



Lorem Ipsum Dolor

Design for Social Change Course and it's Impact on Students

Written Dissertation
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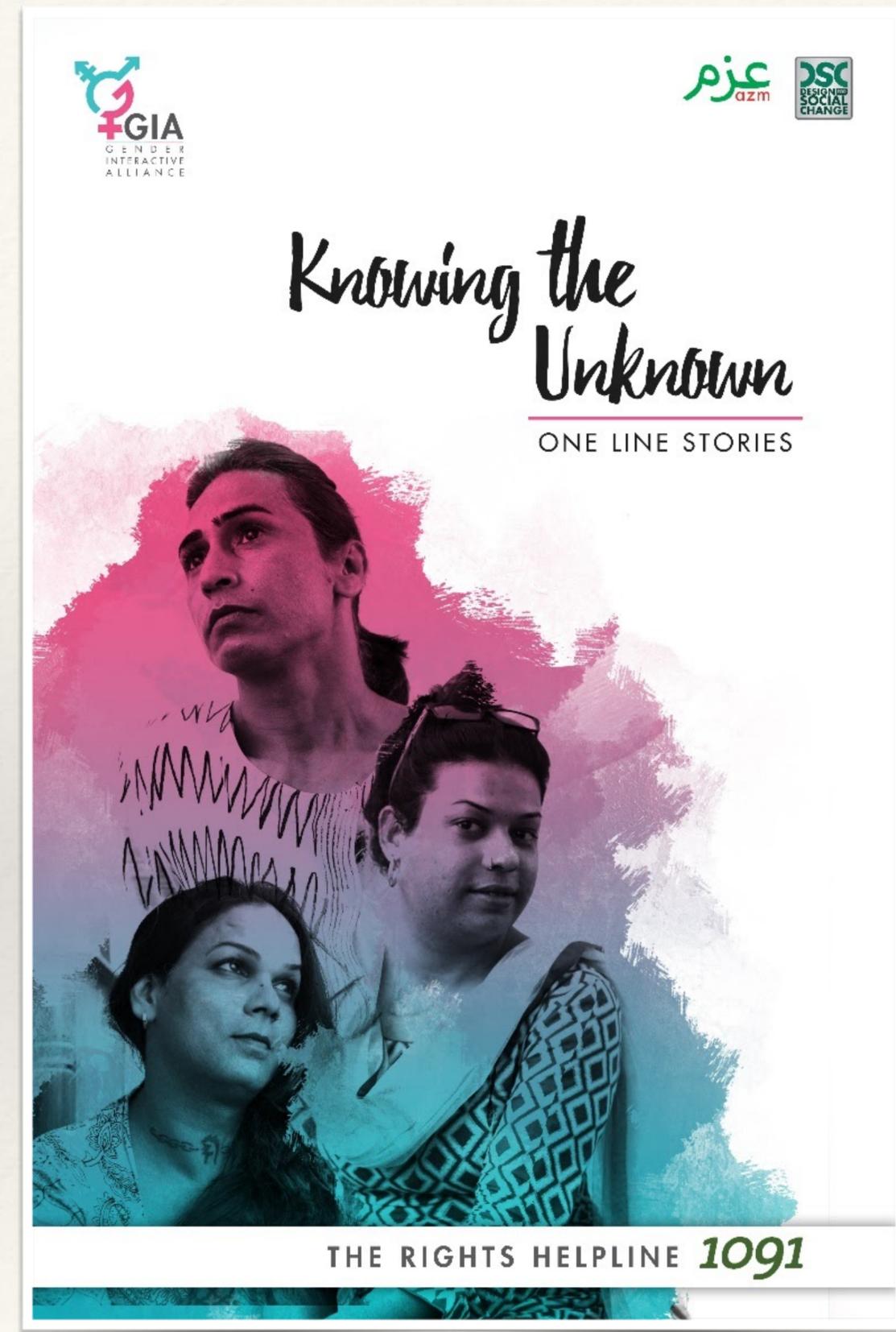
Design for Social Change

The Beginnings

Design for Social Change' can be defined as an umbrella term which covers a wide range of design activities including research and on ground activities trying to solve problems or at least make life a little easier for communities and groups. 'Design for Social Change' encompass a range of strategies based on social responsibility and design-led social innovation (Thorpe & Gamman, 2011, p. 219).

It was my early days after leaving advertising and deciding to teach (influenced by my literal disdain for the way the advertising industry operated) that the idea of using design to communicate positive ideas instead of selling products all the time began to interest me. Years later a 6-week project at the IVS became a semester-long course that I have been teaching for the past 7 years at SZABIST, KU and the IVS.

The course has been a 'hit' among students, every year more and more students want to take it. Occasionally I get to meet former students and almost always 'DSC' finds its way in our conversations. This informal feedback has compelled me to study the course and its impact on students in a systematic method.



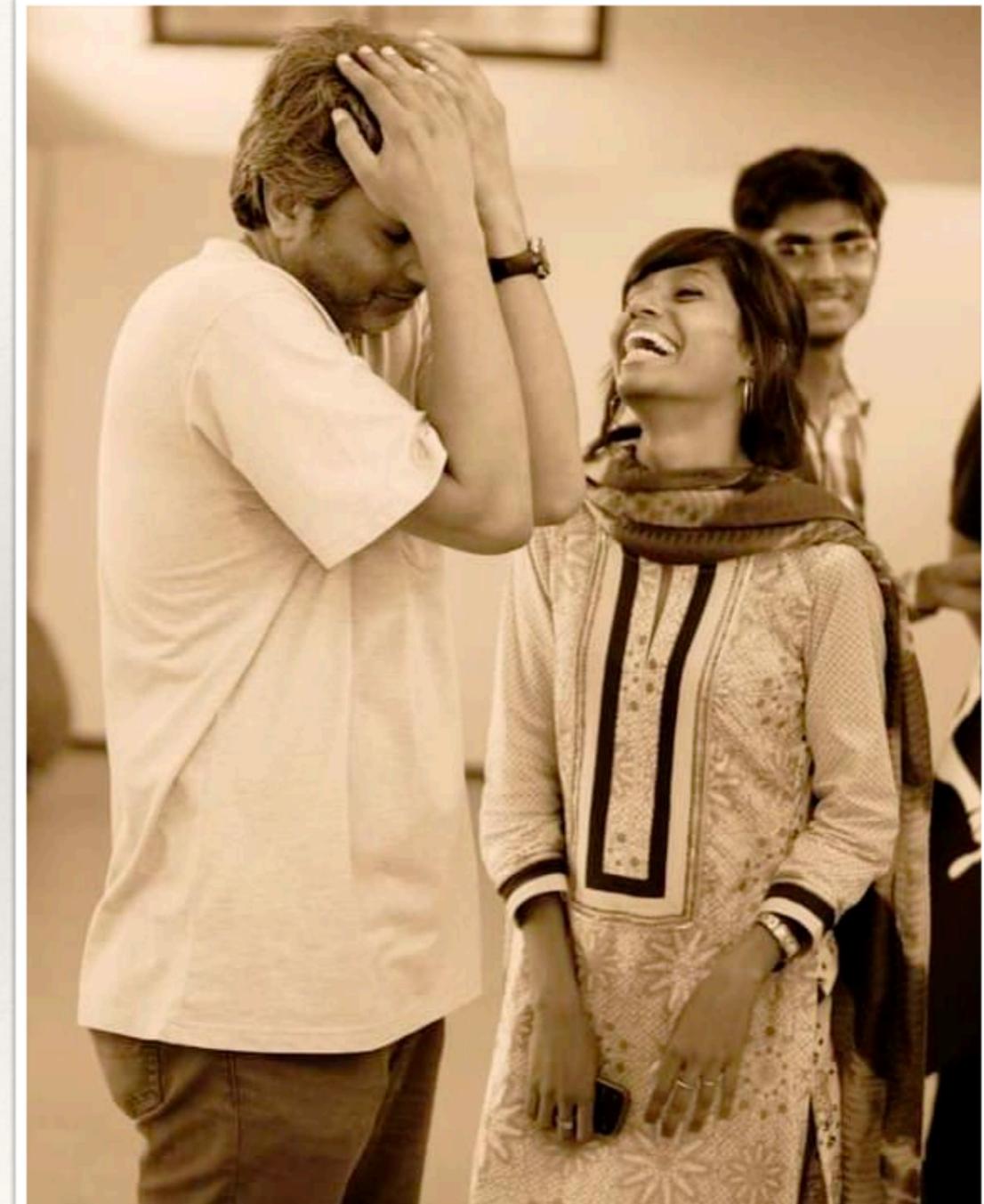
"...One of your sessions with us talking about actions that matter and how to find meaning in things. (Interesting how I used to look at 'meaningful' things in such an objective way, like it's an outside thing. Something exclusive of our everyday actions. When it's just everything we do, it's us and how we exist. All of that is meaningful. It's not a level we have to unlock, it's just a power tool we have to learn to maximize)."

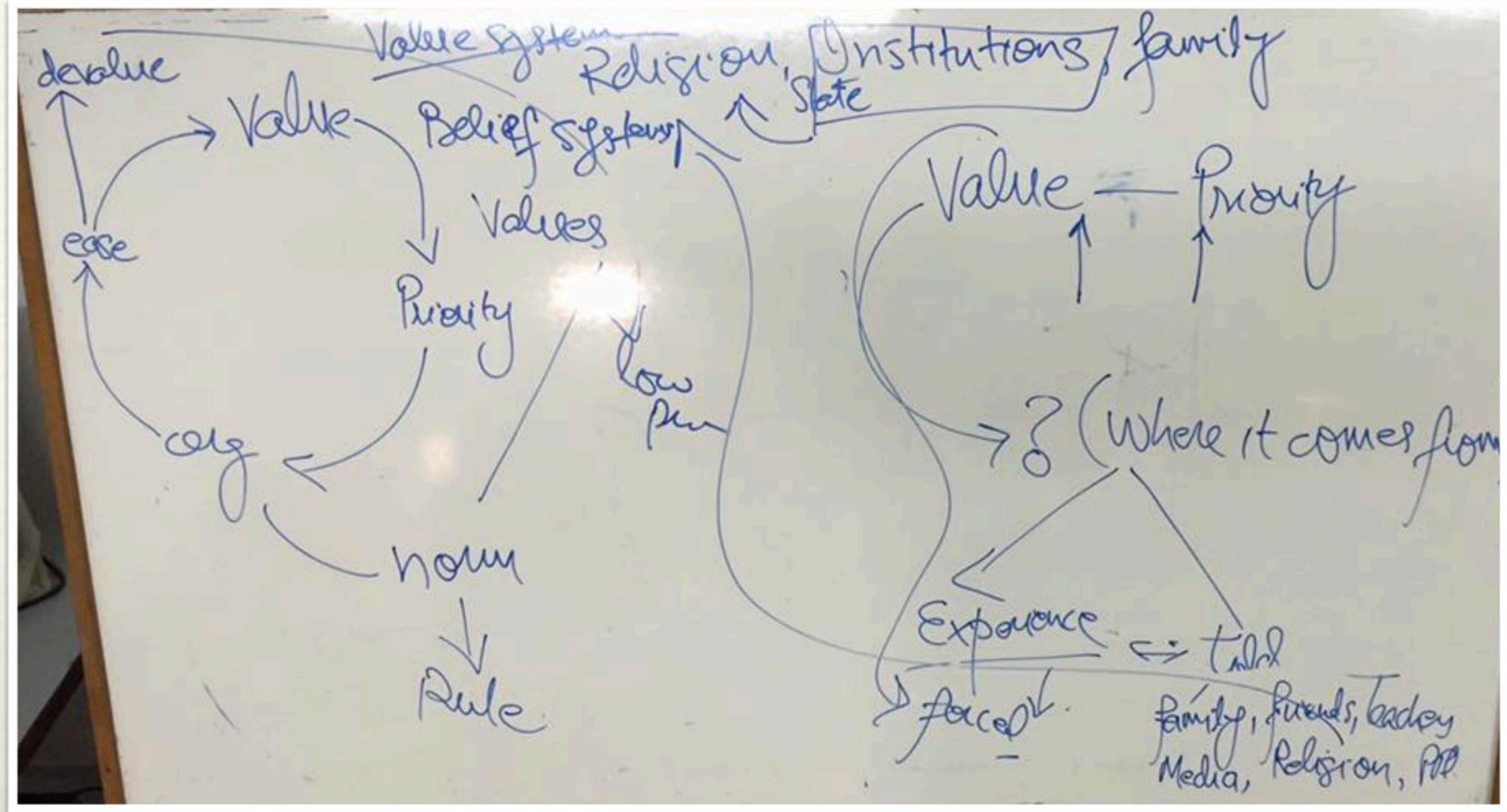
'Paradigm Shift'

The Feedback

I have had the privilege that generally my former students stay in touch long after they have graduated. One course that they always talk about is Design for Social Change; a life lesson for so many of them, it finds place in their portfolios and CVs. They often use a term 'Paradigm Shift' to explain what has happened to their world view, role of design and above all their own role as a designer.

This is encouraging, now I really want to understand how this paradigm shift happens, how it effects their work and life. Does it affect them as much as they claim? How about those whose feedback I haven't received, how do they feel about this course and its effects? Is the change lasting? Or does it fizzle out soon after getting into the realities of jobs and life? Do they see the learnings coming out of this course as useful for the Pakistani Society? Has the course made them more aware about what Pakistan is and what are its realities? What kind a society Pakistanis live in and how do they function in it?





Impact on Students

What Happened Way Back and The Way Forward

The purpose of this study is to explore the significance of the DSC course being taught in Higher Education Institutes in Karachi and understand its impact on graduate students in their professional practice.

And a wider purpose is that as an instructor who conceived the course and teaches it, this whole study becomes a critical reflective research that may help me bring changes in the course and adapt it for future design contexts.

What Do I Want to Know

The Primary Research Question

What is the significance of the DSC course taught in Higher Education Institutes in Karachi? How has it impacted and facilitated graduate students in their professional design practice?



Thesis Statement

All Summed Up

The significance and impact of the DSC course on students' professional design practice.

TFW

The Scaffolding



Design Education and its Impact

Pedagogy, Impact on Thinking and Practice



Design for Social Change and Innovation

Practice, Social Justice, Socially Engaged Design



Learning Beyond the Classroom

Learning Theories, Higher Ed, Community Service (as part of course content)

The Knowledge Base

Important Themes and Ideas

Design Education and its Impact

Pedagogy, Impact on
Thinking and Practice

Partnership between **schools and communities** improves education and community's economic/ environmental health • **Students learn better in 'place'** instead of text books • local contexts, activity in community and heightened student engagement are linked • Attachment to place + Skills lead to more social action.

• Cultural, Pedagogical and Economic Aims • Design isn't just arrangements of elements • Teaching design through **problem-solving**

• DSC must adapt **user-centered & evidence-based** approach
• Needs to **move away from teacher-centered** approach
• Empathy, collaboration, interrelationships of **diverse people** and their environments. • Analysis of info and material through non-traditional and "messy" tactics.

• High-impact practices are effective because they require **more dedication** and time from students. • **Collaborative assignments** lead to personal growth and openness to diversity. • High impact edu practices include collaborative projects, **community-based learning** among others.

Powers, A. L. (2004). An evaluation of four place-based education programs. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 35(4), 17-32.

Souleles, N. (2017). Design for social change and design education: Social challenges versus teacher-centred pedagogies. *The Design Journal*, 20(sup1), S927-S936.

ZANDE, R. (2010). Teaching Design Education for Cultural, Pedagogical, and Economic Aims. *Studies in Art Education*, 51(3), 248-261.

Kilgo, C. A., Sheets, J. K. E., & Pascarella, E. T. (2015). The link between high-impact practices and student learning: Some longitudinal evidence. *Higher Education*, 69(4), 509-525.

The Knowledge Base

Important Themes and Ideas

Design for Social Change and Innovation

Practice, Social Justice,
Socially Engaged
Design

- **Large scale challenges** in Europe like climate change, refugees, ageing people, economic disparity, intolerance, etc **need DSC** and innovation.
- **More DSC** like courses should be taught in **Higher-Ed**
- Teachers must keep their own beliefs in check as their strategies are influenced by their beliefs.

- Socially engaged design is creating a more **desirable world**
- Designers are more than **mere capitalistic tools**
- SE design enhances community capacity to better their lot
- Focus on emerging practices in and **out of classroom**

- Concept of Social Justice
- How **pedagogy is more important than content**
- **Enhanced self awareness and empathy** leads to better understanding of 'others'
- Provide students with tools to be **"change agents"**

- Social Innovation in Polars (Top-Down/Bottom-Up, etc)
- Bringing **all available resources** in the fold to innovate
- Redefining of problem in radical ways
- Creating structures, **creating enabling systems**
- Getting **community to take charge**, then the gov support.
- Design with and designing for communities.

Souleles, N., Savva, S., & Ferreira, A. M. (2017). The challenge of embedding design for social change and innovation in Higher Education curricula and the role of DISCERN (DesIgn for Social Change and innovation through a EuRopean Network). In 9th International Conference Senses and Sensibility 2017.

Storms, S. B. (2012). Preparing students for social action in a social justice education course: What works?. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(4), 547-560

O'Donoghue, D., & Berard, M. (2014). Six qualities of socially engaged design: Emerging Possibilities for K-12 Art Education Programs. *Art Education*, 67(6), 6-10.

Manzini, E. (2014). Making Things Happen: Social Innovation and Design. *Design Issues*, 30(1), 57-66.

The Knowledge Base

Important Themes and Ideas

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Learning Theories, Higher
Ed, Community Service
(as part of course
content)

- **Community engagement** is a catalyst for Higher-Ed
- Universities need to **offer positive social change courses** to make leaders out of their students.
- Community based courses with **active learning** and specific community goals enhance civic responsibility.

Research Design

Type of Study

The objective of this study is to explore and understand the significance and impact of the DSC course. This study is an applied research and somewhat evaluative in nature. The philosophical perspective is interpretive / constructivist as it will be aiding me in describing and understanding the two primary objectives.

FOCUS GROUPS

IN-DEPTH, SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Sites and Settings

This study will be conducted while stationed in Karachi but the participants do not have to be physically in town. Initial focus group will be conducted online and the interviews will be in-person and can also be conducted through online meeting tools such as Zoom or Google Meet. For in-person interviews I will be approaching participants in their settings.

Research Design

Sampling Decisions and Method

The participants will be my former students (while some might be colleagues in design practice and /or teaching at some point in time) who have taken the DSC course with me within the last 5 years. Since the study is focused on the impact on students and significance of the course, the participants must be those who have taken this course and can provide insights into the course and its impact.

My Role as a Researcher

My role as a researcher will be limited to observation and data collection through focus groups and interviews.

Data Collection

What do they say

There will be three sources of data collection from participants

(1) Focus group, (2) Interviews, and (3) Work samples (if possible).

I will be conducting a focus group of 10-15 participants and interviews of 3-4 people. These interviews will be in-depth semi structured in nature. Interviewees might be asked to fill out reflection sheets and I will keep a journal as well.

The focus group is aimed to collect important information regarding how participants see the course and its role in their professional practice. The outcomes of this activity will help me draw questions for the later interviews. The interviews are appropriate because these former students will have to be probed and will have to dig deep in their memories to recollect the activities in the course. Also, the questions in the interview will help them evaluate and draw links (if they feel there were any) with their current practice and what they experienced in the course. The work samples of the participants might also shed some light on the impact of this course on their practice.

Possible Outcomes

Sharing the Knowledge

Once the written dissertation is submitted the findings can be shared through multiple means such as...

- ★ Lectures / presentations at conferences
 - ★ Paper in Research Journals
 - ★ Workshops can be offered to fellow academics on developing 'Design for Social Change' like courses
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Checks and Balances

Validity Check

TRIANGULATION: The data collected from two methods (focus group and interviews) will help validate the findings also the work sample might also help in doing the same.

RESEARCHER'S POSITION or REFLEXIVITY: Critical self-reflection regarding assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation.

PEER REVIEW / EXAMINATION: Discussions with colleagues regarding the process of study, the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations.

Ethical Issues and/or Limitations

Not sure if it is an ethical issue, but sure to be an issue of possible bias as I am the one conducting the study while I am the one who has taught this course as well. Also students might overstate the positive impact to oblige and recognize the efforts of their former teacher (though this can be somewhat mitigated by employer's point of view on participant's work).

Significance and Implications

Why it Matters

- A) Social-change (SC) driven projects are still a novelty in design schools (specially in Pakistan) and often taken as a break from serious design work like branding and advertising, the findings of this research may convince design educators and learners that SC projects are worth taking seriously.
 - B) It may help design instructors develop their own social-change projects / courses.
 - C) It may compel design professionals to take on social-change projects in their professional practice.
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Thank You