

# From Tradition to Trend: Marketing Management in the Promotion of Baba Nyonya Beaded Shoes

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## ABSTRACT

Baba Nyonya's beaded shoes, also known as beaded shoes, are a unique creation of the Peranakan or Straits Chinese culture, which mixes Chinese and Malay traditions in Southeast Asia. Historically, these beaded shoes symbolised identity, wealth, and prosperity and were made with high craftsmanship for ceremonial and cultural purposes. However, in recent years, these shoes have transformed from traditional apparel to fashion statements that have piqued the interest of collectors and modern shoppers. This change is fuelled by a renewed interest in historical fashion, strategic marketing, and internet promotion. This research focuses on the opinions and experiences of the craftspeople who make Baba Nyonya's beaded shoes. Using qualitative methods such as interviews, this research aims to explore how these practitioners strike a balance between preserving traditional crafts and adapting to contemporary fashion trends. By examining the views of artisans, this study will provide insight into the role of cultural heritage in fashion innovation as well as its implications for cultural preservation and sustainability.

**Keywords:** Baba Nyonya beaded shoes, Cultural heritage, Strategic marketing, Traditional Apparel, Artisan, Craftsmanship

## INTRODUCTION

*Kasut manik* or Baba Nyonya Beaded shoes are made popularly known because they represent the cultural and artistic heritage of the Peranakan. These shoes are a dress made of soft leather adorned with colourful glass beads that are unique to the Peranakan women in Malaysia who wore it and which incorporates Malay and Chinese design (Azmi et al., 2018). Once only regarded as a stylish accessory representing wealth to be worn on formal occasions; however, they transformed into style items that quickly acquired cult status through production and back again amidst the transition of renewed vintage fashion (Ko & Lee 2011).

The demand for sustainable fashion, high-quality craftsmanship, and culturally diverse products has fuelled this change. The shoes are no longer just valued for their functionality but rather appreciated as aesthetic values of cross-cultural style (Ko & Lee, 2011), and thus today Baba Nyonya beaded shoes. Due to marketing efforts focusing on digital storytelling and collaboration with some contemporary designers, Baba Nyonya beaded shoes have made their way into modern fashion. The social media campaigns present these shoes as not just fashionable but also culturally relevant, effectively connecting heritage with modern consumption sensibilities.

However, that pivot comes with its own set of difficulties. These footwear options enjoy the advantage of a worldwide revival that the sustainable fashion movement has sparked, yet constitute their own sub-category still lacking in systemic support to scale production and market access. Even though there are efforts in promoting and sustaining traditional arts by several organization, especially from the government sector, e.g., the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture in Malaysia (MOTAC), little research has been conducted as to how effective current traditional art marketing strategies are out there attracting Baba Nyonya beaded

shoes to a global marketplace for a wider audience. Although digital marketing efforts have successfully opened new markets for these shoes, the analysis identifies gaps in branding, customer engagement, and contemporary marketing practices. Addressing these areas could strengthen the commercial viability and cultural significance of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes in the competitive global fashion landscape

This study seeks to explore how artisans navigate the balance between preserving the cultural authenticity of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes while adapting to modern marketing trends and consumer demands. It will examine the impact of these strategies on the shoes' marketability, focusing on the challenges and opportunities in promoting these culturally significant yet fashion-forward products in today's globalized marketplace.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENTS**

Baba Nyonya beaded shoes are part of the traditional craft of Peranakan culture in Malaysia, which has struggled to keep their cultural integrity and marketability. Though culturally rich, these unique types of shoes have failed to obtain the global prominence or commerce that they merit. Sustaining this legacy is essential so that the following generations can enjoy, cherish, and carry on this important skill (UNESCO, 2019). Although there have been initiatives to promote this traditional art, mass appeal has yet to be gained through holistic approaches that involve government initiative, culture exchanges, and NGO efforts so as to refine the Baba Nyonya beaded shoes (Lee 2008).

Heritage arts have been supported through efforts such as grants by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC), but programs aimed at increasing the visibility or preservation of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes are not evidently understood. Additional to this, whilst both heritage tourism and handicrafts highlight the increasing interest in promoting traditional crafts, there is a lack of research that addresses how effectively either digital or traditional marketing strategies are making Baba Nyonya beaded shoes readily available and appealing to an international market.

Despite these efforts to conserve this unique art, there remains a lack of understanding about how aspects such as brand image, customer engagement, and current marketing practices could contribute to elevating Baba Nyonya beaded shoes towards commercial success and cultural importance in the rapidly competitive global fashion market (Albattat et al., 2019).

This research seeks to investigate the viewpoints and experiences of artists involved in the manufacturing of Baba Nyonya's beaded shoes. It will examine at how these stakeholder reconcile the preservation of historic skills with adaptation to current market demands. This study will identify the challenges and opportunities they face in maintaining the cultural relevance and marketability of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes in an increasingly competitive global fashion landscape by looking into their role in the promotion, preservation, and commercialization of these unique shoes.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this research are:

- I. To explore the perspectives and experiences of artisans in balancing the preservation of traditional Baba Nyonya beaded shoes craftsmanship with contemporary market demands.
- II. To investigate the impact of contemporary marketing strategies on the promotion, visibility, and consumer acceptance of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes in both local and global markets.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- I. What are the key challenges artisans face in preserving traditional Baba Nyonya beaded shoes craftsmanship while adapting to contemporary fashion trends?

- II. How do marketing efforts influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions regarding Baba Nyonya beaded shoes?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Revitalizing Tradition: The Role of Marketing Management in the Promotion of Baba Nyonya Beaded Shoes**

Marketing management plays an important role in the survival of heritage products such as Baba Nyonya beaded shoes due to competitive forces. Batik has been transformed by the fashion industry into cultural representations, using it to produce pieces of arts for our feet.

Research conducted underlines the significance of marketing strategies in revitalizing traditional crafts. The use of storytelling in campaigns helps to highlight the rich cultural narratives surrounding the shoes, bringing these stories to the forefront (Lim & Khoo, 2020). Brands may separate the emotion of products, lifting cultural heritage to fashion-related status by focusing on authenticity and craftsmanship.

The digital revolution has opened avenues for local artisans to showcase their craft not just in India but around the world. Chan (2021) gives a good example how social media can promote and strengthen the visibility of artisan. In addition, as environmentally friendly fashion becomes more popular and people seek to shop with social responsibility in mind, Baba Nyonya beaded shoes fit the consumer need for sustainable hand-crafted goods. According to Tan (2018) the labour-intensive production process satisfies these ethical considerations.

To sum up, a well-rounded and sustainable social enterprise promoting Baba Nyonya beaded shoe requires storytelling as marketing strategy supported by digital platforms. By adapting these elements into their designs, it is a nod to preserving this cultural art form as wearable pieces and honoring Peranakan heritage for modern-day consumers.

### **Fashioning Tradition: The Impact of Marketing Management on Baba Nyonya Beaded Shoes**

The evolution of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes from cultural artifacts to modern fashion items highlights the importance of utilizing marketing management in promoting heritage products. Peranakan-inspired and culturally rich, these heritage shoes encompass intricate details that run deep with stories spoken through culture families' stories weaved into the soul of modern ladies.

As Lim and Khoo (2020) pointed out, marketing these shoes is going to be all about compelling storytelling. Brands will only create emotional connections when they emphasize the rich history and artistry that goes into creating a pair of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes, for a consumer who is on the lookout for authentic pieces. Wong (2016) also note that marketing is impressive at linking fashion to cultural heritage configurations.

The other features of this product can also be brought closer if marketed through different digital marketing platforms. Chan (2021) emphasis's that social media allows artists to exhibit their crafts worldwide, growing an audience of people who are keen on culturally valuable objects. This exposure increases consumer involvement and commitment.

Finally, the emphasis sustainability is an integral part of the marketing of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes. These shoes have been manufactured ethically, a selling point to modern day consumers who are driven by values-based shopping that fits with their needs for style and ethical production (Tan, 2018).

In summary, the effective marketing of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes encompasses storytelling, digital campaigns and sustainability. These elements not only commemorate the cultural heritage of Peranakan community, but they also recast familiar consumerist values that are relevant today and help make shoes fashionable objects.

## **Heritage Meets Modernity: Marketing the Cultural Significance of Baba Nyonya Beaded Shoes**

This balance of heritage and modernity is also reflected in the marketing of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes. It operates as a key determinant in effective storytelling which develops emotional associations with the consumers through highlighting about how culturally significant and exquisitely, they are made (Lim & Khoo, 2020; Wong, 2016). Artisans now use digital marketing platforms, especially social media to connect with a broader audience and raise awareness about the value of these cultural items (Chan 2021).

Moreover, they cater to the latest fashion trends as consumers are now more socially aware and their ethical values have shifted (Tan 2018). Through the incorporation of storytelling, digital engagement and sustainability in marketing strategies we will be able to successfully elevate Baba Nyonya beaded shoes back into relevance for today fashion while maintaining their own cultural heritage.

### **Crafting a Market: The Influence of Marketing Strategies on Baba Nyonya Beaded Shoes**

One such makes use of modern advertising strategies while preserving conventional handicraft, as illustrated by the sale of Baba Nyonya beaded footwear. Consumers should be aware of the history behind these shoes in order to create a connection and understand its cultural value. A similar claim was made by Lim and Khoo (2020) who stated that heritage-anchored narratives result in a greater perceived value among consumers, along with an increase in product appeal.

According to Chan (2021), the global nature of social media platforms that encourage community around an ongoing cultural history and creation has changed practices that have lasted for decades. Also, ethical-conscious consumers of 2023 are attracted to marketing that represents sustainability. A tipping point, according to Tan (2018), needs to be reached in order for Baba Nyonya beaded shoes to be marketed as sustainable goods. In short, with effective communication — storytelling and the use of digital platforms to market products — traditional items like Baba Nyonya shoes can be modernized without losing their indigenous identity.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research strategy is relevant for this study in order to explore the experiences, perspectives, and practices of artisans involved in the production, preservation, and promotion of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes. It allows for an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences, challenges, and views of key stakeholders in the context of cultural heritage and modern market demands.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

### **Interviews**

Qualitative research, particularly through interviews, is an effective method for gaining insights into people's feelings, perceptions, and motivations. For Baba Nyonya beaded shoes, interviews with artisans can reveal the intricate craftsmanship and cultural significance behind the shoes. This approach provides a deeper understanding of why these heritage items are produced and how individuals involved view their role in preserving tradition while adapting to modern market demands. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative interviews are ideal for exploring personal experiences and emotions. For example, an interview with an artisan focusing on traditional beading techniques can offer valuable insights into both the craft and its appeal to consumers, highlighting the authenticity and cultural importance of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes in the fashion market.

#### **A. In-depth Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders.

- I. Artisans who produce Baba Nyonya beaded shoes to understand the challenges they encounter in keeping the tradition alive while accommodating the contemporary market needs.

### **Document Analysis**

The study will also analyze relevant reports, government publications, and scholarly articles to review:

- I. Tradition craft conservation any government policy related to funding of traditional crafts.
- II. Ideas about marketing strategies by other traditional crafts in Malaysia or similar contexts that may contribute to the marketing-strategies of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes.

The document analysis will be conducted using content analysis in order to identify valuable information from government reports and Baba Nyonya beaded shoes promotional material. It should help gain the knowledge of how these initiatives were marketed, their scope and perceived impact.

### **Academic Literature**

To deeply analyse marketing management as applied to the Baba Nyonya beaded shoes, a legacy brand, a rich understanding must be derived from theoretical literature. The literature relates to academic publications, traditional crafts theses and dissertations, cultural heritage organic marketing-strategies. It will focus on the necessity of narrative in selling cultural products that extends beyond emotional ties and builds relational equity, as well as effective marketing strategies using narrowing attention on consumer mindset through appeal for authenticity and meaningfulness respectively. Moreover, preserve teachers could also get insights from case studies on cultural preservation that implements innovative marketing plans in reviving the left-behind traditional crafts as this study aims to successfully re-energized Baba Nyonya beading shoe. This literature review will bring these items post-absent and assemble a theoretical framework that demonstrate the relevance of marketing management process to safeguard heritage assets.

## **SAMPLING STRATEGY**

Purposive Sampling will be used to select participants who have direct experience or involvement with Baba Nyonya beaded shoes and their commercialization. These will include artisans and manufacturers who create or sell Baba Nyonya beaded shoes.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Thematic Analysis**

The data collected from the interviews and document analysis will be analyzed using thematic analysis which will involve:

- I. The use of qualitative criteria pertaining to the promotion, preservation, posing challenges and marketability of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes to determine patterns or themes within data.
- II. To consider how those receiving these can observe whether government policies as well as marketing strategies work.
- III. Comparison of findings literature on commercialization of traditional crafts and application of modern marketing to the preservation cultural heritage.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **I. Implications for the Preservation and Development of Baba Nyonya Beaded Shoes**

Baba Nyonya's beaded shoe artisans are faced with a huge challenge in preserving the heritage of traditional skills while meeting the demands of the modern market. Despite challenges such as time-consuming

production, rising costs, and loss of traditional knowledge, there is a growing demand for heritage-based and sustainable products that are in line with today's consumer values. The incorporation of modern design elements and the use of digital marketing platforms have helped artisans expand their reach and attract the attention of global customers. Amid such pressures of its commercialization, artisans remain committed to preserving the cultural values of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes when expanding their business through product diversification's and ways to pass on knowledge to the next up-and-coming generation of artisans. In sum, the future of this craft depends on the ability to combine cultural preservation with innovation and global appeal. The finding of this study also ascertains the persistent challenges of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes in reaching mass market relevance. One of those key problems is the disconnect among the stakeholders like government, NGO and artisans. Although initiatives such as those given by MOTAC offer grants to preserve the art of crafts, these efforts are more focused on preservation rather than on expanding international production or marketing.

The skills involved in the creation of these shoes were so sophisticated that they lent themselves poorly to mass production, and many artisans did not possess the business acumen required to sell into a wider market. Further, both local and global consumers frequently fail to recognize or appreciate the cultural importance of these shoes, and high prices for the artisans rendering this craftsmanship results in lower competitiveness among a wider population. Baba Nyonya's beaded shoe seem like high fashion but internationally, they are rather material culture (cultural artifacts). Even if it goes with the trends of sustainability, poor branding and a non-existent digital presence reduce its marketability potential to a younger audience like Gen Z more enticed by authenticity and cultural stories.

## **II. Impact of Contemporary Marketing Strategies on Baba Nyonya Beaded Shoes**

Modern marketing campaigns have driven Baba Nyonya Beaded shoe to a larger scale, for example, through digital media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and online marketplaces. This has allowed artisans to directly connect with consumers around the world and specifically attract consumers who are interested in heritage-based sustainable products. These storytelling collaborations that showcase cultural values and shoe-making skills have helped brands develop an emotional connection with consumers.

Additional obstacles to wide consumer acceptance, however, will be the scaling up of production and high prices (even though they have reached niche markets around the globe). These shoes have trendy up to limited edition handmade items due to greater demand for sustainable fashion. Still, the locals might not see them as more than their cultural value. Baba Nyonya beaded shoes are more like fashionable products, and somehow they have gotten great responses internationally but limited market acceptance due to pricing and logistic problems.

In general, this has led to improved consumer acceptance due to the role of digital marketing and storytelling collaboration, but hurdles still exist in terms of production scale and consumer awareness.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

A campaign refreshing Baba Nyonya beaded shoes with traditional and modern fashion styling elements is important for facilitate the marketing purpose. They are also leveraging digital storytelling to narrate the history and cultural significance behind the craftsmanship of these shoes. Brands can use the platform to emotionally engage consumers by telling their ancestral stories through the shoes. It appeals to younger, socially conscious consumers who are already interested in authenticity and narrative-driven products (Pulizzi, 2012).

Sustainability is also an important element in the marketing of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes. These shoes are made using traditional, artisan methods mostly from 100% cotton thus catering to the need of the hour that is responsible consumption and sustainable products. One of the main marketing strategies would be to promote the sustainable manufacturing processes behind the shoes, and at the same time promote their

culturally-rich usage. With both of these aspects promoted, consumers with a desire for ethics can be drawn towards the environmental and culture (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

It is equally significant to aim at niche areas respecting heritage fashion. Many of the consumers who share Baba Nyonya culture are expected to develop an emotional attachment with the shoes as fashion can be seen as a way of expressing oneself (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Baba Nyonya shoes can gain more local and international market with the scope of that fall under larger categories within fashion heritage (e.g. Japanese Kimono or Indian Sari) as presentation for more global appeal (Jackson & Shaw, 2006).

Another powerful idea is making use of influencer marketing for exposure of your shoes. Partnering with influence's who embrace cultural pride and artisan-ship enables brands to connect with a broader, more diverse global audience that seeks to discover Baba Nyonya shoes among consumers who may not have been exposed to the culture otherwise (Freberg, et al., 2011).

Through the synergy of digital storytelling, sustainable production, cultural heritage and influences collaborations, Baba Nyonya beaded shoes can continue to stay relevant and create a niche in the global fashion industry.

## SUMMARY

As such, the coexistence of tradition and modernity is brought to fruition with the transformation from traditional cultural artifacts (Baba Nyonya beaded shoes) into trendy commodities or products are released through effective strategic marketing management. Utilizing forward-thinking branding and storytelling, alongside a new approach to digital marketing introduced these handcrafted shoes to a growing segment of the consumer market that seeks this fine craftsmanship in an era where artisan work is valued more than ever but against rapid fashion. The marketing of these shoes builds on their cultural value and will help position them within a modern fashion landscape as customers look for brands with values they identify with. In the end, putting Baba Nyonya beaded shoes on a global map anchor something as innovative and rooted in heritage may coexist by providing narratives to shed light on deep culture appreciation of Peranakan traditions that enhances its understanding yet preserves it truest core.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We certify that this manuscript is the original work of all authors. The manuscript has not been previously published and is not under consideration in another journal. Finally, all authors read and approved the final manuscript. Conflicts of interest the authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the topic or materials presented in this article. This study on the marketing management and promotion of Baba Nyonya beaded shoes is not funded by any parties or receiving financial interest.

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