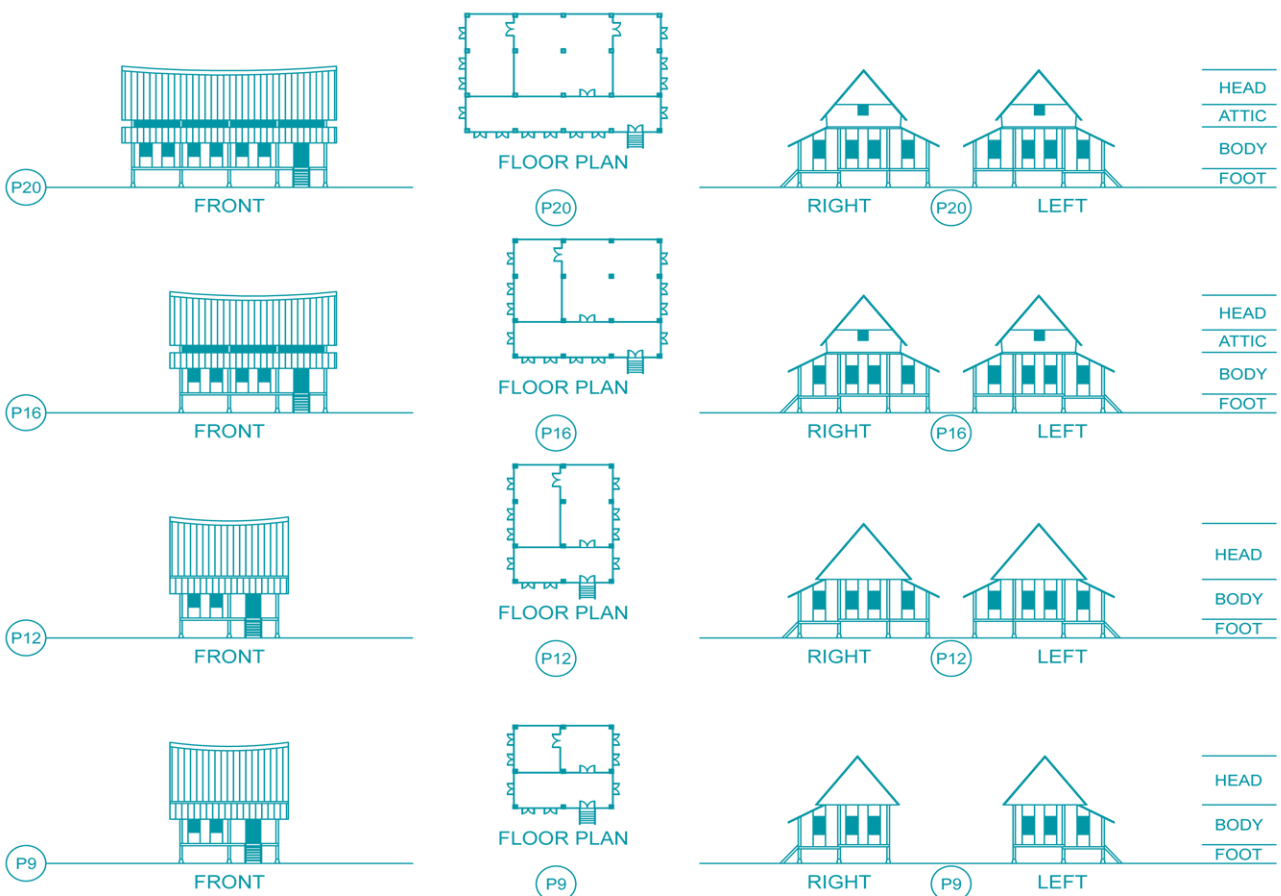
Identity is a process and a journey that has formed a civilization and travels through history and culture (Nobutaka, 2020a). According to Kosman (2009), Malaysians search for identity in obscurity because there is no example or teaching directly from the previous architecture. The ambiguity of its architecture developed after independence has changed the architecture functions that existed before (Misnat et al., 2018). Thus, identity is a collective set of features that are directly recognized or identified through a relationship of equality in the same group identity. It can be seen belonging to a place or landmark that can be a proud identity that highlights the peculiarities of character and has its stand. The identity of the traditional Negeri Sembilan Malay house can be viewed through its long roof, which has a ridge that extends from left to right or upstream to the downstream direction parallel to the road or the river. Categorizing these traditional Negeri

Sembilan houses can be seen on the roof of curving or tapering and depends on the foyer or 'serambi' as in Table 1.

**Table 1:** The evolution of a traditional Malay house has formed a diversity of housing Typologies in Negeri Sembilan.

















House Type					
Name	'Middle Serambi '	'1 Serambi'	'1 Serambi' and 'Anjung'	'2 Serambi'	'2 Serambi' and 'Anjung'
Layout Plan					

The design of the Negeri Sembilan traditional house has terraced rooftops between the front house and 'Rumah ibu' with a roof overhang. This house has identified its evolution in roof design that has long tapering features varied over the years. The main house has a 'serambi' and 'Rumah ibu' which combined with kitchen. It raises floor houses with 9, 12, 16, and 20 pillars, as shown in Figure 4 and Table 2. The raised wooden stairs are a powerful image and element associated with the social status of the house owner.



**Figure 4:** The design of a traditional house typology of the 'serambi' and pillars established its identity.

**Table 2:** The establishment of a typology depends on the pillars, porch, or 'serambi'

Pillar	Middle 'Serambi'	1 'Serambi'	1 'Serambi' And 'Anjung'	2 'Serambi', Pangkal, 2 'Serambi' And 'Anjung'	TOTAL
P 9	 5	 1	 1	 1	8
P 12	 12	 21	 28	 1	62
P 16	 1	 2	 2	 3	8
P 20	 1	 1	 1	 1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>82</b>

Negeri Sembilan state has 12 tribes or 'suku' and ethnic origin of aboriginal people (natives) who have lived for centuries in peninsular Malaysia. Within the 15 villages, there are eight tribes or 'suku', as shown in Table 3. The arrival of the Minangkabau society resulted in the assimilation of life by marriage. Mixed marriages between natives and tribes produce a 'suku' named 'Suku Biduanda'.

**Table 3:** Analysis study of tribe 'suku', age, categories, and pillars - traditional Malay house in Negeri Sembilan.

SUKU	Nos	%	Percent Cumulative	AGE	Nos	%	Percent Cumulative
Biduanda	25	30.5	30.5	More 100 Years	40	48.8	48.8
Anak Acheh	6	7.3	37.8	91 to 100	7	8.5	57.3
Anak Melaka	5	6.1	43.9	81 to 90	6	7.3	64.6
Tiga Batu	4	4.9	48.8	71 to 80	10	12.2	76.8
Batu Hampar	18	22.0	70.7	61 to 70	8	9.8	86.6
Paya Kumbuh	11	13.4	84.1	51 to 60	5	6.1	92.7
Tiga Nenek	5	6.1	90.2	41 to 50	4	4.9	97.6
Seri	1	1.2	91.5	31 to 40	2	2.4	100.0
Melenggang	7	8.5	100.0				
Tanah Datar	7	8.5	100.0				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>	
CATEGORIES	Nos	%	Percent Cumulative	PILLAR	Nos	%	Percent Cumulative
Middle 'Serambi'	16	19.5	19.5	Pillar 9	6	7.3	7.3
1 'Serambi'	45	54.9	74.4	Pillar 12	70	85.4	92.7
1 'Serambi' and 'Anjung'	18	22.0	96.3	Pillar 16	5	6.1	98.8
2 'Serambi'	1	1.2	97.6	Pillar 20	1	1.2	100.0
2 'Serambi' and 'Anjung'	2	2.4	100.0				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>	

There are several tribes 'suku' that are carried by the Malays who came from Minangkabau. It has also demonstrated its form and style strongly influenced by its community (Nasir, 1996, Hosseini et al., 2016). Studies show that 'Suku Biduanda' is the biggest tribe of 30.5% in Negeri Sembilan and has lived in a traditional house that is more than 100 years old. Table 4 shows the culture and tradition practiced by them, which has led to the existence of distinct identity of their houses.

**Table 4:** The ethnic 'Suku Biduanda' abound in Negeri Sembilan and the correlation with the age of the house.

Suku	HOUSE AGE (years)								Total
	> 100	91-100	81-90	71-80	61-70	51-60	41-50	31-40	
Biduanda	13	2	2	5	0	1	2	0	25
Anak Aceh	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Anak Melaka	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	5
Tiga Batu	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	4
Batu Hampar	10	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	18
Paya Kumboh	10	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	11
Tiga Nenek	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	5
Seri Melenggang	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Tanah Datar	1	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>82</b>

The study also found that the most popular pillar category is 12 pillars with 1 'serambi' (refer to Table 1), as Idrus (1996) confirmed. The most popular house in Negeri Sembilan is indeed 12 pillars and 1 'serambi', and this research was proven in the study carried out as shown in Table 5. An architectural element such as pillars and construction methods follows cultural elements, customs, beliefs, religion, philosophy, customs, and rituals. In each building, the space layout and ornamentation highlighted on the house have a specific meaning by the customary philosophical beliefs and cultural nature, which gives harmony and comfort to its occupants (Nobutaka, 2020b).

**Table 5:** Categories and typology of the house according to pillars 9, 12, 16, and 20 pillars.

HOUSE CATEGORIES	HOUSE TYPOLOGIES				Total
	Pillar 9	Pillar 12	Pillar 16	Pillar 20	
Middle Serambi	4	9	2	1	16
1 Serambi	1	43	1	0	45
1 Serambi And Anjung	1	16	1	0	18
2 Serambi	0	1	0	0	1
2 Serambi And Anjung	0	1	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>82</b>

Foyer or 'serambi' consists of a 'serambi hujung', 'serambi tengah' and 'serambi pangkal' (left, middle and right). The nearest 'serambi' to the stairs is 'serambi pangkal', and the farthest is 'serambi hujung' (Shahminan, 2008). Meanwhile, according to Idrus (1996), there are four types of variations based on the 'serambi': house with 'serambi', house with one 'serambi', and house with two serambi' and house with three 'serambi'. 'Serambi' house is a house that was originally started to evolve on the type of middle 'serambi' house.

## 5 Conclusion

The assimilation of two cultures, the native Malay and West Sumatra Minangkabau, has established the identity of the traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan. The spaces of these houses are divided into three parts, a foyer or 'serambi', the main house or 'Rumah ibu', and a kitchen. The layout is just like any other traditional houses found in different states of Peninsular Malaysia. The design of those, as mentioned earlier, traditional Malay houses throughout Malaysia has their characteristics and identity depending on the history, customs, culture, social and regional context. Misunderstanding of Negeri Sembilan traditional house as Minangkabau house issues are often associated with the traditional house in Negeri Sembilan by the public due to the lack of understanding of the influence of prominent culture on the architecture design of Minangkabau. The typology and evolution of Negeri Sembilan houses can be studied through a place in our history. Factors that influence the design of a traditional house in Negeri Sembilan, such as customs and culture, are decisive to the typology of the house. Cultural factors are affecting house owners' customary practice of 'perpatih' and diversifying the typology of a traditional house in Negeri Sembilan. Customs have influenced the traditional house owners in determining the design of their homes. Traditional house in Negeri Sembilan is the product of social and architectural assimilation and should be maintained and preserved for future generations.

## 6 Availability of Data and Material

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

## 7 References

- Chieh, L. T. (2020). *Globalization and Its Impact On Malaysia Media Essay*. Retrieved September 2020 <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/media/globalization-and-its-impact-on-malaysia-media-essay.php>
- Diradjo, I. D. S (2012). *Tambo Alam Minangkabau: Tatanan Adat Warisan Nenek Moyang Orang Minang*. Bukit Tinggi: Kristal Multimedia.
- Hanafi, Z. (1996). *Pembinaan Bangunan Tradisional Melayu*. Kulim: Amber Solara Publication.
- Hanafi, Z. (1999). *Siri Lukisan Terukur Rumah Tradisional Melayu di Pulau Pinang*. Kulim: Amber Solara Publication.
- Hosseini, E., Mursib, G., & Shahminan, R. N. R. (2016). Implementation of Traditional Malay Design Values in Contemporary Malay Houses. *International Journal of Built Environment & Sustainability*, 3(2), 93-101.
- Idrus, Y. (1996). *Rumah Tradisional Negeri Sembilan*. Shah Alam: Fajar Bakti Press. (Book)
- Kosman, K. A. (2009). *Krisis Wacana Identiti Seni Bina Malaysia*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press.
- Majid, H. A. A. (2014). Penerapan Identiti Seni Bina Negeri Sembilan dalam Arus Perkembangan Seni Bina Moden. *Proceedings of Simposium Antarabangsa Muafakat Minang: Sejarah, Budaya, Teknologi & Senibina*. Johor: Pusat Kajian Alam Bina Dunia Melayu.
- Masri, M. (2012), The Misconceptions of Negeri Sembilan Traditional Architecture. *AicE-Bs 2012 Cairo, ASIA Pacific International Conference on Environment-Behaviour Studies*. Mercure Le Sphinx Cairo



Hotel, Giza, Egypt, 31 October 2 November 2012.

- Misnat, N., Surat, M., Usman, I. M. S., & Ahmad, N. B. (2018). Re-Adaptation of Traditional Malay House Concept as A Design Approach for Vertical Dwellings Malays. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7(3), 1-4.
- Nasir, A. H. (1996). *The Traditional Malay House*. Shah Alam: Fajar Bakti Press.
- Nobutaka, I. (2020). *Globalization's Challenge to Indigenous Culture*. Retrieved September 2020 <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/global/02inoue.html>
- Shahminan, R. N. R. (2007). Senibina Rumah Bumbung Panjang Negeri Sembilan. In *Adat Perpatih - Esei Pilihan*, 191-197.
- Shahminan, R. N. R. (2008). *Kajian Tipologi Rumah Kedai Awal Era Belanda di Bandar Melaka: Sumbangan Kepada Bidang Pemuliharaan Di Malaysia*. Thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Surat, M. (2020). *Penerapan Teras dan Lunas Senibina Melayu Dalam Pembangunan Senibina Identiti Malaysia*, Seminar Dan Pameran Senibina Melayu 2020 D' Village @ Victoria Bridge, Karai, Kuala Kangsar, Perak 20 Januari 2020: Persatuan Pencinta Senibina Melayu.
- Vellinga, M. (2004). A family Affair: The Construction of Vernacular Minangkabau Houses. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 32(92), 100-118.
- 



**Dr. Noor Hayati Ismail** is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Architecture, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. She graduated with a BSc in Architecture (Distinction) from Universiti Malaya, a Master of Landscape Architecture from Universiti Putra Malaysia, and a Ph.D. in Architecture from University Kebangsaan Malaysia. She is a registered Profesional Landscape Architect (ILAM). She is interested in Landscape Architecture (Urban and Heritage), Heritage Design (Heritage and Conservation Building), Sustainable Environmental Architecture, and Building Design Architecture.



**Dr. Mastor Surat** is a Senior Fellow at the Department of Architecture and Built Environment (SErAMBI), Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, UKM. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from UTM, a Master of Literature (Architecture) from UKM, and a Doctor of Philosophy (Architecture) from UKM. Mastor passed the Part III of the Professional Architect Examination and is registered as a Professional Architect with the Board of Architects of Malaysia (LAM). He is a Corporate Member of the Malaysian Architects Association (PAM) and is registered as a Subject Consultant (Landscape and Visual) with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Malaysian Environment for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).



**Shahrul Kamil Yunus Al-Haj** is a Senior Lecturer at Politeknik Port Dickson. He graduated from International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) with B.Arch (Hons) and got a Diploma in Architecture from University Technology Malaysia (UTM). He is interested in Building Information Modelling (BIM), Autodesk Revit, Heritage Design (Heritage and Conservation Building), and Building Constructions and Materials.

---