

THE SHARIA VALUE IN THE DESIGN PROCESS OF SYAFAAT MARCOMM AGENCY

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Abstract: *Design process is a problem solving process from the problem solver for client. In Yogyakarta, there is a problem solving agency which is solving the communication visual problem named Syafaat Marcomm. Syafaat marcomm labels its agency using Sharia value. Sharia itself means the rules in Islam. Thus, this research conducted to identify the position of the value in the design process, The methods for data collection used participant observation, non-participant observation and semi structured interview. Etnometodology and unstructured interview is conducted for the data collection step using etic perspective. Meanwhile, the non participant used the emic perspective. The study revealed that the position of value (this case is Sharia) in the design process is framing. Because its mechanism reflect is reflection in action which applied in Syafaat Marcomm. This model was applied whether for the recent situation or the new ones. Moreover, the design process in Syafaat Marcomm consists of eight steps, nevertheless only two steps of the design process which execute using Sharia, those are problem identification and synthesis.*

Keywords: design process, value in design, value as framing, sharia design process

INTRODUCTION

Design is an activity to solve problems related to how designer solve clients' problems. This concept applies to all design science branches, including visual communication design. There are four stages of problem solving according to Pertina [1]. The first stage is recognizing the problem and then devising a plan or design to solve the problem. The third is carrying out the plan that has been made. And the last is performing evaluation on the solution produced.

Sharia concept has developed in various business sectors in Indonesia since 1990's, one of examples is the development of sharia bank, according to Yuswohadi [2]. Other sectors also have begun to explicitly apply sharia concept, such as hotel, insurance company, cosmetic company, and advertising agency. This fact indicates that target consumer for Muslim market has increased. One of advertising agencies explicitly applying sharia concept is Syafaat Marcomm located in Yogyakarta.

Syafaat Marcomm is an advertising agency with legal entity in the form of Limited Liability Company (PT). However, in practice, Syafaat adopting regulation that they this is

better, the regulation is called as *Syirkah*. *Syirkah* is the law of corporation in Islam. The difference between PT and *Syirkah* is in field work practices. If in PT, investors have a right to participate in several company affairs, while in *Syirkah* system, investors only act as financiers, who do not have any role in the operational process of the company. *Syirkah* is a term derived from Islam. Meanwhile, another term firmly attach to Syafaat is Sharia.

Etymologically, sharia is derived from the verb shara'a, which means the path leading to water. It can be interpreted as the path having rules taken by humans to go to God. Therefore, according to the point of view of Islamic community and society in general, sharia is a rule.

Syafaat is an advertising agency applying Sharia in the process of their design. For example, Syafaat Marcomm designers do not draw animal and human character using realist technique. It is because they believe that according to their Holy Qur'an, such action is prohibited, and it is explained in Surah Ali Imran verse 6, Al-A'raaf verse 11, Al-Hasyar verse 24 and Al-Infithaar verse 6 to 8, and it is also clarified by the interpretation of several hadith, such as Al Bukhari 416 and Muslim 528.

If it is compared to Sharia value that is based on Islamic teaching with the source of Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith, and by observing life pattern of Islamic community in Indonesia in responding Islam today, so design synergizing with sharia value will be possibly developed in the future. This argumentation underlied the researcher's line of thought. Many studies on sharia design were found in the disciplines of architecture and interior design, but it was not yet found in visual communication design.

After conducting initial research on clients entrusting their communication and design problems on Syafaat Marcomm, the researcher found tendencies of the type of company handled by Safaat Marcomm, which was Islamic-based companies. Data from Syafaat Marcomm showed that 57% of the companies were based on Islamic principles in running their business, such as Badan Wakaf Al-Qur'an, Mandiri Syariah and Bank Sumatera Selatan Syariah. While the rest were conventional companies, such as Mylio, Axioo, and Bulog.

Previous research was performed by Jani, Harun, Mansor, and Zen [3] entitled *Exploring the Islamic Garden Concept as Inspirational Landscape Design*. Jani et. all examined Islamic value to the garden landscape design in Malaysia. In fact, concept of Islamic landscape design has existed since the 6th century. There were two parts of this finding, which were garden design that was according to Sharia and according to the diversity of community. Garden design that was according to Sharia referred to eight principles, such as obedience to God, obedience representation, environment, worship, honesty, justice, knowledge, loyalty, and beauty. This research was conducted under design umbrella, but not in the discipline of Visual Communication and Design Besides, this journal did not discuss the topic on how a value may affect design process.

The researcher had tried to find the result of research on value and design in all journals, one of the best journals was from ethic in running business written by Bari and Abbas (2011) entitled *Advertisement & Islam: A Muslim World Perspective*. This journal viewed advertising agency from Islamic point of view. One of principles that religion-based advertising agency should have was honesty, by not advertising controversial products and

considering the halal of the advertised products. This journal was good enough at the theoretical level in revealing what was stated in the book to be practiced in the reality of advertising agency. However, this journal had not explored in detail the design process in Islamic-based advertising.

According Bari and Rana in Pakistan, contemporary and Islamic-based advertising was distinguished by principles they held. Some of the principles held by Islamic-based advertising agency were honesty in working process, not showing prohibited part of women body, and not promoting controversial products, like condoms. Meanwhile, contemporary advertising agency was just the opposite. Therefore, the researcher draw a conclusion that value in this case acted as a guideline for business ethics.

All of articles that had been screened describes that value can be used as guideline, inspiration and genre. Value as guideline is basically used as a foundation to think and act of making decision. For example, Jani, Harun, Mansor and Zen [3], guideline is closely related to a value system that has certain principles. This principle is regulatory, but not restrictive. But, this principle will always be applied since at the beginning to the end of the process. Besides, value as inspiration is functioned as a source of ideas for creation of work. It is found in article Xing [4] where a value becomes a reference in work. In addition, value is also as genre. Genre in value is a part of type of certain system, such as Islam or Feng Shui.

Consequently, the research question in this article is “What is the position of sharia value in the design process at Syafaat Marcomm?”

Research Metodology

A. Approach

In this research, J. Christopher Jones [5] theory was selected as an approach to examine problem of value to designers. Jones [5] stated that the possibility of new method by problem solvers may emerge. This decision referred to the problem condition used in solving the problem. Then, the researcher also used Schon [6] theory as another approach to explain reflection in an action, which was the reason for the position of value as a frame in the design process at Syafaat Marcomm.

B. Research Object

Research object concerning investigation of designer value focused on the design process related to the position of Sharia value. There were six steps of design process performed by Syafaat in solving client' visual communication problems: (1) identifying problems, (2) analyzing problems, (3) categorizing problems, (4) synthesizing, (5) prototyping, (6) evaluating solution.

The problem identification performed by Syafaat Marcomm was through assessment of the design result from prospective client according to Syafaat point of view. Next, Syafaat made comparison between design result from the prospective client and similar design made by Syafaat. After that, AE made gradual approached to the prospective client, in this step, the process changed into problem analysis. Because AE was in charge, AE automatically made observation at the same time while making approach. Then, the problems were categorized to classify the problems into several parts.

The next step was synthesizing. In this step, discussion was performed related to ideas in solving the categorized problems. Then, it was followed by prototyping step generally known as prototyping. Sketch that was ready to be executed was visualized in the creative room. In this step, designers processed the idea from rough design into more mature design with computer assistance. The end of the entire design process was solution evaluation. Solution that was found was reassessed by client, whether or not it was already met client's needs and desires. If the client was not satisfy with the final result, but Syafaat had logical argumentation about that, then education would be carried out on the client.

C. Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using two methods, which were observation and interview. There were two kinds of observation: involved and non-involved observations. The involved observation referred to ethnomethodology technique by Garfinkel [7] because the research examined daily design process that was the habit of the designers. The involved observation made by the researcher was that the researcher had a role as designer at Syafaat. In fact, the researcher was not employee in Syafaat. However, to achieve the desired result of this research, the researcher became an apprentice designer for three months with the aim to be closer with research subject and to closely observe the process of problem solving carried out by designers at Syafaat Marcomm agency.

Meanwhile, non-involved observation made by the researcher aimed to understand designer phenomenon while performing design process. In this non-observation method, the researcher only observed the process. Observation guide was used to make focused observation and avoid field distortion. Besides, non-formal interview was also carried out to consciously explore certain situation. The following is the observation guideline:

D. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis technique used was descriptive analysis. Results of transcription and narration were analyzed descriptively through several steps: (1) scrutinizing collected transcription data, (2) conducting data reduction using first coding stage and then 75 codes were obtained, (3) conducting second coding stage to compile, categorize, and reduce data, so the code number reduced into 18 codes, (4) conducting data checks to determine data validation and (5) interpreting data to obtain broader meaning inductively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Research Result

1. Syafaat Marcomm

- a. The difference between Syafaat Marcomm and other advertising agency in general

Syafaat Marcomm had explicitly labeled its company with Sharia status. This labeling certainly made difference between Syafaat Marcomm and other advertising agencies that did not put Sharia label, although there were some things that might be still the same with other agencies. The difference between

Syafaat Marcomm and other agencies lied in how Syafaat female employees got dressed, in which all of them wore hijab and their dresses were not tight.

Besides, Syafaat Marcomm tried to create religious atmosphere during synthesis, meeting and solution evaluation. Women and men sat across from each other. It was because they obeyed the rule, where women and men should be distanced. The atmosphere during synthesis looked like the meeting. The sitting position was always formal; always sat on the chair, in the same place, which was in the meeting room, where women and men sat slightly apart. That is the description of daily synthesis in Syafaat. The difference between Syafaat and other agencies lied in the sitting position.

.The sitting position separating women and men showed that the basic rules of socializing in Islam were applied in Syafaat Marcomm. This rule was similar with the application of worship in Islam. In religious life, the function of gender dichotomy is to show leadership hierarchy. The leader for worship is a man. Unless there is no man, woman allows being the leader. Likewise in Syafaat, synthesis leader was a man. Even so, it will not affect communication system. This meant that women allowed expressing their opinion without prioritizing men during synthesis. Before starting the synthesis, it was begun with greetings and recitation of praises to God and the prophet in Arabic as usually done by Muslims when performing recitation.

This explanation indicated that in certain activities, Syafaat Marcomm tried to create Islamic atmosphere in its working environment. In the other hand, there was no significant difference in term of physical aspect, such as building and design exhibited between Syafaat Malcomm as Islamic-based agency and other advertising agencies in general.

b. Social value and personal value applied in Syafaat Marcomm

The researcher observed that there was a change in how employees in Syafaat Marcomm got dressed, in which they adapted sharia style. This was one of points where a value did not affect working process but also habit and appearance of people involved. This means that not only functional value related to work contained in Syafaat Marcomm, but social value in Syafaat Marcomm also affected personal value.

B. Discussion

1. The Position of Sharia in Syafaat Marcomm Agency

In literatures discussing values in design, such as Jani, Harun, Mansor and Zen [8]; Hong, Song, and Wu; Hongmei [9]; Mak and Ng [10]; Xing ; Madeddu and Zhang [10] showed that the position of values in design might be in the form of genre, inspiration, experience, guideline and base. Meanwhile, the researcher

found that value in the design process at Syafaat Marcomm was different from previous literatures because Sharia value in the process of problem solving at Syafaat Marcomm played role as a frame.

The following is the scheme of Sharia position in the design process:

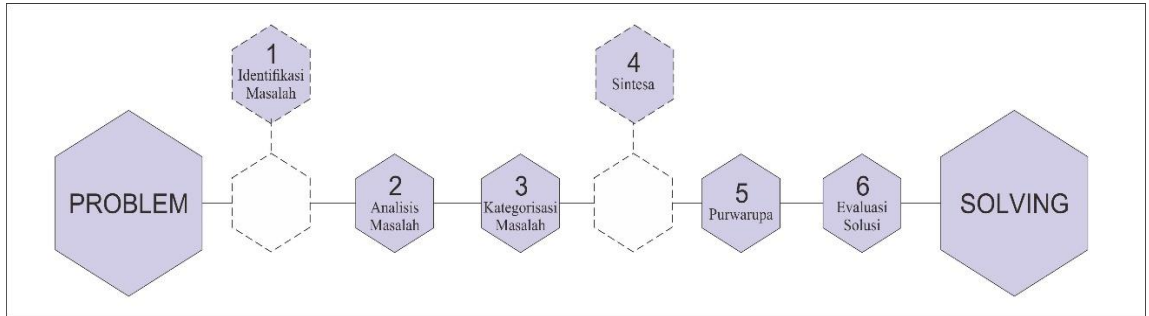


Chart 1 : The Position of value in the design process at Syafaat Marcomm

To answer the question concerning the Sharia position in the design process at Syafaat Marcomm, this research found that of six design processes (problem identification (1), problem analysis (2), problem categorization (3), synthesis (4), prototyping (5), and solution evaluation (6)), Sharia value was found in the two steps of design process, which were problem identification and synthesis. Both process faced the same situation where the objective was identified, but it was yet described physically. So the steps taken adjust the course of the objective. While the researcher did not find Sharia concept in the other four processes (problem analysis, problem categorization, prototyping, and evaluation) because the four processes were the continuity of the technique from both process applying sharia concept and containing certainty of the manifestation of the process objective.

Sharia value did not provide significant effect in every design step at Syafaat Marcomm. The researcher argued that uncertainty in each situation in the design steps was different. Therefore, uncertainty here constituted a degree. The higher the degree of uncertainty, the more effect of Sharia value would produce. Consequently, Sharia value was functioned as a provider of certainty.

Moreover, Sharia provided certainty when Syafaat had many choices, for example, to choose ideas or problems to be handled. Syafaat found problems and ideas by referring to the past or previous situations where similar problems had been solved. This was where Syafaat framed the problems by highlighting some of features from many features to make it stand out, so that the attention focused on it.

Based on the researcher's opinion above, the researcher decided to label Sharia position as frame. This term is the same with the term used by Schon (1983). Schon [6] explained that framing was to give limitation to a phenomenon in order to provide more attention and determine which method to be selected in changing a

situation. That was why the researcher stated that framing was the right term to find the position of Sharia value in the design process at Syafaat Marcomm.

The researcher herself used the term frame because Syafaat framed the problem and solution in Sharia frame. To be precise, Syafaat only focused on halal. The nature of framing indeed places limitation, but its main use do not create limitation because its main use is to frame problems or ideas by focusing on what we want to achieve.

CONCLUSION

Problem solving in design with the frame of Sharia value was a creative process consisted of two main things, which were mindset and action as well as six steps, such as: (1) problem identification; (2) problem analysis; (3) problem categorization; (4) synthesis; (5) prototyping and (6) solution evaluation. Of the six steps, the position of Sharia was only found in two steps, which were problem identification and synthesis. Both steps were same in common, such as finding the final result of each step in which the manifestation of the objective was still uncertain. This uncertainty showed that functionally, Sharia had role to provide certainty among many choices. How Syafaat decided to choose one or more choices was using the method used in the past or previous situation, in which Syafaat understand how to solve the problem in that situation. That was how Syafaat Marcomm framed the problem by highlighting some of features from many feature so, the problems or ideas would only focus on the matter that had been framed.

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