

Design Studio 1b
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Design Facilitator as Connector Role in Contemporary Society

People today can use clothing to express who they are, especially given that they "mingle with multitudes of strangers and have only short seconds to impress them" (Bennett 2005, p. 96). A person's image in society may today be significantly influenced by the clothing they wear. As the opportunities provided by fashion to transform oneself into someone else through the use of accessories, make-up, and clothing are great (Pine 2014), based on the potential for personal transformation, people can multiply their identities through their attire and the propensity to be someone else, even if in small ways.

How society grows to categorize and meaningfully interact with our social landscape, which provides us with a sense of social support, will change how people's social individualities are expressed (Haslam 2018). As a result, people will eventually alter how they dress to reflect their identities. In order to promote their individual expression and ensure that they have access to a wide range of clothing alternatives that suit their personalities, this motivates individuals to purchase more clothing. Hence, if the demand for more clothes increases, the market will be influenced to make more clothing, leading to a problem with the rising production of textile waste.

If this is the case, it is obviously not the fault of the consumer to keep purchasing a variety of limited clothing designs that only reflect one of their identities; rather, it is the fault of the designer for failing to incorporate their user's need for multiple identities into their designs. Hereafter, being apprehensive of the condition, I believe that the role of designer comes in.

The designer acts as the design's change agent and serves as an intermediary between the customer's requirements and the larger community's responses. In recent

years, the 'designer as facilitator' position has evolved to include guiding participants, users, and stakeholders through the design process in order to encourage and promote fresh methods for problem-solving (Body, Terrey & Tergas 2010). The designer must emerge in connection to the development and application of design thinking and co-design settings throughout the process (Wahl & Baxter 2008). Using design thinking approaches, designers can subsequently facilitate and resolve problems backed by user observation and conversation, including in-depth studies about the user's culture, problems, experiences, and gains.

Facilitation "is concerned with encouraging open dialogue amongst individuals with different perspectives so that diverse assumptions and options may be explored" (Hogan 2002, p. 10) and is "intrinsically social and interactional" (Reilly 2008, p. 62). In order to facilitate the collaboration process between the user, designer, and design, the designer must participate in their skills, knowledge, and creativity (Body, Terrey & Tergas 2010). Design facilitation shifts the focus of the design process from producing an artefact to outcomes that identify needs or help diversely populated groups decide what standards should guide its development and what should constitute the "next step" through the collaborative process (Fraser 2009). This implies that the designer will also have the option to engage directly with their design in order to assess whether it is relevant to the goal or purpose as it applies to the needs of their users at each step. Additionally, they must prioritize the inclusiveness of the user's active involvement or engagement in the identification and framing of challenges as a design facilitator to create a people-centred design. By doing these, the designer then ensures that they capture the tangible results of the user's experiences and infer the intangible meaning

of those experiences to discover insights for the outcome design as a guide to develop creative solutions.

Regarding my project's design role as facilitator, I am attempting to meet the needs of my users by offering a convertible design, allowing my users to have their own methods of attaching additional components to the clothing in a variety of ways as a sustainability action, while also reflecting it following their identities, is one way to improve their engagement. Button and buttonholes were repurposed into features that are used for attaching extra components, linking them to the idea of design forms and valuing the inclusion of my knowledge on the designer's expertise.



Figure 1 Users to form the additional pieces on top of the garment reflected to their identities

In this project, the user has the option to put the components on top of the garment how they see suitable through their identity because the buttons within them are placed differently. As can be observed, each person approaches how the piece should be worn distinctively (Figure 1). The silhouettes and outcomes of this process genuinely highlight how the user would be able to position the design as they would wear it depending on their preferences, experiences, and identities.

As the designer, it is my role to link the consumer's needs and the responses to the problem in the wider community together. The outcome design may not perfectly hold to solve the problem that correlates with my user's needs for the longest time; however, because my user has a variety of ways of thinking, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds that will always be shifted due to rapid changes in technological advancements that have an impact on the social evolution (Wilterdink & Form 2023). This is a similar problem that other design facilitators usually encounter with the outcome of their design. We may think that we already create a design that will become the "next step" for a period of time. In reality, our users may not think of it the same way, which is why every designer, other than becoming the facilitator, should also be the one who enhances innovation to hold the long-term user experience.

To conclude, nowadays, it is the designer's responsibility to include all of their user's needs in the design that they create by applying the methodology of design thinking and their expertise. This will lead to the discovery of insights for the resulting design and serve as a guide for developing creative solutions. However, the designer may not be able to effectively retain the solution for a long time in his or her role as facilitator.

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