

Adaptation of *Asma'ul Husna* in Existing Design Practice

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ABSTRACT

Until now, industrial designers are solely educated with the epistemology of dialectical materialism; meanwhile, the spiritual aspect is often segregated from education affairs. Many kinds of literature highlighted that this segregation could lead to negative impacts. Supposedly as a Muslim, learning about our Creator through *Asma'ul Husna* is an essential trait to develop designers' value, also known as *sahsiah* or characteristic of excellence. Therefore, this paper attempted to study the adaptation of *Asma'ul Husna* in the existing design practice among Muslim designers and at the same time devote the existent designer's knowledge and awareness to this understanding. A set of questionnaires were distributed using stratified sampling. The result showed that the majority of the respondents did not adapt *Asma'ul Husna* in the existing design practice due to limited knowledge on ways to integrate *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process. Designers who claimed to use *Asma'ul Husna* in design are either still confused with the usage or only limits the usage to motif and zikr. As an overview, this paper highlights the general view of an adaptation of *Asma'ul Husna*'s among designers and emphasises the urgency to develop a guideline for designers to implement the values in their design process.

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INTRODUCTION

Gardiner and Rothwell (1985), Hicks (2014), Tovey (1997), World Design Organisation (2017), Yliris and Buur (2007) and Cuffaro et al. (2013) define industrial designer as

an individual who practises professionally, applied secular design process in producing good design product through fulfilling human wants and need focussing on profit maximisation.

Therefore, it is understandable that a designer should learn the concept of customer preference (perceptions toward evaluation of good design product) to improve profits. In relation to design education, according to Lawson (2005) and Liu (1991), since then, industrial designers must equip themselves with the epistemology of dialectical materialism, various kinds of knowledge and undergo training in designing school with various practices in order to educate, cultivate and improve the quality of the designer's work.

It is terrifying to discover that implicitly, designers are being taught to encourage consumers to seek and establish worldly paradise through materializing in consumption. As being pointed out by Richins and Dawson, the Oxford English Dictionary refer to materialism as "a devotion to material needs and desire, to the neglect of spiritual matter; a way of life, opinion or tendency based entirely upon material interests" (1992, p. 891).

As pointed out by Saeed et al. (2001), for an instant, encouraging customers to pursue satisfaction through materials will turn them into the slaves of the marketing firms. Ramadan (2011) did remind; an autonomous Muslim should not be a slave of material but a servant of God. However, unfortunately, as Abdul Razzaq Naufal (1982) highlighted, the pleasure and joy

that humans find in this world gradually pull them away from Allah.

Referring to Aydin (2013), when the existing design curriculum focuses on profit maximisation and materialism aspect, it is contradicting with Islamic teachings, and Norzaman et al. (2018) considered the secular design approach as incomplete because it only covered *duniawi* and left no option for designers to prioritise consumer over Allah. It refers to intention (*nawaitu/niat*) of designer while designing. In Islam based on Alserhan (2010), all actions are judged by their intention behind their action, thus this includes design practice.

Walker (2013) added and clarified that, contemporary design practice limits spirituality solely to the individual's private domain. Hence, resulting it to becomes a less important aspect in education, professional practices, public decision making. Not only that, history also showed that obtaining materialism, modernity, advancement, sophistication will inevitably be accompanied by degradation of the natural environment or in other word, pollution and unsustainability.

Whereas according to Aydin (2013) and Sheikh Munawar Haque (2021), Allah purposely creates human as caliphs (Allah's vicegerent) as the best mankind amongst all and His other creations in this universe to facilitate and be responsible in managing the world. Even in the Quran, Allah repeatedly reminded humans to abstain from practising corruption in this world.

"You are indeed the best community that has ever been brought forth for

(the good of) mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil and you believe in Allah. If only people of the Scripture had believed, it would have surely been better for them. Among them are true believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.” (The Quran, 2012, 3:110)

“When they are told, ‘Do not cause corruption in the land, they say; “we are only promoters of peace, but it is they who are really causing corruption though they do not realize it.” (The Quran, 2012, 2:11-12)

“Eat and drink what God has provided and do not act wrongfully in the land, spreading corruption” (The Quran, 2012, 2:60)

“Do not defraud people of what is rightfully theirs and do not spread corruption in the land” (The Quran, 2012, 26:183)

In addition, according to Noor Fazreena and Mohd Zuhdi (2015) today's education structure is based on dualism system that poses multiple worldview, couples with different values and beliefs to a point it isolates divinity element in the modern sciences.

To further highlight the problem with the existing design curriculum, Noor Fazreena and Mohd Zuhdi (2015) mentioned that today's education structure is based on dualism system that poses multiple

worldview, couples with different values and beliefs to a point it isolates divinity element in the modern sciences. Isolating the spiritual or divinity element could lead to a negative impact because we believe Islam is the way of life. Based on El-Bassiouny (2014) and Zarabozo (2009), Islam covers *tauhid*, *iman*, *ibadah*, Sharia law and the most important part is way of live to humanity.

Supposedly, according to Halstead (2004), useful concept of knowledge based on Muslim perspective is able to help users acknowledge God, live in accordance to Islamic Law and fulfil the purpose of God's creation. Therefore, it is really important to integrate the divinity element which is through *Asma'ul Husna* into the existing design process and re-orientate the designer's design process.

Briefly, Haque and Keshavarzi (2014) define *Asma'ul Husna* as the beautiful names of Allah and Murtadho (2012), Zakaria and Mat Akhir (2017) explained that *Asma'ul Husna* consist of 99 names of Allah and El-bassiouny (2016) classified them as Divine attributes.

According to Ali (2006), *Asma'ul Husna* embodies the concept of *tauhid* that is described as the consciousness of the oneness of Allah. It is the only source of knowledge that could save humanity and foster excellent *ummah* as mentioned in The Quran,

“Remember Allah abundantly, in order that you become successful.” (The Quran, 2012, 8:45)

Designer as *Khalifah*

With the idea of *tauhid*, a designer must strive to reorient every action and move towards Allah or *Asma'ul Husna* especially in their design practise. Even Muslim (2018) agree that, there is a lack of exploration in linking the design process with *Asma'ul Husna*. Hence, this study intends to look on the existing design approach used especially among the Muslim designers. The main question is, do the designers ever use *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process?

Abd Rahman (2005) also highlighted in Table 1, example of design courses needed to be learned by a designer in relation to knowledge conversion process. He classified designer model into four types: designer as imitator, designer as apprentice, designer as a collaborator and designer as thinker.

In Islam, we do have another type of designer; designer as *Khalifah*. Designer as *khalifah* is a mediator between consumer, Allah, and organisation. In integrating this

idea into the conventional design process, the integration of *Asma'ul Husna* should embark at early part of the design process which is within the industrial designer.

Figure 1 visualises the idea in integrating *Asma'ul Husna* into conventional design process in relation to knowledge conversion process. As the vicegerent (*khalifah*) of Allah on earth, the believers are advised to implement *Asma'ul Husna* in every aspect of their life and this is considered as the greatest deed as mentioned in the Quran

“The remembrance of Allah (swt) is the greatest.” (The Quran, 2012, 29:45)

Apart from that, El-Bassiouny (2014) also highlighted that maintaining good consciousness by remembering *Asma'ul Husna* is the main purpose of our life and it can be considered as a form of worship to Allah. Designers who integrate *Asma'ul Husna* in their design process will have a

Table 1
Design pedagogy

Designer model	Knowledge conversion process	Learning goals	Design studio/ Lab activities	Examples
Designer as Imitator	Integration Explicit to Explicit	Acquisition of know-what	Learning by doing, practice, exercise, repetitions	Workshop, CAD training, drawing
Designer as Apprentice	Assimilation Explicit to Tacit	Acquisition of know-how	Book, magazines, lectures, factual and principles	Design Principles, history, manufacturing process
Designer as Collaborator	Reciprocation Tacit to Tacit	Collaboration and negotiation, management know-why	Discussion groups, reciprocal learning, management	Field research, interaction with user and producer, industrial training
Designer as Thinker	Exteriorization Tacit to Explicit	Critical and reflective thinking for innovation, care-why	Discovery learning, management	Degree project, experiments, design competition

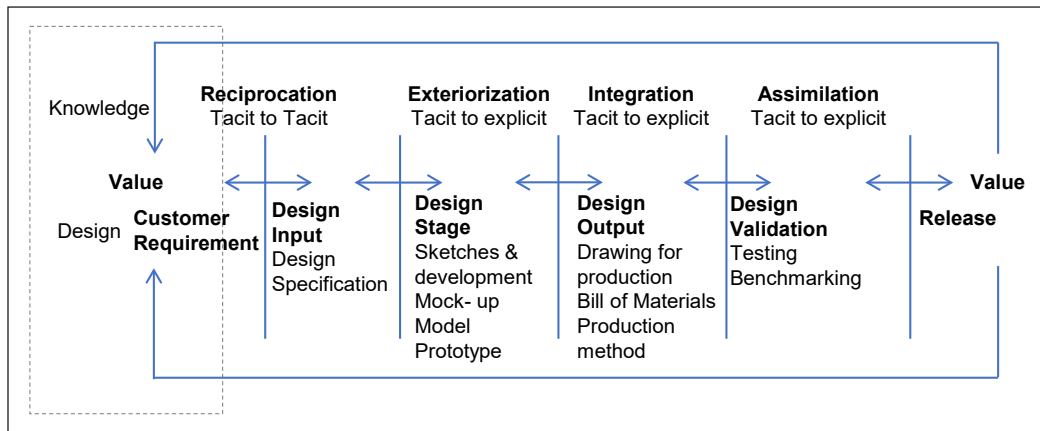


Figure 1. Integration of Asma'ul Husna into ISO 9001 design process

more wholesome approach as they are not only satisfying the consumers' demands but doing it purposefully with good *niat*. Therefore, as pointed out by Lundgren (2017), it's really important to have special attention in the design process since, a good design process will guarantee a good result. This is further emphasized by Norzaman et al. (2017), who mentioned that an excellent design process will not only please humans, but also please Allah and ultimately helps a person serve the purpose of life.

Benefit of Reorienting Designers' Designing Practice towards Allah

Assimilating spiritual element into design process is not something impossible. Other religion also did have their own interpretation of religious belief into design. For example, Vasstu Shahstra assimilation of an ancient Indian architecture knowledge with ancient Hinduism; Vedic (Patra, 2009), Zen interpretation of Buddhism (Walker, 2013) and not to mention Feng Shui originally from Chinese belief (Ng, 2016). From Islamic perspective, *Asma'ul*

Husna relatively a new concept in design which is yet to be thoroughly explore.

The best way to integrate is through *Asma'ul Husna* since it embodies concept of *tauhid*. Omer (2020) defined *tauhid* as the concept of monotheism and opined that understanding the concept is crucial as it also gives a unique identity to Islamic civilization and able to binds all constituents together, making them integral, harmonious and supportive to each other to serve ontological purposes.

Furthermore, Murtadho (2012) also mentioned that, prophets also encourage us to imitate the moral attributes of Allah as reflected in *Asma'ul Husna* and apply in real life. Not only that, Ahmet and Akdogan (2012) believe that having faith in Allah able in providing inner peace and satisfaction in both worlds.

Shuhari and Hamat (2017) highlighted the importance of understanding *Asma'ul Husna* among Muslim designer which is clearly indicate in hadith of the prophet and proven have significant benefits to individual where appreciation of *Asma'ul*

Husna able to develop characteristic of Trustworthiness (*Amanah*).

Not only that, Shuhari and Hamat (2011) also agree that understanding *Asma'ul Husna* is an important value in order to be caliphs in this world. In addition, according to Hamat and Shuhari (2010), understanding *Asma'ul Husna* is a basic requirement in achieving *makrifatullah* and developing individual characteristic (for example Al-Sidq) to become *insan robbani* (Shuhari, 2020).

Furthermore, Rosmani and Zakaria (2018) highlighted lack of understanding and appreciation toward the *Asma'ul Husna* value will eventually effect their favourability in learning Islam and effect their faith towards Allah since they unable to feel and see the greatness of Allah. Therefore, the effort in integrating *Asma'ul Husna* into conventional design process should not be neglected as the integration in the design practice is believed to be beneficial for mankind.

Shuhari et al. (2019) stated that education plays a vital role in building character or personality and an important step in projecting man as a role model in doing good. Integrating *Asma'ul Husna* into design curriculum is not possible since producing student with holistic personalities through Islamic integrated curriculum is the common vision of Malaysian university, such as in International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Islamic Science University Malaysia (USIM), Islamic Academy of Science (ASASI) as well as Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA,

Rahimah et al., 2015; Kamal Hassan, 2009; Rahimah et al., 2016).

Thus, it is important to make sure design education today is able to nurture and develop excellent design characteristic aligned with values of *Asma'ul Husna*. Inevitably designers will produce design which prioritise spiritual aspects and practice values that pleases Allah. Prior to coming up with the guideline for designers in integrating the *Asma'ul Husna* values in the design process, a study needs to be carried out to observe the existing practise among Muslim designers.

METHOD

This paper utilized quantitative approach in collecting the data, which is through survey. In order to find out the usability of *Asma'ul Husna* in the existing design practice, a survey is distributed among Muslim designers, academician and final year students who have art and design background. 163 samples of respondent are sufficient as the findings are equivalent to achieving 85% confidence level by RASOFT calculator.

Figure 2 categorises the percentage of respondents based on the survey with 34.4% of the respondents are designers, 20.2% are among the design academician and the rest are final year students. Final year students are also included in the survey due to their acquired design knowledge and experience in the real working environment while undergoing industrial training.

Meanwhile, Figure 3 breaks down the respondents' area of specialization. It can

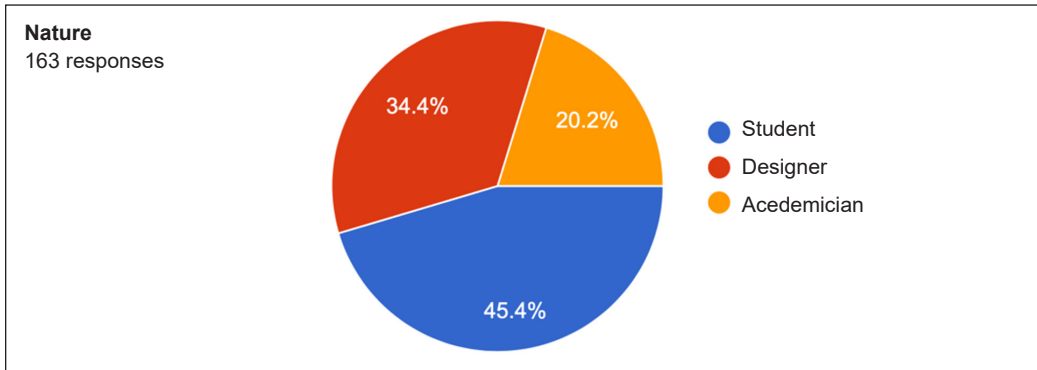


Figure 2. Respondents of the survey

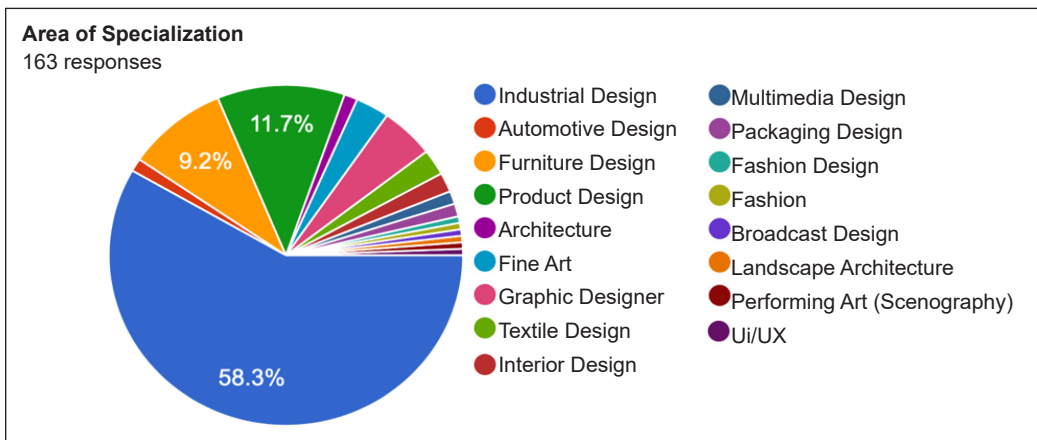


Figure 3. Specialization of respondents

be seen that majority of the respondents are from industrial design which encompasses 58.3% from the total number of respondents.

RESULTS

In question 1, researcher inquired about any respondents who have ever used *Asma'ul Husna* in their design process. Figure 4 indicates that 87.7% of them did not use *Asma'ul Husna* in designing. It is eccentric for a Muslim designer to neglect the use of *Asma'ul Husna* in a design process as it is mundane to apply the values in daily tasks and while designing. This further rectify

the claim that existing design curriculum successfully manage to segregate the spiritual aspect from design practice.

Question 3 probes the reason why majority of them did not use *Asma'ul Husna* in design (Figure 5). Most of them did not apply *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process due to limited knowledge on how to use *Asma'ul Husna* followed by; being afraid to use them since *Asma'ul Husna* are Allah's sacred names. The rest of them are content with the existing design approach and have little interest to use *Asma'ul Husna* in design. The finding supports the need

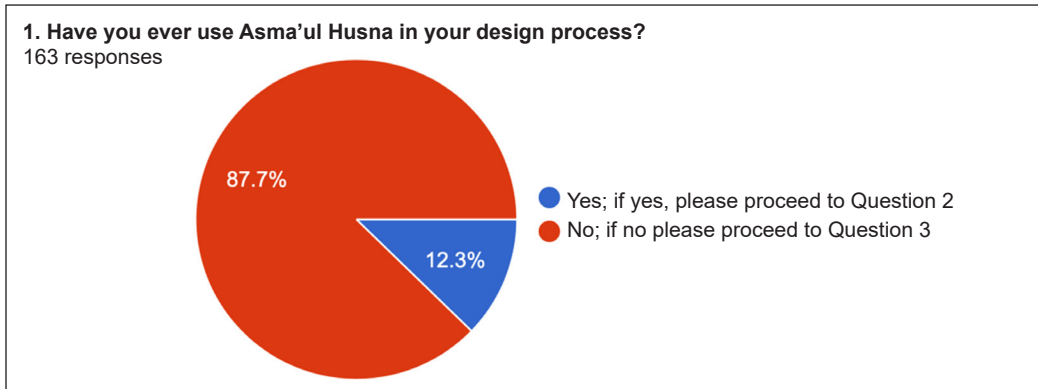


Figure 4. Percentage of respondents who use asma'ul husna in design practise

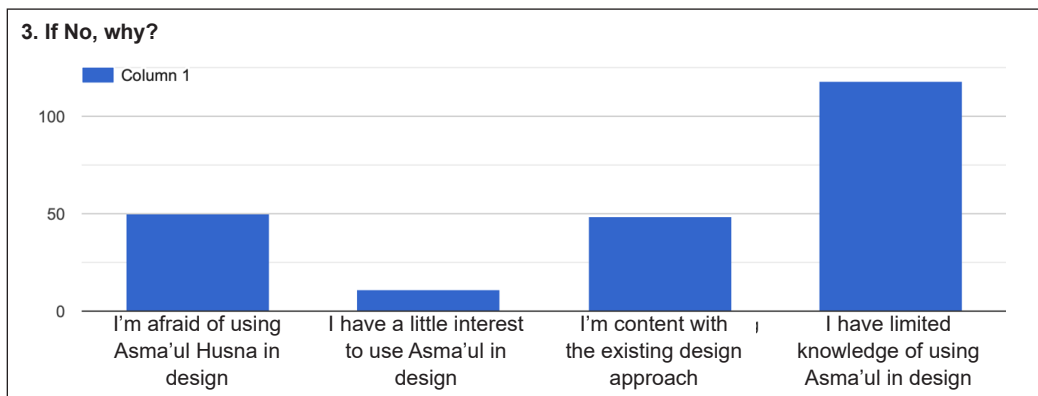


Figure 5. Reason why respondents did not use asma'ul husna in design

in designing proper guideline on how to implement and integrate *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process.

Furthermore, some of the respondents have a false assumption that the integration of *Asma'ul Husna* in design practice is not similar to their existing practice (Figure 6). Even in Table 2, R18 point out that integrating *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process is possible and being practise by them indirectly.

The data in Figure 7 reassured the purpose of this study as it shows a satisfying level of respondents' openness and readiness in integrating *Asma'ul Husna* in design

process. Hence, it is timely to develop a guideline for designers on how to integrate *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process.

In order to develop the new guideline, Question 2 was curated purposely to understand how designers use *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process. Although only 12.3% of the respondents claimed that they use *Asma'ul Husna*, it still shows the possibility to integrate *Asma'ul Husna* in the design process. Table 2 explains how they apply *Asma'ul Husna* in designing.

Analysing the answers in question 2, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents integrate *Asma'ul Husna* in

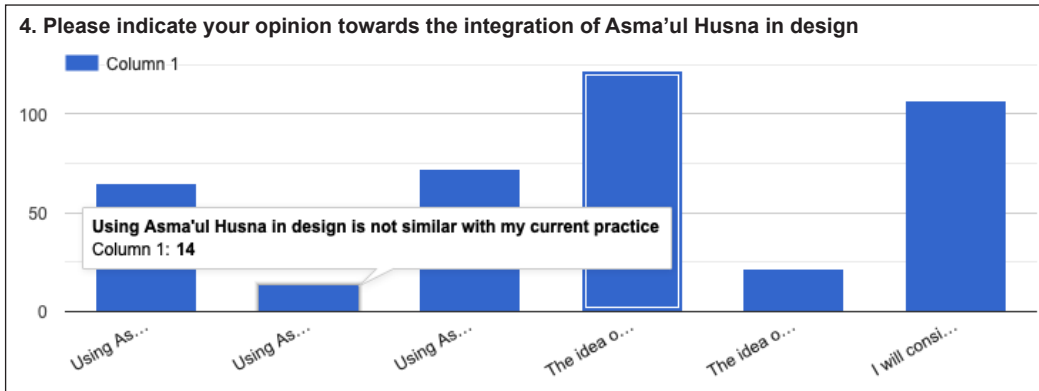


Figure 6. Assumption of respondent that integration of asma'ul husna is not similar with the existing practice

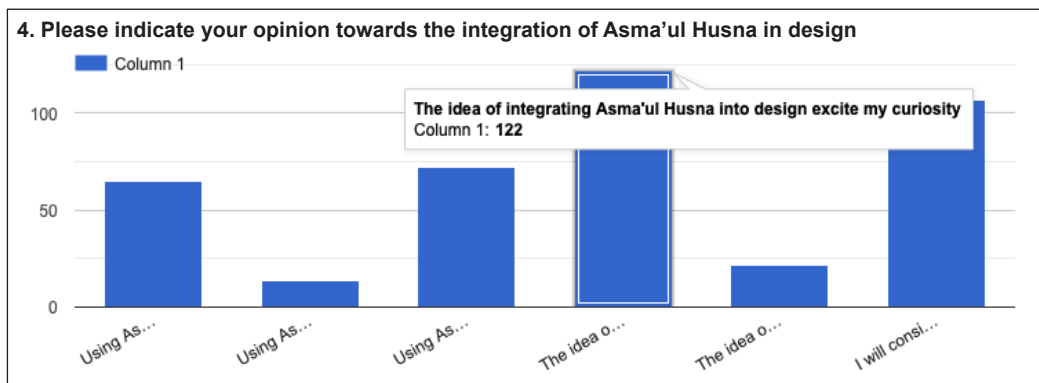


Figure 7. Level of respondents' openness and readiness toward the integration of asma'ul husna in designing

Table 2
How respondents apply Asma'ul Husna in designing

Respondent (R)	Highlighted keyword from the respondents' answer	Category of the keyword
R15.	Use Asma'ul Husna as guideline in every aspect. As Muslim we should never disregard our creation in everything, we do	Sharia Compliance, Asma'ul Husna Value
R18.	Honest in making any new idea	Asma'ul Husna Value
R19.	Yes, I'm plan for my design on fabric to create the base on this especially when I started to design on motif of Islamic design	Motif
R24.	Concept & motif . In fashion design, adhered towards the aurat guideline is also one of the ways applying Asma'ul Husna value in design.	Motif, Sharia Compliance, Asma'ul Husna Value
R29.	Try to plan project as thorough as possible	Asma'ul Husna Value
R35.	It must reflect the limitations and guidelines in Islam and sunnah	Sharia Compliance, Asma'ul Husna Value
R48.	By giving the best	Self- Conscious, Asma'ul Husna Value

Table 2 (continue)

Respondent (R)	Highlighted keyword from the respondents' answer	Category of the keyword
R56.	For me asma ul husna is not apply in just for design process. As muslim better apply asma ul husna in all the thing to get what we want. Cz asma ul husna is 99 names of Allah. In terms of design, we can maybe recite our dua early with name (ya Hadi) means giving guidance. Thus, it is more related with the name of the dua we make. Also, if we had problem in design we can use as zikr; ya hadi repeatedly to seek for the guidance. Cz sometimes we get stuck in the design process. Not just ya hadi...many more name related we can use, suit with the situation we had.	As Zikr
R59.	Asmaul husna in designer's life (esp. Muslim) start with <i>niat</i> to have a good outcome, during process development, heart and soul always connected to the idea (brain) and transferred it into tangible things. This is how we feel grateful with what ALLAH given to us.	Asma'ul Husna Value
R63.	Work with heart, passion and sincerely	Asma'ul Husna Value
R70.	Come out with new design inspired from Allah's creation	Asma'ul Husna Value
R71.	in many ways, such as create the beauty and ergonomic of design	Asma'ul Husna Value
R73.	Being honest in design process, amanah in charging customer, providing the best design service regardless design charge.	Asma'ul Husna Value
R140.	If I was trusted to do something I would do the best that I can do since I know Allah Maha Melihat lagi Maha Mengetahui	Asma'ul Husna Value
R145.	I'm work in team , and I try my best work with them.	Asma'ul Husna Value
R152.	Always remember Allah every time	Islamic Spirituality
R159.	Honest while designing, Allah is All Knowing	Asma'ul Husna Value
R161.	I believe I do, but indirectly. Because as Muslim, it is ingrained in our practices to practice good deeds in everything that we do and planned to do.	Asma'ul Husna Value
R162.	Considering Spiritual values toward design works	Asma'ul Husna Value

design process through the values reflected from each name of Allah. Only 3 out of 19 respondents use *Asma'ul Husna* as zikr and motif in their design artwork. R18 particularly highlighted an interesting answer and the keyword used is 'indirectly'. This indicates that integrating *Asma'ul*

Husna in design process is possible and had been practised by them subconsciously. By coming up with a well-structured guideline, it will be possible to encourage more designers to integrate *Asma'ul Husna* in their design process.

DISCUSSION

Results from the survey shows that only 12.3% from the respondents use *Asma'ul Husna* in design. The remaining respondents did not integrate *Asma'ul Husna* due to reasons, such as limited knowledge and no proper guideline to be referred to. Findings from this survey also indicates the general view on usability of Asma 'ul Husna and emphasizes the urgency in developing guideline for designers in integrating *Asma'ul Husna's* values into the design process.

In addition assimilating divinity element especially Integrating *Asma'ul Husna* values into the design process believed able to improved their faith to Allah and at the same time cultivate good personality according to Islam. Rahimah et al. (2016) also agree that exposing undergrad students with the holistic integrated curriculum able to attain personal's firm belief, accustomed to righteous deed and nurture behavioral skill.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this study not only intend to look on the adaptation of *Asma'ul Husna* in existing design practice, it also wants to find out the reason why designer did not use *Asma'ul Husna* and at the same time seek an overall view on existing ways of adapting *Asma'ul Husna* in the design practice. It is hope that this study to some extend able to create awareness among designer on the possibilities of integrating *Asma'ul Husna* in their design practice. Finding from this paper also rectify the claim that existing design curriculum successfully manage to

segregate the spiritual aspect from design practice and highlights possibilities and needs in developing guideline especially for Muslim designers.

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