

**THE POTENTIAL OF FLORAL PATTERN ART  
IN MALAY TEXTILE EMBROIDERY:  
A FORMALISTIC ANALYSIS**  
*(POTENSI SENI CORAK BUNGA DALAM SULAMAN TEKSTIL  
MELAYU: SATU ANALISIS FORMALISTIK)*

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**Abstract**

This research studies the aesthetic processes of creating stylized, colourful, floral motifs on fabric. Malay fabric often include various floral motifs such as hibiscus, pitcher plant, rose and frangipani. These floral motifs have the potential to be stylized in more innovative and creative ways. Some designers and artists who are proficient in pattern design did not receive a formal education in pattern design, but their expertise and skills are impressive nonetheless. The quality and visual aesthetics of textile designs are highly dependent on the motifs created through skilled labors and design. Floral motif is not only visually appealing, but also has its own meaning and reflects the creative values of its designer. Floral motifs are representative of the affinity of Malay culture with nature. This research might inspire designers and inform current society that floral motifs can be innovated in scientific and creative manners. Furthermore, floral motifs.

**Keywords:** Textile, Pattern design, Floral, Embroidery, Creative, Innovation.

### *Abstrak*

*Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk memperlihatkan keindahan dari segi olahan struktur binaan dan warna yang terdapat pada potensi motif flora untuk fabrik. Terdapat beberapa motif flora dalam dunia Melayu dipilih sebagai sampel kajian seperti bunga raya, periuk kera, mawar, kemboja dan lain-lain.*

*Motif-motif bunga tersebut mempunyai potensi untuk diolah secara lebih inovatif dan kreatif. Penyelidikan ini mendapati bahawa ramai pereka dan penggiat seni yang mahir dari segi reka corak tidak terdidik secara formal tentang mengolah rekacorak dengan tertib dan sistematik tetapi pengetahuan dan kemahiran yang dimiliki oleh mereka adalah ditahap yang boleh dibanggakan. Mutu dan keindahan lakaran tekstil sangat bergantung kepada motif yang dihasilkan oleh tenaga mahir atau perekanya. Motif-motif flora bukan sahaja indah secara visual tetapi juga mempunyai makna yang tersendiri serta nilai kreativiti pereka yang mengilhamkannya. Pemilihan subjek flora dan penampilan motif berkenaan sangat serasi dengan sekeliling alam semulajadi dalam dunia Melayu. Penyelidikan ini dapat memberi keyakinan kepada pereka dan masyarakat hari ini bahawa motif-motif flora berpotensi diinovasikan secara lebih kreatif dan ilmiah. Ianya juga perlu dilestarikan demi pembangunan industri tekstil tanahair dalam memertabatkan produk kraf Melayu di persada yang lebih tinggi.*

*Kata kunci: Tekstil; Reka corak; Flora; Hiasan; Kreatif; Inovasi.*

### **Introduction**

Floral motif is known to be the main visual in many artworks and it is stylized to be a pattern design that enhances handcraft such as textile. Designers who style design pattern for textile making usually get inspiration from the nature near them. Floral motif is considered as motif

that comprises of flowers or shrubs in our surrounding. According to Norlelawaty Haron (2015), floral motif is used frequently especially in batik technique and other artistry such as wood or copper engraving. The nature is the main inspiration for West Malaysian Malay. Nature is more prominent as floral motif rather than other sources such as animal in Malay culture. Textile industry without motif embroidery would be dull and lackluster. There are plenty of floral motifs that are frequently used as decoration design pattern for Malay textile such as bamboo shoots, flowers, leaves, twigs and plant shoots. They are arranged in many looks and style to attract people's interest especially among those who are interested in products for modeling. According to Rosnani Mohamad @ Mat Yasin 2014, motif arrangement consists of two arrangements which are bunga tabor arrangement and full arrangement (Rosnani Mohamad @ Mat Yasin, 2014). *Songket* motif is made up of two important elements such as natural element and plant element. The most frequently used motif in textile embroidery is usually floral or leaves or shoots and fruit stalk.

Floral motif is made with weaving technique in which it will result in geometrical pattern. Motif composition and stylization in textile make it a unique and creative artwork. Motif creation is categorized as visual art as its content such as motif, style and arrangement makes it applicable for perceptive response as its aesthetic. Furthermore, the principle and basic design knowledge were not given to designers and skilled labor and thus there was no formal aesthetic value in it. This research is important and aligned with Malay history as mentioned by Purwo Prihatin that the Malays were creative, innovative, and dynamic and generally part of world culture. Hence, it is not strange if there are traces of influences from foreign culture in this country. They only incorporated foreign influences in their culture if it fits. Hence, aesthetic meaning is massive and thus, knowledge on art history, art appreciation and art critics would be commendable. What we perceive as artistic in the aesthetic perspective nowadays might be acceptable to a certain group's culture in the past in which they could have visually expressed their creative ideas visually or physically. According to Harry Hamersma (1994), he stated that beauty is expressed through aesthetic object. Some of the characteristics in reality of aesthetics is that it comes in all shapes of expression such as beauty of

the physical and spiritual, beauty of nature and beauty of art, as well as research on human emotion as reaction towards things that are beautiful, magnificent, tragic, devastating and everything else.

Motif is a sketch drawn repeatedly to achieve a complete stylized pattern that stands out the most on fabric as it is an important element and has its own meaning. In the context of floral motif in the Malay world, Siti Zainon Ismail mentioned that floral motif is arranged in Malay textile clothing such as cindai, songket, teluk berantai or jong sarat which can only be worn by the royals (Siti Zainon Ismail,1991). The pattern or composition of flowers determines the royal sovereignty. However, the design was made according to the king's preference. The type of flower has its own meaning and thus should be thoroughly chosen. As an example, a rose signifies a cure for calamity and it should be worn by infant in the hope that he or she will live under the protection of God.

Generally, the motif frequently used in Malay fabric art is influenced by the nature and the lifestyle of its people while designers and art enthusiasts were influenced by the custom, religion, belief, geography and the nature. Hence, floral element is fundamental in Malay art textile as it expresses embroidery motif through patterns of flowers and shrubs. Generally, vine is chosen as motif pattern for its delicate tendrils or twining and its versatility to be styled according to the designer's taste.

## **Research Objective**

The research objective is to answer research questions by providing a proper guideline to solve problems which are:

1. To preserve and maintain the potential of batik floral motif in the industry
2. To bring awareness towards Islamic prohibition against drawing or designing living things on clothing decorations
3. To cultivate a formal understanding amongst designers and batik makers in producing a floral design that has aesthetic value and could easily be commercialized.

In general, floral motif is the main motif for decoration in artworks such as Malay textile and other art crafts. The Malay community is rich with unique and creative craft goods. The use of floral motif especially in textile has led many designers and art enthusiast to pursue decorative pattern design in developing textile industry in Malaysia.

## **Problem Statements**

Pattern design is the head of embroidery decoration in the textile world and it is said to be the motto of textile embroidery with the application of ideas for motif. The floral motif is an art rooted in Malay traditional apparel which reflects their symbols, identity and culture. Furthermore, craft products such as Malay clothing which has existed for decades should be preserved and dignified so that it is not outdated. The community is responsible for preserving its culture and art so that it lasts especially in this globalized world. In other words, we need to advocate the beauty of pattern design that in order to innovate and sustain the art that embodies this Malay inheritance.

Problems occur when many designers or batik makers make up their designs based on ethnic, abstract, geometric motifs and so on. For example, designers around Kuala Lumpur often use urban or abstract motifs in their batik production. A young designer in Malaysia, Megat Faisal Mizan Ab Halim (2016) pointed out that the urban batik pattern is an option because it is suitable for all ages. The combination of old batik pattern from East and overseas country like Indonesia with new batik pattern and three-dimensional (3D) texture had become an urban trend in today's fashion spread.

Another designer Amir Harith Mat Kashim (2018) who produces superheroes motif to attract buyers, especially to the younger generation. He noted that old motifs such as *pucuk rebung* or *awan larat* are still admirable but there should be modern elements to attract young people by applying the futuristic concept in *batik*. This statement was agreed by Zunita Zulkifli an entrepreneur who designed a dyed braided *batik* pattern with modern elements to attract young people. She noted that

besides design motifs, cotton and linen are cheap fabrics which are the main factors that attract young people to wear this *batik* designs.

It is apparent that the popularity of flora motifs is less prominent in today's fashion industry. According to Roslan Hussain (2008) who is a fashion designer, he does not restrict the use of patterns or motifs on his fabrics. Although he knows most fashion fans are more focused on plant motifs such as *pucuk rebung*, *paku pakis* and *tampuk manggis*. In contracts, he still uses a combination of motif such as abstract, ethnic people, sea creatures and safari that is still attractive if the design and color combination are tolerable.

Founder of the Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week (KLFW), Andrew Tan (2018) states that often the younger generations refuse to wear traditional textile because they are unwilling to be labeled as old (at age) or too conservative. They describe that by wearing apparels with batik motifs are outdated. In initiative in developing their interest towards batik motifs through modernization of designs.

The above statements can be illustrated by sustaining flora motifs to be made in line with other motifs or images. Flora motifs are most likely to be attracted by certain groups. This can be seen from Fairuz Wan Kadir (2009), which has been working on batik for over 10 years. According to him, soft and woven fabrics are more attractive to customers who choose to make it into traditional *baju kurung* which is more suitable compared cotton. Cottons are usually used to make sleeping apparels such as *Kaftan*. Other than the types of fabric, the pattern or design also affects buyer's interest. In this modern times, batik also has innovated in designs and patterns that are now more contemporary. The *batik* patterns that he created include diversity through the colors and its creeping flower petal. He used plain background pastel colors to enhance the flower patterns to appear fresher and brighter.

For famous *Batik* producers such as Nur Arfa Batik, even though innovations for its designs need to be holistically done, innovation in popularization of flora motifs are always developed for the sake of preservation of aesthetic values towards *batik* and flowers that are could

not be separated. According to its Executive Director Noor Hijerah Hanafiah (2015), the new collection of Noor Arfa is a wonderful inspiration for her creations and the beauty attracted her to produce more nature motifs into her *batik* designs.

In the context of developing these floral designs, awareness should be cultivated into society. Entrepreneurs and designers should enhance this *batik* patterns as to strengthen them by applying them into new designs. There is still awareness among several entrepreneurs and designers who always maintain the flora motif in the world of *Batik* but, the fashion design today has been dominated by motives such as urban, retro, geometric, abstract and so on.

Moreover, the Malays who inhabited the Malay Archipelago claimed that floral pattern in textile embroidery which contains flowers and plants to be their art and tradition by rights. Art comprises of various shapes and uses. Source of ideas to create variants for pattern design and motif decoration would be copying live images from the surroundings of the motif designer. Malaysia is an ideal place for designing floral pattern as the country is surrounded by forests which could be a great source of ideas for art enthusiast and designers. The nature has a lot to offer for reference such as the flowers, shrubs and plants to inspire designers and art enthusiast by applying floral decoration onto textile based in Malaysia.

Floral images in the Malay world were the inspiration for designers to decorate motif on Malaysian apparels. Most of them would alter and style floral images such as stylizing *pucuk rebung* motif and *tampuk manggis* motif. Other floral motifs that can be found in Malay apparels would be cedar, clove, jasmine, ylang-ylang and screw pine leaf and betel. Application of floral motif as the main motif for textile embroidery is highly acceptable in Malay community. Research analysis has found that entrepreneur and designers have chosen floral motif as main motif for their design in fabric production industry, significantly, the textile production based on *batik janting* and *batik blok* in Kelantan and Terengganu. The Malays, especially their artists and designer are conscious towards Islamic prohibition on referencing living creatures as decoration such as in clothing or on the wall. Research analysis has also found that the absence of insights on

pattern design principles has led many designers and entrepreneur textile to copy motif from local and overseas references.

In addition, fauna motif such as butterflies, bugs, birds and chickens were among the designer's favorite for their design. Furthermore, cosmology such as geography and the universe which comprises of mountains, waves, stars, sky, cloud, the moon, and the sun were part of motif for textile embroidery too. These motifs were inspiration for ideas to create textile pattern design for showcase in Malaysia. However, floral motifs are usually favorite among designers in creating fabric for their showcases. They would sketch the motif and applicate it to the surface of fabric as their initial ideas developed. The approach to textile techniques differed as the motif adaptation was different even though the material was only textile. As an example, songket textile would apply *menyungkit* technique, a textile based of tekat is made by *menyulam* technique while batik textile is made through stamping and *canting*.

Culture played an important role in inspiring ideas for motif creation, part of the Malay culture that has strongly influenced the designer back then was folklore stories and real stories told by the ancestors and then adapted into sketches and finalized into craft products such as *tekat* fabric, *sulaman*, *batik*, and engraving. According to Siti Zainon Ismail, (1986) she stated that motif is created through imagining previous experience and everyday scenes from people's daily life especially from the surrounding nature. In the process of making motif for Malay traditional apparel, designers would alter how the surrounding would look like on the fabric such as the clouds would look as if they are floating away, the ocean waves as if waving, the mountains and hills would be alternate to suit the Malay style.

According to Haziayah Hussin (2006), she mentioned how the overall floral motif is the most used motif. Floral motif goes through alternation through stylization and modification until it is not recognizable as its original form. However, motif designers would creatively and brilliantly retain the identity of the floral motif in their design. This can be found in motif '*bunga penuh*' that is made in Terengganu and Kelantan while '*bunga tabur*' in Pahang. The technique used differs from



one state to another depending on request, demand and the local taste. Sustainability can be preserved but to inspire fresh ideas to meet the demand of today's market, comprehensive supervision must be operated as well.

Islamic influence has changed every approach and way of thinking of the Malay in every aspect of life. Hence, it has also influenced how art is produced where excessive decoration is off limits; this reason alone has an impact on designers and Malay art enthusiast in creating fabric decoration. Islam prohibits its followers to create art that contradicts the teaching of Islam as it may lead people astray in one's belief in the religion. As an example, Islam prohibits Muslims from engraving or sculpting living spirits because doubtfully it would lead a Muslim's belief astray. The motif can be made only if the identity of spirit is lost so that it does not resemble the original image. It must be drawn in abstract.

In the past, designers and art enthusiasts had supportive family or family inheritance which is meant for close family members or descendants as it was a tradition. Meanwhile, today's scenario has changed as designers and art enthusiasts get a formal education in art academies and institutions. It is said that art attraction relies on designers' ability in styling textile embroidery that is floral motif in a higher level. Although, what is the best way to inspire new ideas for existing floral motifs and does design examples must be addressed according to the flow of time and consumer's taste in today's world.

## **Methodology**

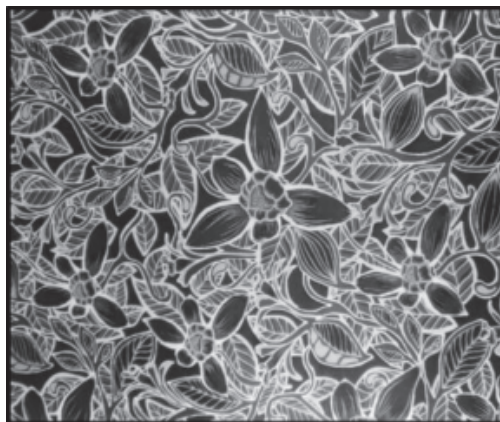
This is a qualitative research hence the data analysis is descriptive in explaining how stylization of floral pattern design is produced by young designers contemporarily. The potential of floral motif pattern design is selected to be analysed in this research because it is important for these motifs to relate with designer's insight and knowledge in Malay culture. Hence, this research will carry out qualitative method **descriptively** in the first stage, researcher has to experience and analyze thoroughly the use and stylization of floral motif in Malay community. The main focus is to clarify what is in a certain motif which comprises of the measurement

including length, height and size. It is process of learning in depth on the format and how it is used.

**Formal Analysis** data is comprehensive research on every visual work including analysis on knowing the basic ingredient of an artwork such as lines, look, shape, color, space and texture. This research also analyzes design principles such as balance, harmony, repetition, unity, versatility, rhythm, appeal, direction and movement. Formal analysis is to explain art features which are elements of visual art language. Theory and practical comprehension would impact the production and knowledge in visual artworks.

**Interpretation** or translation can be defined as impression, assumption and imagination which relate to rationale behind motif. In this context, we could assume the technique or the material used. Interpretation is a process of attaining definition and insights with clarity and thoroughly. As an example, an abstract flower pattern is hard to comprehend by the user and thus, in depth knowledge is needed to find out the meaning. An interpretation must be theorized in a scholarly manner so that every textile consumer would understand. The last stage is by **marking** the result in the description, analysis and interpretation. In summary, according to Feldman, he stated that art criticism means a discussion on an artwork be it in verbal or written form (Feldman, 1994). Art criticism is made with various perspectives in mind based on one system or an organized strategy comprising descriptive aspect, analysis, interpretation and judgment. Art criticism is important as it influences the profession of an artist, perception and general appreciation, preference and art collector's strategy, gallery owner and art promoter. Hence, good art criticism is said to be the best asset in determining an artist's artwork progress and visual art in general.

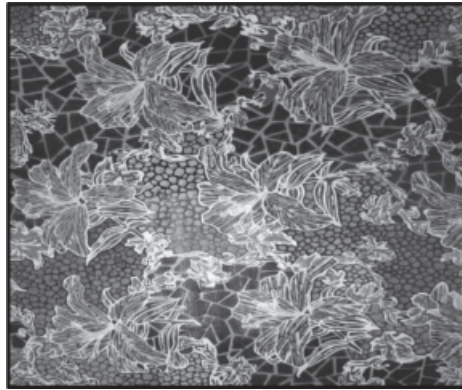
## Data Analysis



**Figure 1: Vanilla Planifonia**  
Artist : Nurul Jannah bte Mohammad Norddin

**Table 1: Vanilla Planifolia: Motives, Description & Interpretation**

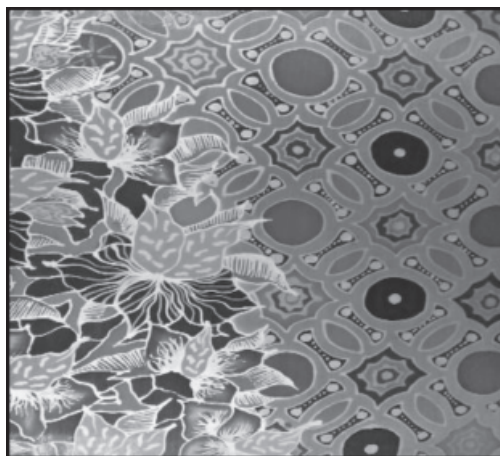
Motives	Description	Interpretation
Vanilla Planifolia Flower Motifs are tropical flowers which is suitable for Malaysian climate. It is a flower species of orchid category.	Vanilla Planifolia's is flower motifs that have balance and attractive composition when the arrangement is made in different sizes. The use of leaf motifs as a background combined with rubber leaves enhanced its pattern. The idea of this combinations are interesting because of its color combination that counter the elements between the colors of brown and green. The application of blue on the main motif (vanilla flower) makes the idea of this kind of pattern become creative and beautiful.	The creation of this pattern is a design that was innovated from a moderate design process that is not too drastic unlike traditional batik designs. The combination of designs (floral) using minimal motifs are compacted in this pattern. The usage of patterns (floral) that is suitable for modern batik innovations. Appropriate color applications play a large role towards this pattern design. The 'overall' design is quite suitable for batik designs today.



**Figure 2: Lilium**  
Artist : Siti Nursyamimi bte Yaakob

**Table 2: Lilium: Motives, Description & Interpretation**

Motives	Description	Interpretation
<p>The lily flower motif or its scientific name <i>lilium cansium L</i> is a famous species since ancient Greece. This flower is one of the plants that grows out of the tuber and there are about 100 species all together. Its characteristics are soft color and have unique fragrance. In fact, it is among the lushes flowers and every one (1) bud has six large petals, it creates a pleasant smell and has a variety of colors ranging from white, yellow, orange, pink, red and purple. Among the advantages of lily flowers is that they are able to live longer and the fragrance stays longer and it is attractive compared to other flowers.</p>	<p>The process in applying lily by using the same composition and sizes for its flower patterns. Textures are used by using <i>canting</i> techniques to enhance the flower petals. The colors are put on top of braided petals using two (2) different colors. The background is design by using abstract images alternately. Geometric images with purple combination and organic images with blue, pink and lilac combination is applied. Leafy designs are also used to connect flower motifs from each other to differentiate backgrounds and its flower patterns.</p>	<p>The motifs produced between the main motives, the second and the background designs have their own strengths in a series of patterns. The creation had formed a unity that gives the pattern strength and more harmonious and graceful floral design. Flora styling combined with additional waxwork on the flower petals illustrates that the unique flora batik has the potential to be on its own class. Processes that combine a variety of characters, especially organic and geometric ideas on the backdrop. The use of more vibrant and varied colors makes this flora pattern to have potential and it is relevant for today's.</p>



**Figure 3:** Alstroemeria Flowers  
Artist : Nur Syahanim bte Namami

**Table 3:** Alstroemeria Flowers: Motives, Description & Interpretation

Motives	Description	Interpretation
<p>Alstroemeria Flower or commonly known as lily was originated from the Netherlands. When this flower is planted, the possibilities for it to grow is high. Its soft stems are filled with water. The leaves are long and slim similar to acacia leaf. Alstroemeria flowers blooms all year long not depending on any weather conditions or season.</p>	<p>The creation of Alstroemeria flower motifs is not distinguished by the color of the petals alone but it is created alternately on the design. Purple petals are quite large compared to the small ones where the petals are colored in blue. The brown image of a twigs becomes the connector between the other motifs. The background motifs are dominated by greenish colors. The designs were illustrated at the body of the fabric that is inspired by <i>Batik Sarong Melayu</i>.</p>	<p>The whole idea of this technique is inspired by the <i>sarong</i> fabric structure with the combination of overall sketches. Traditional elements with modern touches can be seen in the combination of color and motifs on the body fabric. Brown variations is created was interpreted into the design to make it look more traditional and unique. The aesthetic values of this Alstroemeria floral design and the application of color contrast is a great ideas for this fabric. The pattern arrangements is innovated so that the design from this motives could be used widely.</p>

## **Findings**

### *Each Textile Making Has Basic Visual Arts In Its Pattern Design*

Pattern design can be defined as organized, planned or freestyle motif composition. It is defined as a certain artistic form that could meet cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain. Motif is a decoration element in art object, which include all type of Malay textile. Motif is stylized and elaborated from organic pattern design or geometrical as well as its own distinctive composition and technique.

Different pattern can be achieved through Planned and unplanned decoration but designers must be skilled, determined and knowledgeable in it. Pattern design is universal and thus, thinking exercises relating to basic design and design principle is a must. All races and communities have their own artistic value, culture and identity in pattern design. Different pattern design and embroidery and artwork of a certain culture are the result of separation between communities who live in geographically different locations. However, different communities make contact and that is how an impact on pattern design which values art and culture becomes the foundation of integration between communities.

Based on the research of floral motif in Malay textile, the Malay is said to be attentive to formal elements of visual art. Malay textile designers and art enthusiasts have understood and identified motif and its stylization in creating a certain textile pattern design. Art enthusiasts had opportunity to create planned floral pattern, planned pattern and traditional pattern through a certain technique. Artwork appreciation taught them the learning process and additional knowledge in the fundamental of art for future generation. Furthermore, the importance of pattern design is to beautify a part or surface of textile. It also functions as an embroidery element which has aesthetic values. If we look into whatever motif made by Malays, there will always be visual arts such as lines, texture, shapes and colours which have been used vastly. Basic elements are modified with design principles in mind such as balance, contrast, composition, repetition and others. Hence, comprehension in visual art makes motif designs by Malay designers more stable and successful. The fundamentals and universal art principles make Malay motif decoration beautiful and

have its own aesthetic visual art. Malay designers have also created their own techniques and design principles and thus, some terms are born from making Malay textile decoration. Terms such as soft, beautiful, delicate, meaningful, useful and other became the basis and principles for design as it is more synonymous with Malay designers in explaining an artwork.

*The Domination and Beauty of Floral Motif as Basis for Malay Textile Motif*

The change in Malay sociocultural has affected the development of decoration characteristics on Malay fabric especially through its motif. Floral motif can be categorized into two groups which are traditional and contemporary floral motif which is a combination of new elements in Malay textile decoration. The Golden Age is when foreign influence was strong in west Malaysia in terms of arts and culture. Local decoration was immersed in foreign elements and customized with local elements. The level of formalistic comprehension showed clearly that one motif has transformed. Malay floral motif was made with an approach to Islamic elements and this motif style was spread widely until it became a trend in the whole Malay Archipelago. Application technique of Malay decoration also changed according to the demand of culture and religion of the locals.

In addition, various floral motifs carry its own meaning in Malay textile. The common motif used in pattern design was inspired by plants that carry many meanings in reflecting the teachings of Malay culture and the religion. As an example, in the past, every elders, traditional leaders, locals and art enthusiasts should understand the shape of motif, its colours, the meaning of symbols that can be found on Malay clothing especially fabric like songket. This obligation only means that they could understand the meaning behind every inspired motif. They could also customize the use of floral motif for local events and celebration and it must be appropriate. One of the most popular motifs at that time was bamboo shoot as its shape is modifiable and can be redesign into various styles. Bamboo shoot was quite a dominant motif and frequently used in pattern design for head piece and the shoulder part of Malay clothing. The main feature of bamboo shoot motif is its triangular shape from the tunas of the bamboo itself. This motif was also the main decoration on

the surface of songket and Malay batik sarong, it is also interesting as to how bamboo shoot motif goes with many names such as *Pucuk Rebung Berjuang*, *Pucuk Rebung Tunjuk Langit*, *Pucuk Rebung Kendung*, *Pucuk Rebung Gigi Bota* and *Pucuk Rebung Putu* or *Pucuk Rebung Siku Keluang*. Symbolically, the influence of floral motif such as bamboo shoot was also a portrayal of its meaning that carries good will such as inspired from a Malay proverb, "*jika mahu dilenturkan buluh, biarlah dari rebungnya*". The lesson from this philosophy is in order to shape good habits in children; we must start teaching them in earliest stage of life. If children are not taught how to behave when they are young then it could damage their growth. Looking into the history of Malay motif, most floral motif has the potential to grow further in the future. Creative approach such as menggabung and mengolah could lead to futuristic design pattern. By utilizing new approaches in stylizing motif, it would still retain its features, characteristics and philosophy.

Meanwhile, in the batik world, many floral motifs are inspired by the nature. Floral motif is created with attentiveness of Malay community towards their surroundings. They believe that inspiration comes in many forms and anything interesting and has its own philosophy can be used as design pattern. Hence, we could assume that their floral motif is a portrayal of the harmony between Malay communities with the nature. The richness of nature is the main factor as to how Malay community values each type of flora until there are plenty of floral motifs that are stylized into decoration or pattern design.

Floral motif formally functions as:

1. To decorate batik fabric. Floral motif such as flower, bud, leaf, *ranting* and *pucuk* is used singularly or scattered
2. To decorate the body of batik sarong with:
  - a. flowers, buds, pistils, twigs and shoots are arranged in soft flat design
  - b. leaves, petals, twigs and flowers
  - c. flowers are arranged vertically
3. To decorate the selvedge of fabric, common motif used is bamboo shoot, Variety of patterns is changed not realistically but a mix of organic and geometric styles.



Production procedure also undergoes adjustment from traditional procedure of batik block to canting to printing by using simpler and spontaneous canting technique. Floral motif is stylized in a modern style while color selection and type of fabric used vary according to consumer's demand and comfort. Floral motif made with batik technique has different floral patterns such as spider flower, creeper plant, tarul, and *betel* leaf, flowers of mango tree, *champak*, orchid, *dayang senandung* and rohani.

#### *Islamic Elements in Malay Art*

The core of Malay community in Malaysia is Islam while external element that has assimilated within the community is the outcome of foreign culture which is brought by other communities through migration from the Archipelago. Muslim Malay art focuses on the concept of Islamic art and who are the Malay Muslims and their artwork. This statement proves that a huge assimilation between local art and Islam and both subjects have harmonized within the world of Malay community. Furthermore, Tylor (1871) mentioned that culture can be defined as a community which: "culture is an overall complex that comprises of beliefs, knowledge, laws, customs, arts, abilities and practices followed by people in a society"

Generally, art is perceived as a human creation that expresses its designer or creator, in all kinds of decoration and sometimes its functionality is measured. The aspects of art could be calligraphy, sculpture, architecture, textile, pottery, dance and music. To produce artistry, a creator must possess the skills, creativity, artistic mind and knowledge of nature and life. When an artist reaches a high level in art, his pleasure also increases. However, it is human nature to think of other aspects other than art as well. People would ask themselves why an artwork is made a certain way. These artists seek intrinsic meaning in the artworks while expanding knowledge at the same time. In order to describe an art, they must know the meaning first.

*Tauhid* is a doctrine in islam which is a popular topic in discussing islamic art concept. Tauhid has been the main feature of islamic art since it is the core of islamic teachings and islam teaches muslims to strengthen their tauhid. Every aspect of life should be following the tauhid concept be it through our thinking and actions (Sidi Gazalba 1977, Uthman El-

Muhammady 2001). Islam does not compare hidup rohaniah from worldly affairs because of tauhid (*La ilaha ill'Allah*). Hence, art is important as its ability to enhance one's tauhid which also strenghtens one's belief in islam. What's unique and interesting about Malay motif design is that the designers are Malay muslims who understand the concept of tauhid. They practice islamic teachings in their daily life and thus, they highly respect islamic art in their artworks. Islamic values have promoted a unique expression in many application of floral motifs.

Islam is a religion that teaches people to think positive, sincerity, gentleness and good manners which are expressed in Malay fabric motif. Ever since the arrival of Islam in the 14th century to Malay Archipelago, the Arabs, Persian, Indian and Malay embraced the religion. Islamic teachings have inspired Malay art textile in which there is a significant implication in new motifs in geometrical forms, flowers, plants and leaves. Animal motif was not used gradually as new motif forms emerged. The presentation of Malay textile industry was attractive as they were inspired by many elements which make them versatile especially in the presentation of decoration of batik and songket. Floral decoration made by Malay designers and art enthusiasts followed the Islamic rules; to do good deeds and leave bad conducts. Islamic concept in Malay motif design was obvious on their clothing in presenting the might and holy God as the floral decoration is inspired by God's creation.

## **Conclusions**

This research uncovers the creative description and expression of floral motif aesthetic for Malay fabric decoration. The formalistic analysis focuses on the fundamentals and principles of visual art and design principles. The historical, development, production and expansion of textile industry incorporate tropical floral motif which is significant to Malay culture and Islamic art influence in the future. The progress of this research is within the scope of design quality, shape and looks and the production process to ensure the best results and quality for Malay fabric. Adaptation of the nature as inspiration for motif design through appreciation of nature and thus stylized creatively onto the surface of fabric.

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