

THE ROLE OF DESIGNERS IN THE SOCIAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Designers have been active promoters who campaign for the wellbeing of life through the convenience and practicality created through design (Manzini, 2015). However, it has only recently been realized that the positive intentions discovered to be unsustainable that leads society to become very consumptive, thus causing a negative impact on the social, economic, and environmental problems we face today. Designers who are contributing to this problem need to be part of the solution, therefore it is necessary to develop tools or methodological frameworks to help designers get new ideas, develop solutions and utilize technology to create engaging sustainability initiatives for society. The major problem that society faces today is the lack of sensitivity to sustainable ways of living. Social problems play an important role in initiating the desired change, the power of design as a means to change behaviour into interests among the people, especially interests in the field of sustainable design or what is now commonly referred to as social design. The main purpose of the social design was to initially design products that require the least energy to produce and can be recycled. However, the development of massive industrialization produces a negative impact on the environment and society so that the development of social design shifts focus on things that affect change, the design must be able to change user behaviour.

Keyword: social design, social impact, community, responsibility, sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological developments have a great effect on the world's ecosystems and way of life. The fourth industrial revolution or commonly called Industry 4.0 began to change the way of producing goods, where all human resources were replaced with machine power that was controlled by artificial intelligence. The industrial revolution 4.0

is even being said to be able to significantly improve the economy and quality of life (Baenanda, 2019). With technological advances, the simplicity in product manufacturing makes many companies utilize design to improve the display and function of their products. Designers take many approaches to product innovation, differentiating their brand from competitors.

This regard makes design play an important role in free-market capitalism. By making products according to customer needs (user-centric), encouraging people to be more consumptive; with an efficient process, making the company to get more profit. However, this makes the world fight against pollution, education inequality, imbalance, and climate change, therefore, a more sustainable approach is needed in designing. Rapid technological developments and the occurrence of the negative impact of industrialization have made advanced countries begin to make changes as an effort to minimize the gap between humans and technology.

The momentum of the 2008 monetary crisis in Europe is assumed to become the initial occurrence of the social design discipline. There are also those who consider the emergence of social design due to changes in political conditions and changes in a more open government system. The necessity for social entrepreneurs, rapid developments in the digital technology sector, and the emergence of design activists who focus on environmental conditions and the generalization of economic and social inequality. Eventually, the world of education responded by applying new sciences related to social design, namely service design, design for communities, social innovation, and others with the expectation that the design school graduates would be able to work in the public sector and non-governmental organizations.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is a literature review, it's research that examines or critically reviews the knowledge, ideas, or findings that can be found in the academic-oriented literature as well as formulating the theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic, (Cooper, 2011) by collecting a number of books, articles, journals that are related to the problem and research objectives. This method is used to express various theories and discussions that are relevant to the problem that will be studied by the author as reference material in the discussion of research results.

DISCUSSION

History, background, and definition of Social Design

Social design has been popular in the last ten years; many researchers performed this topic development that referred to previous research written by (Victor Papanek, 1985); (Whiteley, 1993); dan (Lange, 2017). Moreover, many new sources that involved narratives about interactive design and service design were carried out by (Meroni, 2007)(Manzini & Coad, 2015); (Dorst, 2015); (Binder et al., 2015); (Kimbell, 2014). Besides independent researchers, several consultants such as IDEO, Think Public, and Participle were also playing a role in the social design development (Chen et al., 2015) that have been published in a book with the theme of the relationship between design and social sciences (Frascara, 2002).

There are many ways to describe the social design, including:

- Design for Good is the ethos of using problem-solving and design thinking for social change.
- Social Impact Design is a design that tries to resolve a humanitarian problem such as improving living quality for beneficiaries.
- Social Design is the design methodology application as a solution to complex human problems
- Design for Social Innovation is the interaction among people who are responsible for the positive and systemic impact that occurs within communication and the system that work internally, not externally of them

From the aforementioned description, it can be concluded that the social design essence is a design that concerns the designer's roles and responsibilities in society, and the use of the design process to carry out social change (Jain & Hrudaya VY, 2019).

The designer also has a role as a catalyst in the social development sector since the design is related to the following:

Process Driven

The design provides a framework to discover, define, develop, and produce; this regard is very important when attempting to solve great and chaotic social problems such as hunger and climate change

Systemic

A designer observes, describes, analyzes, designs, prototypes and evaluates the behavior and results of complex systems from various perspectives and applies thinking system methodologies towards problems. A designer is a great connector and consistently viewing problems from every angle.

Grounded

Design is based on people's needs; the idea is not only come from above but from anywhere and therefore values are redefined by providing power to those people closest to the problem. This approach has been tested in social development.

Collaborative

The design uses a multidisciplinary approach, is open to various ways of collaboration and providing feedback.

Design for Social Impact

The social engagement model studied by (Micklethwaite et al., 2020) states that socially responsible design or design for needs is an important agenda in higher education. It is very important for engineering and design graduates to be aware of their responsibilities in their professional activities, understand their ability to make a positive contribution to the global community, as follows:

a. Acting for the marginalized community

“The majority of the world's designers are focusing all their efforts on product and service development for 10% of the richest customers in the world exclusively. The design revolution is needed to reach the other 90%”. The power of social design to promote transformational change and improving people's welfare (Smith, 2007). Most people in developing countries are marginalized, they are unable to live properly and lead healthy and productive lives (Melles et al., 2011). However, this marginalization does not

only occur in third world countries, many advanced countries are still facing problems of poor health, limited facilities for the elderly and people with disabilities, and a poor quality of life that reduces an individual's potential to make a meaningful contribution to society.

b. Design as the agent of change

Product design is considered to have a fundamental role in the occurrence of consumerism (MARGOLIN, 1988). Products were often associated with consumers who were later on burdened with social, environmental, and economic impacts. Whereas designers may not always be the cause of this problem, they have the technical capability and expertise that can produce a better solution. Engagement among designers and end-users becomes the fundamental point to the successful implementation of social design.

c. Design for social innovation

Social impact is related to the capacity to create positive social change in society and individuals. Designers have a responsibility to imagine and present in the form of material and immaterial products that can solve human problems on a large scale and contribute to social prosperity (Margolin & Margolin, 2002). In recent years, designers have been able to play an important role as 'society shapers' (Tromp et al., 2011) through design interventions that promote behavior change and social impact.

d. Design activism

Fuad-Luke identifies 'design activism' as a practice that occurs in which designers use the power of design for the greater good. This regard is also supported when design experts actively promote social innovation (Manzini & Coad, 2015). These projects provoke new definitions of design practice, assigning designers at the center of a new paradigm as the promoter of social change.

Social Design in Indonesia

Today's society is facilitated, designers always innovate to create comfort and practicality in designing (Manzini & Coad, 2015). However, it was realized recently that these positive intentions make humans becoming more consumptive and harm the environment. In Indonesia, the problem of waste management is still becoming a major problem, most of the household waste still ends up in the TPA or final disposal site which

is increasingly dense each day (Kartika Nurwigati Sumartiningtyas, 2020). Moreover, some rural areas don't have waste disposal facilities yet, consequently, people throw waste into rivers, causing various sanitation problems and flooding in Indonesia. The data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in February 2019, states that Indonesia produced more or less 64 million tons of waste per year. Only 60% is transported and disposed of to landfill, 10% is recycled, and the remaining 30% is unmanaged and pollutes the environment. "In 2025, we can realize what the president has planned in that year, can our waste management be 100 percent? That is still in a minimal consideration, with a 30 percent reduction and 70 percent waste handling," explained the president director of waste management, KLKH. Novrizal Tahar, ST, MSi.

The sustainability issue has reached all aspects of human life, the sustainable development issue was started with the declaration regarding the importance of all party awareness related to various global environmental issues. Basically, sustainable development is a development that is able to fulfil society's needs nowadays without neglecting the future generation's ability to fulfil their needs. As the process of change in which the resource utilization, investment direction, development orientation, and institutional change are always balanced and synergistically strengthen the potential of the present and the future to meet human needs and aspirations (Budihardjo & Sujarto, 1999). Sustainability has become part of our collective view of the world in recent years. Therefore, new maps are needed to navigate the dynamics of change in the construction of cities, buildings, and products.

The term of social design is still common among Indonesian graphic designers, although in the last ten years, social design has become an interesting research topic for researchers. Several consultants such as Participle, IDEO, and Think Public were also contributed to the social design development, there is at least one book that has been published concerning the relationship between design and the social sciences (Frascara, 2002). The problems of economic crisis, overconsumption, climate change, make the designer motivated to "do a good thing" for society. Many designers and companies act more responsibly towards the development of their products. For instance, focusing on the use of recycled materials, refusing to use child labor, and so on. Besides, designers also use their design skills to find solutions to social problems such as education, security, and health problems (Tromp et al., 2011).

As a developing country, the Indonesian government is also making various efforts to support the welfare improvement of its citizen. According to Bambang Brodjonegoro, former Minister of National Development Planning (PPN), there are at least five priority programs in 2020 which include human development and poverty alleviation with a total amount of budgeted fund of Rp 148.8 trillion; infrastructure and regional equal distribution with a total fund of Rp 73.5 trillion; value-added of the real sector, industrialization and employment opportunities with a total fund of 15.2 trillion; food, water, energy and environmental security programs with a total fund of Rp 42.5 trillion; and defense and security stability with a total fund of Rp45.1 trillion.

Government programs in improving social welfare also involve many product designers collaborating with local craftsmen or entrepreneurs in regions such as the inner island of Kalimantan, Maluku, and Papua islands. Designers are also challenged to develop traditional handicraft products in order to be more appropriate with the market needs. The government also performs an event for local craftsmen to be able to compete nationally and even globally by holding exhibitions for creative industries, crafts, *UMKM*, and so on. Moreover, from the private sector, many social enterprises also help craftsmen by giving craft skills in the regions where the economic conditions need to be supported. In this regard design also plays an important role in that field, the need for branding, packaging, and promotional media are the main keys so that these products can compete globally.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, design professionals have pushed beyond merely engaging with consumer culture and exploring new forms of practice (Chick, 2012). Design is used to overcome social problems to create innovative solutions ((Margolin & Margolin, 2002); (Fuad-Luke, 2013)). Considering this urgency, therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on design for sustainability that focuses specifically on the problems of visual communication design and technology application for each initiative being developed. Social design occurred as an effort to design a system of change by emphasizing collective values without being dominated by mere commercialization needs. Designers are required to have the ability to involve other parties in the design process with an emphasis on participatory values (Manzini, 2015). However, But in reality, the search for

design solutions for the society is mostly impossible to perform collaboration in the design process, so, designers complete the design process without involving other people.

Designers have become active promoters who campaign for the prosperity of life through the coziness and practicality created through design (Manzini, 2007). However, recently it has been realized that the positive intentions found are unsustainable which causes society to become very consumptive, therefore causing negative impacts on the social, economic, and environmental problems that we face today. Designers who have contributed toward this problem need to become part of the solution, therefore it is necessary to develop methodological tools or frameworks to support the designer to get new ideas, developing solutions, and utilizing technology to create sustainable initiatives that are attractive to society. The main problem faced by Indonesian society today is the lack of sensitivity in a sustainable way of life, Therefore, an initiative that encourages the community to contribute to the process of sustainable initiative ideas is needed for young designers and their implementation using appropriate technology.

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