New tool helps designers consciously enrich design concepts with human values

Introduction
Despite the significance of human values in everyday life, only few design approaches concentrate on this, and there is even a little agreement between them to identify these values. This research is based on the question “how to help designers with a tool so they can enrich design concepts with human values?” It is intended to support designers bringing human values consciously and explicitly into the design process, even if they personally do not value them.

Step 1- Exploration of a value framework
The literature study showed the lack of a comprehensive value framework for design. Such a framework is needed to emphasise what human values are, summarise lists of values and simplify thinking about and discussing them. We did a worldwide online survey to explore how different people relate human values to each other, and how the group them into categories. The result is a new value grouping layout with nine value groups. We used this outcome to design a value framework, which is the basis for our design tool.

Step 2- Development of a design tool
Due to the natural conflict between the abstract level of human values and practical level of design, we made a tangible medium to bridge this gap. Through several design iterations, we designed a card-based tool, called HuValue, including our value framework and some examples of activity, people, and product. Also, we proposed some relevant design activities to apply the tool for defining vision, ideation, conceptualisation and validation to help designers perceiving and analysing every object, subject, and situation in design from a value point of view and discuss them in detail.

Step 3- Evaluation of the tool
We did an experimental study to test the applicability and effectiveness of HuValue in a design process. As this tool was designed for designers and design educators, a group of bachelor design students were randomly selected to take part in this study. After informing them about the intended usage of the tool, the students were asked to use the tool in their design projects. The data were collected via questionnaires and the students’ final deliverables of their conceptual design.

Conclusion
The experimental study outcomes highlighted that HuValue is applicable in a design process and also it is effective to embody human values in design concepts of designers. Therefore, we can conclude that raising awareness of designers about human values and facilitating using a value point of view in their design seems to be helpful to emphasise human values in design. However, the current study is limited by time and further investigations and developments are necessary. Next steps are to digitalize the tool and make it more simple and persuasive to use. We also recommend investigating application of the tool in a design for changing behaviour, and how to use it for preserving and/or changing values.