

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF MYTHS ROOTED IN STUDIO CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of literature review carried out for a research on Studio Culture, specifically discussing on Islamic perspective of myths rooted in Studio Culture. In architectural education, Studio culture was generally developed in western architecture schools with secular methodological consideration and then adapted by schools of architecture in various Islamic countries. Studio Culture is shrouded with myths that are considered necessary for architectural students to conform in order to be successful architects. This research has the objective of evaluating the appropriateness of embracing the myths, based on Islamic perspectives. This research is an example of multidisciplinary research that combined the fields of architectural education and Islamic perspective of education. By critically analysing this issue, it is hoped that this research could benefit architecture students and academicians, as well as architectural practice in general.

Keywords: Studio Culture, Architectural Education, Design Studio, Design Education, Architectural Educational Approach, Teaching Methods, Islamic Teaching Methods.

INTRODUCTION

The conventional approach of learning architecture is known to be adopted by the Islamic countries from their western counterparts, which have brought in the studio culture (Koch, (2002: Kuhn, 2001) with its own distinctive esoteric working and learning method. Both the Beaux Arts and the Bauhaus movements that are believed to root the conventional architectural education today were originated from Europe. As such, studio culture adopted globally was also rooted from the western secular methodological consideration, in which religious obligation may not have a place to influence working and learning culture in the design studio.

Studio culture that has been practiced for decades in the conventional architectural educational approach has been severely criticized for promoting the unhealthy lifestyle among

architectural students, and influencing their mentality on having certain behaviour and patterns. Koch (2002) describes studio culture as the experience, habits, and pattern found within the architecture design studio, which is associated with “late nights, exciting projects, extreme dedication, lasting friendships, long hours, punishing critiques, unpredictable events, a sense of community and personal sacrifice.” Architecture students throughout the globe generally obey to the demands of such norms in their design studio working environment. Thus, they generally accept the myths studio culture perpetuates. Among those are full devotion to studio is compulsory for acceptance in the architecture community, and architecture is the product of individual artistic struggle.

Many scholars in western world realise the need to change the studio culture as it is considered no longer appropriate for the education of current architects (Caruso, 2008; CEBE, 2003). Changes to the dominant habit and pattern of studio culture are needed to elevate the value of architectural education; thus, produce healthier, more optimistic, and more engaging architecture school graduates. Nevertheless, although there are prevailing calls for changes, the studio culture remains intact as those involved in practicing the culture, students and design tutors, are not presented with a proposed cultural modification they need. Besides, resistance to changes in studio culture is difficult to handle because both architectural students and design tutors often take pride of their esoteric studio culture in the conventional architectural educational approach.

On the other hand, for Islamic countries, there is no literature available that specifically discuss the appropriateness of working and learning methods from Islamic perspective to be applied in the studio culture. Providentially, however, there are general guidelines in the *Al-Hadith* (representation of the prophet Muhammad's *s.a.w.* words and actions) and the *Al-Quran* on how the Muslims should conduct their everyday lives. Both sources of references in the Islamic instruction have been known to promote healthy lifestyle, either in working or learning environment. As such, references to both guides would be used to introduce a paradigm shift to the studio culture. Therefore, this research would analyse the appropriateness of embracing the myths, based on Islamic perspectives of both *al-Quran* and *al-Hadith*. Hopefully, this review would respond to the challenges made by

Henderson (2003) on considering inventive and sustainable new ways of using studio as learning laboratories, which is relevant to the present age.

CRITICISM ON STUDIO CULTURE

Leonie Milliner, the RIBA Director of Education states that “culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group” (Henderson, 2004). It includes “modes of life, fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs”. In the context of studio culture, students’ behaviour in the field of architecture is influenced by the common practices which are not really acceptable among students of other disciplines. Contrary to other students’ normal life, those who have had studied architecture must have experienced the habits and pattern found within the architecture design studio.

Studio culture is situated in architectural design studio, existed because it is a requirement of project based “learning by doing” (Schon, 1983). The design studio is generally the location where the architectural design courses are conducted, “in an environment that is different to a traditional classroom from pedagogical, sociological, ideological and epistemological points of view” (Demirbas and Demirkan, 2003). This environment provides an organizational and social process for students (Demirbas and Demirkan, 2003), where they “engage in conversational, dialogues and collaboration related to open ended problems” (Roberts, 2004). Many scholars have “an almost unquestioned presumption” that activities related to learning and teaching of architectural design is best taken place in a studio environment, where individual tuition and peer learning happily co-exist (Henderson, 2003).

As this so-called tradition generates common experience, habits, and pattern within the architecture design studio, it also indirectly establish myths among students on how they are supposed to work, act and behave during their learning process and within the design studio environment. Some scholars claim that these established myths in studio culture have more bad effects to architectural students than good. They even proposed

alternative models to be explored to improve the unhealthy content of critique session in studio (Stuart-Murray, 2010). Calls for a change in culture and attitude in order to produce healthier, and more diverse architectural graduates were discussed intensively in numerous architectural conferences, such as CSAAR 2006 (Al-Qawasmi, J., & et. al., 2006) , CEBE 2003, and Oxford 2008 (Roaf, S., & et. al. (2008). One of the most talk-about aspects of studio culture that have been scrutinised are the myths embedded in it.

Koch et. al. (2002) has published a popular report on studio culture, and listed 14 myths associated with studio culture, based on the study done by AIAS (American Institute of Architecture Students). The myths are:

1. Architectural education should require personal and physical sacrifice
2. The creation of architecture should be a solo, artistic struggle
3. The best students are those who spend the most hours in studio
4. Design studio courses are more important than other architecture or liberal arts courses
5. Success in architecture school is only attained by investing all of your energy in studio
6. It is impossible to be a successful architect unless you excel in the design studio
7. Students should not have a life outside of architecture school
8. The best design ideas only come in the middle of the night
9. Creative energy only comes from the pressure of deadlines
10. Students must devote themselves to studio in order to belong to the architecture community
11. Collaboration with other students means giving up the best ideas
12. It is more important to finish a few extra drawings than sleep or mentally prepare for the design review
13. It is possible to learn about complex social and cultural issues while spending the majority of time sitting at a studio desk

14. Students do not have the power to make changes within architecture programs or the design studio.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF STUDIO CULTURE

The following discussion highlights the scenario in design studio based on observation carried out by the researcher in various universities particularly in Malaysia. Architecture students generally practice the same studio culture with their counterparts in the western countries. The question whether influence of general Islamic teaching and Muslims' responsibilities affect studio culture in Malaysian context would be analysed.

Reference is made to *Al-Quran* and *Al-hadith* because Islam has provided the Muslims with very beautiful culture to guide human in managing life. With the provision of al-Quran, the people especially Muslims have comprehensive guidance. In giving the guidance, Al-Quran has touched many aspects, including the manner and ethic of learning. Thus, architecture students may apply what are stated and implied in the holy book, to be implemented in their learning experience. As stated;

*“This day have I perfected your religion for you,
completed My favour upon you, and have chosen
for you Islam as your religion”
Quran (5:3)*

Over-indulgence of commitment to studio culture as listed in the myths (Koch et. al.,2002), with its unbalance priority, is sometimes in contradiction with the practice of Islamic ethics. Students often neglect the need to question or scrutinise the practicality of following certain tradition imposed on them. The conflation of this unbalanced commitment is clearly prohibited in Islam. As stated in the holy Al-Quran;

*“Nay, they say. We found our fathers following a
certain religion, and we do guide ourselves by
their footsteps. Just in the same way, whenever We
sent a Warner before thee to any people, the
wealthy ones among them said: We found our
fathers following a certain religion, and we will*

certainly follow in their footsteps. He said; What! Even if I brought you better guidance than that which ye found your father following? They said; “for us, we deny that ye (prophets) are sent (on a mission at all). So We exacted retribution from them: now see what was the end of those who rejected (truth).”

(Quran, 43:22-25).

Angelo Battero (cited in Al-Qarni, 2005), who wrote thirteen books and thousands of articles related to the topic of child education, is in agreement with the statement. He states “there is none more miserable than the one who grows up not being him, who grows up imitating others in appearance and thought.” In the context of following the studio culture, students often neglect their religious duty of being the slave to their Creator. As stated in the holy Al-Quran;

“And pray in the small watches of the morning: (it would be) an additional prayer (or spiritual profit) for thee: soon will thy Lord raise thee to a Station of Praise and Glory!” (Quran, 17:79).

As Muslim architecture students, the obligation towards the creator is superior compared to others. Unfortunately, some students are observed to skip their duty to perform the regulatory prayers, which should be performed five times daily, simply for the sake of their commitment to complete design projects. This circumstance transpires because the normal conventional style of learning architecture is not really in accordance to the Islamic practice of day to day routine. The norm of working continuously without proper time management befalls upon students in most schools of architecture throughout the world. These elements normally control the mentality and the mind-set of architecture students to uphold certain behaviours and habits that might be in contradiction to the needs of having proper time management in carrying out day to day routine. Since the learning process in design studio requires mental and physical efforts, students tend to use all the energy and time in the studio to finish and achieve what they intended to do in the design studios. Students are also observed to work continuously without taking time out to finish

their works, not even during the nights. Thus, they neglected the obligation to perform their religious duties.

In Islam, Allah has created day and night for human to work during the day time and rest at night. Islam has reserved the night for Muslims to serve their Creator and to do the act of reflection and repenting (*muhasabah*) of what they have done. As stated in Al-Quran:

“Say: See ye? If Allah were to make the night perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment, what god is there other than Allah, who can give you enlightenment? Will ye not then hearken? Say: See ye? If Allah were to make the day perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment, what god is there other than Allah, who can give you a night in which ye can rest? Will ye not then see? It is out of His Mercy that He has made for you Night and Day,- that ye may rest therein, and that ye may seek of his Grace;- and in order that ye may be grateful”. (Quran,28:71-73).

Practically, learning architecture is essentially different from other disciplines of education. With the approach of Learning by Doing (Schon, 1983), students are required to complete their works within specified time frame which are proven to be tedious in nature, especially when students also have other architectural subjects to be learned via normal learning and teaching methods. In design studio, students usually work continuously day and night to produce architectural design, to the extent that they neglect their personal and physical needs. This is proven in an anecdote written by Fadzidah Abdullah (2011), on architecture students lining up to donate blood during academic festival organised by Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design, in 2008. Despite their enthusiasm to participate in fulfilling social obligation, ten out of ten students examined were considered not physically eligible to donate blood due to reasons such as lack of sleep, and underweight.

These result in architecture students being accused of becoming esoteric: living in their own cells, ignoring the outside world for the sake of abiding to the so called studio culture. Although nobody actually force them to abide to such intangible

norm, but by virtue of tradition, this culture of staying in design studio to focus on their design project day and night somehow flourishes. Students often go to the extent of scarifying their own health, and lacking interaction with outside society. The norms of the architecture studio prioritizing the studio works makes the architecture students live only with their own community in their particular faculty or schools.

The following is further discussion on Islamic perspectives of myths perpetuated in studio culture. Some of the aspects discussed are relevant to more than one myth; thus, points of discussion might be mentioned repeatedly to emphasize their importance.

Myth 1: Architectural education should require personal and physical sacrifice

The myth that architectural education should require personal and physical sacrifice happens almost in all schools of architecture all over the world, including in Malaysia. Students tend to focus their energy to accomplish their dream of producing iconic architectural design in studio. In other words, the large number of credit hours designated for design subject influence them to work excessively, even outside allocated class/studio hours. Studio courses command the most credit hours, the largest workloads, the most intensive time commitment from educators and students; therefore it is regarded as having supreme importance (AIAS, 2006). The question arises if this culture is in compliance with Islamic teaching or not. It is essential for this research to clarify whether the current practices of studio culture in the Muslim world complied with the Islamic teaching or just follow what has been done in the conventional method of teaching architecture, as it has been practiced in the western culture.

Based on observation of architectural studio in Malaysia, some students do not observe their duties as Muslims. They are not supposed to focus merely on their commitment to study only, but also to perform what has been prescribed for them in this world. As a matter of fact, men have been frequently reminded in the holy Quran that there is a life that is superior for them in the hereafter. Thus, men should strive to get the best of the hereafter,

without neglecting the current worldly life. As stated in the holy book of Al-Quran;

"Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children."(Quran 57:20).

In the context of studio culture, the student should know their physical strength and work within their ability in the studio, not exceeding what Allah has designated for them. Therefore, it is essential for the student to live as they should be in their life as students.

Islam provides men with freedom, but freedom always comes with responsibilities. Thus, Al-Quran also gives detailed guidance for men of what deeds they should be doing. The obligation to fulfil responsibilities among human being makes (some) men realizes of the true meaning of life. Their focus in life, their obligation to fulfil responsibilities, and their accountabilities would lead them to prepare themselves for what is to come. Thus, there will be no unpleasant surprise awaiting them in the next life. Thus, in Islam, men have to map out their destiny in the hereafter, so they will prepare themselves for the next world (Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, 2007). Allah mentioned in the Al-Quran;

*"But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief."
(Quran 28:77).*

It is also mentioned in Al-Quran that Allah will only test men based on their ability to cope with the inflicted burden.

"On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden Like that which Thou didst lay on those before us;

Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those who stand against faith.”

(Quran, 2:286)

Myth 2: The creation of architecture should be a solo artistic struggle

The myth that the creation of architecture should be a solo and artistic struggle is commonly practiced in the architecture education especially in the studio works. In order to have the best design, solo artistic struggle is considered as a requirement for architecture students. As the creation of the architecture is concerned, the innovation and creativity have significantly gained in currency and have become a primary expectation from students' work (Goldschmidt, 2002). As a consequence, the student often spent extra time working alone, striving to get the best masterpiece for their design studio work. Hence, they neglect their social life, and social interaction between students and society would decrease. This circumstance leads architecture students to have their world isolated from the general communities. Even though these students are likely to be unique and individualistic in nature, they rely more to subjective, tentative and exploratory interpretation and intuition, than to a logical or formulaic process of applying rational body of knowledge” (Schon 1983).

In contradiction to the myth embedded in studio culture, Glaser (2006) recommends that “for the development of expertise, knowledge must be acquired in such a way that it is highly connected and articulated.” This enables inference and reasoning to be applied. When architecture students engages in solo artistic struggle in design studio to come out with self-preference design objects, they are actually going against the ideal learning setting suggested by both Glaser (2006) and Schon (1985). Schon essentially expects studio to be the venue for the acquisition of professional expertise, referred to the studio as exemplar for professional training. Meanwhile, Glaser (2006) recommends that a learning environment that is highly compatible with the studio is

where there are “opportunities for problem solving, analogy making, extended inference interpretation, and working in unfamiliar environments requiring transfer.”

Islam, through the *Al-Quran* and the *Al-Hadith* has also taught the Muslims on the social etiquettes of having a healthy, harmonious, and happy social environment, and with that their brotherhood can be well established (Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, 2007). In short, the way a person behaves will affect his social environment. Thus, Islam perseveres on the nurturing of the proper ethics and the observation of the social etiquettes by the individuals. With regard to working in the design studio, Islam promotes its believers to do something in group, work collaboratively, and to get the best decision. This is in conjunction with the concept of meeting (*syura*) encouraged in Islam. In order to get the best solution for something, in this instance a design proposal, the application of *syura* or meeting is highly recommended by Islam. The culture of being personal in design will lead the student being defensive towards their design studio.

Nevertheless, the culture of sharing information and ideas towards resolving some design problem have been observed to be practised in current design studio in Malaysia particularly, which is a very good sign that the myth is not really embedded to the students. In the design studio, students do not present their works to the instructor individually, but share the presentation with the rest of the class. In fact, discussion take place concerning a student’s works involve all the students, and not just the presenting student and the instructor (Mohammad al-Asad, year not mentioned).

The concept of sharing in Islam has been emphasized in the *al-Quran*. Allah mentioned in the *Al-Quran*;

“Whatever ye are given (here) is (but) a convenience of this life: but that which is with God is better and more lasting: (it is) for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. Those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, when they are angry even when then forgive. Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation;

who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance” (Quran, 42:36-38).

From the verse, it is clear that the mutual consultation which is being practiced in the architectural education especially in the design studio is highly regarded as good deed in Islamic studies. Therefore, the myth of the creation of architecture should be a solo and artistic struggle is not really complied with the Islamic perspective of learning.

Myth 3: The best students are those who spend the most hours in studio

In architectural education, the design studio is the venue where students spend most of their time to study and work, completing their assigned tasks or projects. Therefore; it has become a norm, as in the myth 3, that the best students are those who spend the most hours in the studio. This opinion is supported by research done by many scholars. For example, Henderson (2004) states that the quality of student design works have been decreasing because of the erosion of the studio environment. He points out that one of the reasons why studio-based learning is in decline is the lack of 24-hour access to studio. Thus, he implies that students have to spend most of their time in the studio to obtain good results and the quality of their works.

Many scholars are in agreement with Henderson (2004) that staying in studio gives many benefits to architecture students as the design studio provides a venue for students to engage in conversations, dialogues and collaboration related to open-ended problems and encourages speculative exploration (Andrew Robert, 2004). Here, they may have mutual discussion and consultation. Good students may help weak students in solving design problems, concurrently improve their own performance in design. This concept of helping each other is promoted by Islam. In regard to the Islamic working and learning methods, the concept is commonly applied in design studio. Allah mentioned,

“...Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and

rancour: fear Allah. for Allah is strict in punishment". (Quran, 5:2).

Nevertheless, the idea of spending time limitlessly in the studio, or working space, is not encouraged in Islam, as Islam has taught the believers to be very observant in managing time. There are times to do the worldly affairs, such as working to obtain income, resting, and handling family matters; and there are times allocated for the preparation of the hereafter (*akhirat*). No matter what is one's occupation and responsibilities, time management is very important, as appeared in al-Hadith;

"There is a time for worldly affairs and a time for prayer and meditation" (Muslim, 4-1436-6623).

"Do not abuse Time – Allah s.w.t. is Time. He causes night and day." (Bukhari, B6-337-351).

Numerous verses of Al-Quran emphasize allocation of time to be given for seeking the bounty of the world during the day.

"We have made the night and the day as two (of Ours) Signs: The Sign of the night have We Obscured, while the Sign of the day We have made to enlighten you: that ye may seek bounty from your Lord, and that ye may know the number and count of the years; all things have We explained in detail." (Quran, 17:12)

"He it is That hath made you the night that ye may rest therein, and in the day to make things visible (to you). Verily in this are signs for those who listen (to His message). (Quran, 10: 67)

There are more verses of al-Quran on how a person should manage his/her time during the night; emphasizing the importance of spending time to rest and prostrating to Allah.

“See they not that We have made the night for them to rest in and the day to give them light? Verily in this are signs for any people that believe.” (Quran, 27: 86)

*“And He it is Who makes the nights as a robe for you, and Sleep as repose, and makes the Day (as it were) a Resurrection.”
(Quran, 25: 47)*

*“Worship Him a portion of night - Glorify Him all night long.”
(Quran, 76: 26)*

“He it is that cleaveth the day-break (from the dark): He makes the night for rest and tranquillity, and the sun and moon for the reckoning (of time): Such is the judgement and ordering of (him), the Exalted in Power, the Omniscient.” (Quran, 6: 96)

*“Establish regular prayer – at the sun’s decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer and reading; for the prayer and reading in the morning carry their testimony. And pray in the small watches of the morning; (it would be) an additional prayer (or spiritual profit) for thee; soon will thy Lord raise thee to a Station of Praise and Glory!”
(Quran, 17: 78-79)*

“Bear, then, with patience, all that they say, and celebrate the praises of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun and before 9its) setting. And during part of the night (also) celebrate His Praises, and (so likewise) after postures of adoration. “ (Quran, 50: 39-40)

“And the servant of (God) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say,

*'peace! And who spend the night before their
Lord prostrate and standing.'*
(*Quran, 25: 63-64*)

Scholarly research has proven that scientific finding of human biological clock, or organ hours, is concurrent with Allah's guidelines to manage time. God has created human being with biologically clock that function only if the manual given, the Al-Quran, is properly read and followed.

Myth 4: Design studio courses are more important than other architecture or liberal arts courses

As venue of integration of knowledge, design studio undoubtedly should be treated as more important than other architectural subjects. Nevertheless, this does not lessen the importance of accumulating knowledge and skills from different courses. The major objective of architectural education could be thought of as educating architects capable of creating meaningful environments (Ashraf Salama and Abdulgader Amir, 2005). Consequently, to have the ability in creating the meaningful environment, the students should not only focus on the design studio. The other liberal art subjects should be treated with the same weightage as the design studio subject. Miller (2003) and Henderson (2004) clarify that RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) allows Schools of architecture to teach in whatever way is thought appropriate, as long as the quality of student work being sustained above a minimum threshold and satisfying agreed criteria.

Students' negligence towards other courses do not promise excellent design studio performance, as design requires application of knowledge and skills from various branches of courses. Students have the obligation to acquire as much as possible the knowledge offered in schools.

In Malaysian and Islamic countries context, it is an obligation for Muslims to integrate Islamic knowledge with that of so-called secular knowledge. Studio culture could be more effective if it is in compliance with the Islamic method of working and learning environment. Razia Akter Banu (1997) states that, lack of Islamic knowledge is the result of negligible scope of knowing Islam, at any level of secular education system. In

addition, Mohd. Sani Badron (2009) emphasizes the purpose of knowledge as inculcated in Islamic education is to create and produce a good man or the man of *adab* (etiquette) in whichever one's profession or skill.

*“For We had certainly sent unto them a Book,
based on knowledge, which We explained in
detail, ; a guide and a mercy to all who believe.”
(Al-Quran, 7: 52)*

Myth 5: Success in architecture school is only attained by investing all of your (students) energy in studio

Most architecture students have the pre-conceived ideas that they should invest all their energy in design studio to perform excellently in their learning. As such, their energy, time and resource are all dedicated to design studio. It is observed that every architecture student prioritise the design studio over other aspects of life. In the struggle to develop design ideas and ability, to some extent, students are trapped in their self-indulgence of excessive creativity that turns them to be too esoteric.

Islam gives the opportunity to its believers to promote the culture of assiduous and hardworking within its boundary. The concept of balance is applied to the architectural education to make it in compliance with the Islamic working and learning methods. Afif Bahnassi (2003) notes that the standard for the creativity is moderation which mean that any architectural work should be well-balanced in accordance with the Holy Verse;

*“...And produced therein from all kinds of things
in due balance”
(Quran 15: 19).*

Myth 6: It is impossible to be a successful architect unless you excel in the design studio

It appears to be a norm that a successful architect should be the one who excels in design studio. In real architectural practice, in most architectural firms, only selected few architects get to design the way most architects imagine they would. A successful

architect needs talent; practical, interpersonal, and organizational skills; and most of all, patience. Islam promotes the concept of excellence and success in life, Allah said,

“The believers must (eventually) win through, those who humble themselves in their prayers; who avoid vain talk; who are active in deeds of charity; who abstain from sex; except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess, - for (in their case) they are free from blame; But those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors; Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants; And who (strictly) guard their prayers” (Quran, 19:1-9).

Islam gives the opportunity to humankind to learn and work on their abilities. The concepts of success in Islam provide the guideline for students of the Islamic way to succeed in architectural education. For example, students could excel in design studio performance without neglecting their duties in performing the five times daily prayers. This concept is interrelated to each other in order for students to achieve the success in this world and in the hereafter.

Myth 7: Students should not have a life outside of architecture school

This myth indicates that students should not have a life outside of architecture school, to belong to the architecture community only. Spending most of their time in design studio limits architecture students' tendency to mix with other students from different academic disciplines, and with the society at large. Although there are university and elective courses that give students the chances to socialize with students from other disciplines, yet they choose to devote themselves to activities related to architectural school for excuse of time limitation. Students commit or devote themselves in design studio because of the convenience of schedule and environment. Based on observation, it is common for architecture students to spend most of their times in the design studio, for architectural and learning related activities. The

students have a tendency to exclude themselves from participating in any activities conducted outside the architecture school, including activities carried out in the university hostels. They simply prefer to live within their own architecture community in the school.

In contrary, Islam promotes the believers to socialize within society, and to avoid being in seclusion. Moreover, Umar al-Khattab said, “there will be no Islam without community, there will be no Community without leadership, there will no leadership without leaders, and there will be no leaders without obedience.”

Islam encourages people to explore the world and see the beautiful of the world. The myth of “students should not have a life outside of architecture school” is in contradiction with Islamic method of learning. Allah stated;

“Many were the Ways of Life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth. Here is a plain statement to men, a guidance and instruction to those who fear God” (Quran 3: 137-138).

Life outside the ordinary environment, in this context, outside of architecture school will give the students exposure to new intervention in their learning process in architecture and will provide them the opportunity to increase their knowledge in design.

Myth 8: The best design ideas only come in the middle of the night

Working at night has become a common studio culture in many schools of architecture, with the associated myth that “the best design ideas only come in the middle of the night.” Some students have the excuse that they are too busy during the day to concentrate on design works, while others have the thought that the calm nights inspire ideas to spur from their minds. Thus, this circumstance has become the routine for architectural students.

Based on analysis on pedagogical approach of Student Learning Time (SLT) (MOHE, 2009), students need enough time

to study and rest, and most course outlines in any established school had considered given enough time allocation for both requirement. Therefore, if students spend most of their time working on studio works, they of course would not have enough time for the other required activities.

In the instance of architectural students, working extra time during the nights actually take its tolls by making them not productive enough during the day. After prolong experience of staying at nights, the lifestyle has become a routine, and they continually become less productive during the day. Students often miss-interpret the situation as having less idea during the days, and more ideas during the nights. Indeed, the actual issues are students do not have enough rest and they do not have good time management; for them to be productive during working hours in design classes.

In Islam, the night has been set by Allah as the time for the human to rest and sleep. There is no absolute prohibition in Islam, as human could still work during the nights if it is needed. Yet, to make it as regular practice just like what architecture students has practiced is not encouraged in Islam. In fact, Islam encourages the believers to spare sometimes during the night to worship Allah. Allah said,

“O thou folded in garments!, Stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night, Half of it,- or a little less, Or a little more; and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones” (Quran, 73: 1-4).

As mentioned earlier, there is no absolute prohibition but Islam encourage waking up at the early hour of the morning to worship Allah. In this instance, architecture students could take the chance to do some work and complement the time spend with the worship to Allah, such as doing the *Tahajjud* prayers and reciting the Al-Quran. The practice of staying up all night long, and sleeping in the early hours of the morning, and sometimes intentionally skipping their *fajar* (early morning) prayer should be stopped. This practice is in contradiction to Muslims' obligation as the vicegerent on earth. The obligation of the Muslims is to abide by the law of Islam which is prescribed in the Quran and *Sunnah* as the only constitutional in Islam.

“...if any one rejects faith, fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be in ranks of those who have lost (spiritual good).” (Quran, 5: 5)

Myth 9: Creative energy only comes from the pressure of deadlines

This myth is associated with the idea that “creative energy only comes from the pressure of deadlines.” Based on observation, students tend to be in the stage of procrastination when dealing with their design tasks, or projects. This is due to the myth they hold onto, that they will have sparks of ideas concurrent with the pressure of the deadlines. Working under pressure is believed to give challenge to students to complete their works faster.

Nevertheless, there is no proof that those who practice last minutes work perform better than the others who consistently working within the given time limit. In fact, there is no point of having good ideas but the final design product is incomplete and could not represent/communicate their design ideas. In this instance, students often give excuse that the deadline given is not conducive enough for them to complete, whilst the actual blame should be on them for procrastinating.

Islam emphasises the importance of time management through the revelation of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith. As Allah said,

“By (the token of) Time (through the ages). Verily Man is in loss, Except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of patience and Constancy. (Quran, 103: 1-3).

Concurrently, the prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him (*Rasullullah* s.a.w) had verified that;

“ The best act of worship to Allah is that which is done regularly.” Bukhari (B1-36-41).

“Prophet ﷺ did not do extra deeds of worship on special days, but his deeds were regular and constant. Bukhari (B8-314-573)

Myth 10: Students must devote themselves to studio in order to belong to the architecture community

Devotion to design studio works, or any task is allowed in Islam, as long as the task would not deviate the believers’ intention from remembrance of Allah. In addition, Islam encourages the believers to do their work whole-heartedly, yet remembrance to Allah should be given priority in any deeds. Allah instructed the believers to join the community of those who are collaboratively working towards the improvement of ummah (humankind). If architecture students mix only with their architectural circle of friends, this would limit their social horizons. Similar condition of how students should lead their social life has been deliberated in discussion of Myth 7. Allah said,

“And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds.” (Quran, 18: 28).

“As those who believe and work righteousness, verily We shall not suffer to perish the reward of any who do a (single) righteous deed.” (Quran, 18: 30).

Myth 11: Collaboration with other students means giving up the best ideas

Working collaboratively at the research part of projects is common scenario in design studio, yet students tend to work individually when it comes to producing their architectural

masterpiece. When working individually, the ideas of sharing is observed to be avoided by students for fear of losing the uniqueness of their design. They are afraid other students may imitate their ideas, making the design not distinctively different and unique, thus jeopardize their grade and performance. Some scholars agree to this esoteric nature of architectural personnel; architects and architect-to-be. Cuff (1991) observes that architectural education encourages the “primacy of the autonomous designer by focusing all its attention on the student’s experience as an individual.” However, this perspective is found to be out-dated in current scenarios of architectural education and architectural practice. The recent concern for collaborative issues is acknowledged by Stansfield-Smith (1999) in his report The 1999 RIBA Review of Architectural Education, stating that “more team play” is needed to avoid architectural education from continuing being “too referential and self-indulgent.”

Working collaboratively should be encouraged in design studio, not only among architectural students, but also with other parties outside education boundaries as well. The exchange of the ideas, knowledge and skills between students, and with outside parties would create a diverse environment in the studios. Cultivating relationship with the world beyond the studio boundaries allows students to have better “subjective, tentative, and exploratory interpretation and intuition than to a logical formulaic process and the application of a rational body of knowledge” (Robert 2004; Schon 1983). Meanwhile, scholars of pedagogy disciplines encourage collaboration to comply with recent students’ centred approach of learning, a method of pedagogical approach that is proven to improve students learning capabilities as compared to teacher-centred learning.

In fact, working together with team spirit is an Islamic directive, as stated in Al-Hadith,

*“The hand of Allah is with the team (Jama’ah).
Then, whoever singles himself out (from the
Jama’ah) will be singled out for the Hell-Fire”,
(Sunon Al Tirmidhi).*

*“Faithful believers are to each other as the
bricks of a wall, supporting and reinforcing each
other. So saying, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)*

*clasped his hands by interlocking his fingers”,
(Sahih al-Bukhari).*

The concept does not indicate that students could not excel individually. It only stresses the importance of team work to strengthen knowledge and skills so that as individual, each person could excel. In any teamwork, individual is still important; however effective and efficient teamwork goes beyond individual accomplishments (Akramulla, 2010).

Myth 12: It is more important to finish a few extra drawings than sleep or mentally prepare for the design review

This myth indicates that “it is more important to finish a few extra drawings than sleep or mentally prepare for the design review.” Many students strive to complete their design work without having proper resting time at the last minutes of submission deadlines. It has been observed that this scenario is very common in the design studio. Yet, discussion on myth 9 has stressed out that if students work consistently throughout the given time allocation, issue of striving at last minutes would not arise. Discussion on myth 8 has also stressed the importance of having good time management, to allocate proper time for worldly affair, rest and *ibadah*. Islam has outlined the best way for human being to lead our life.

“Say: Shall We tell you of those who lose most in respect of their deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works? They are those who deny the Signs of their Lord and the fact of their having to meet Him (in the hereafter): vain will be their works, nor shall We, on the day of judgement, give them any weight. (Quran, 18: 103-104).

Myth 13: It is possible to learn about complex social and cultural issues while spending the majority of time sitting at a studio desk

Students who spend most of the time sitting at studio desk might be considered working very hard by their peers, yet the effectiveness of studying alone is proven not effective enough to develop students' comprehensive skills to be good architects. Required knowledge in architecture covers very wide horizon of disciplines; ranging from ergonomics of a chair to the economy of a country. Students should learn multiple methods of learning; self-learning, learning from peers, learning from teachers, and learning from society as well. This way, they consequently flourish their mental faculties and expand their capacities to analyses socio-cultural and economic problems. Students should have exposure to the expectation of society on them, knowing the concept of right and wrong, and be responsible to their parents, societies, and countries.

Concept of *ibadah* (doing good deeds) in Islam is not limited to performing the duties of five pillars of Islam only. In fact, Islam encourages the believers to inculcate a simple living, inspires to spread out after prayer and seek permissible livelihood. Islam promotes and stimulates creative thinking for someone earning in honest way, and encourages to sacrifices for the cause of mankind, people welfare and social harmony (Md. Habibullah, 1997).

Myth 14: Students do not have the power to make changes within architecture programs or the design studio

It is commonly known that students do not have authority to change architecture programme in any school of architecture, as the authority to do so belong to the established university they are studying in. AIAS (2006) states students do not have the power to make changes within architecture programs or the design studio. However, students have the capabilities to make changes on their perception and behaviour towards learning architecture. Since there is no university who officially outline studio culture to be implemented in it pedagogical approach; therefore, it depends on

students to form the culture they want. They are free to either inherit the existing studio culture that has been established for more than a hundred years, or they could form their own studio culture that move forward for the improvement of students' performance and proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion, there is a need to change the existing studio culture, as it has been criticized to jeopardize students' performance. The change should come collaboratively from students, upon reflection of weakness of the existing systems. In this instance, it is observed that the existing studio culture is actually derived from the western or secular way of learning approach, where striving for the best is more of personal glory rather than for the betterment of *ummah* (mankind). The discussion of myths 1 until myth 14 had also highlighted how certain studio culture is not in compliance with proper Muslims way of life, as guided by the Al-Quran and Al-hadith. As such, Muslims in Islamic countries could adopt the architectural educational approach of their western counterpart, provided that they take the best values and integrate the Islamic values on it. With proper integration, islamisation of knowledge could be fulfilled in the mission of improving studio culture, and architectural education system as a whole.

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