

Synergy Between Interior Expression and Architectural Concept During Design Development in The New Design Era

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic has pushed changes and new ideas in the design world to survive in the new design era. The research subject is Axial Studio, where the principal believes that Axial Studio's design development process cannot be separated from their architectural concept. This statement became a relevant topic for the researcher/author to discover how Axial Studio could create synergy between architectural concept and interior expression during design development phase. In order to do that, the methodology is qualitative ethnographic research and instrumental case study as the method as the research's result is based on the analysis of three rooms in one of Axial Studio's project which is De Maja project. The research discovered that the pre-condition and five points of synergy, which are very relevant and valuable for the new design era. This research concluded that the five points synergy complements each other and plays a significant role because the harmonic relationship between interior and architecture is strongly needed in the new design era. Moreover, the result reminds designers about the fundamental attitude that all designers should have, which is open-mindedness and sensitivity.

Keywords: Architectural Concept, Interior Expression, Synergy, New Design Era, Design Development

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic has pushed changes in the design world where designers are challenged to adapt and self-reflect to survive in the new design era. The new design era discussed in this research is the era after the pandemic. The researcher put special attention in the interrelationship between architecture and interior, where the harmonious cooperation between both fields/sectors should exist from the previous design era until the new design era. The research's purpose is to discover how the architectural concepts and interior design expression could create synergy during the design development in a design firm so that the research's result about this synergy could be one of design strategies to adapt in the new design era, including the changes in needs. The discovery became relevant because the various needs of architectural concepts and interior expressions that were caused by different client's expressions still became a challenge for designers in today's design world.

For that reason, the researcher chose Axial Studio (from now on will be called Axial) as the research subject, which is an architecture interior design firm established since 2017. Axial became the right subject for this research as its principal (FT) claimed that Axial's interior design cannot escape from the Axial's concept and architectural layout (FT,2021). Axial has a solid and consistent architectural concept, however, their interior design admittedly also contributed significantly in the design process so that the synergy between interior and architecture could create a quality design for the client according Axial's vision. Synergy, according to KBBI is joint activities or operations. Synergy implies that every party with their differences could work together and complement each other without damaging anyone (Dewi, 2017). The research's question is how Axial's architectural concept and interior expression create synergy during the design development phase leading to design strategies that could be implemented in the new design era.

The researcher had gone through several analyses until finally was able to solve the research's main problem about synergy and made a conclusion for this paper. First of all, the synergy between the architectural concept and interior expression in Axial was analyzed with one of the design processes mentioned in a book written by Cindy Coleman (2002). The book stated that in the design development phase, designers would think creatively and work together to design space in a specific project. With the three steps of design development written in the book, the researcher could systematically and coherently explain the three rooms analysis from De Maja Project.

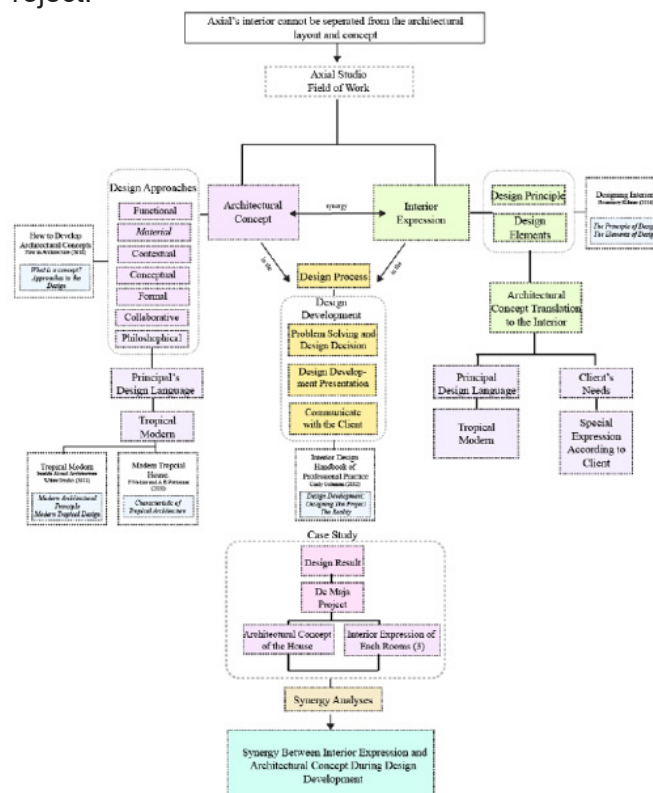


Image 1: Research Framework (Source: Gunawan, 2021)

LITERATURE REVIEW

A concept is an abstract idea, a theory, or a notion (First in Architecture, 2018). In architecture, concept can be described as “an approach” to design. The approaches to design theory can be categorized into seven aspects, which are: functional, material, contextual, conceptual, formal, collaborative, and philosophical (First in Architecture, 2018). These approaches can also be supported by a journal written by Mojtaba Parsaee (2015) about interactive architectural approach, which is explaining about the fundamental or basic model of architectural design process including flexibility, exclusive views, contextualism, balance among all factors and many more. Axial has a philosophical approach that is based on the principal's design language which is an architectural concept with modern tropical approach. Therefore, this research used modern tropical theory to support the analysis. Modern tropical architecture applies two strategies in its design. The first strategy is to look out for elements and architectural shapes/forms in the surrounding area near the existing site. The second strategy is to take consideration of the climate, landscape, and culture of the area. With the awareness of climate and surrounding condition, designers can provide comfort for the user (Nadiar and Pattisnai, 2020).

Expression is used by interior designers (as the executor) to communicate or reveal themselves to the client/user (as the appreciator) through the design (result). This expression is realized from the creative process. The appreciator will catch and comprehend the design result so that there is mutual understanding between the executor and the appreciator (Kusumarini, 2014). Interior expression in this paper was analyzed with design composition theory according to a book written by Rosemary Kilmer (2014) which consists of two aspects: design elements and design principles. Design elements are categorized into space, line, shape, form, texture, time, and color and light. On the other hand, design principle is categorized into balance, rhythm, emphasis, proportion, scale, unity and harmony, and variety.

Synergy was analyzed during design development which is a process where designers make decisions and design implementation to get approval from the client. Design development is divided into three steps: problem-solving and design decision, design development presentation, and communicate with the client (Coleman, 2002). During problem-solving and design decision, the design concept approved by the client and designer will be converted into design solution that is capable of solving client's problem. After that, the design process will continue to the next step which is design development presentation, where the designer will show their design progress to the client in the form of visual presentation whether its 2D drawings or 3D model. Lastly, during the problem-solving and design decision step, client will give input so that the designer can make revisions and eventually get the approval from client which leads to the design process moving on to the next phase.

METHODOLOGY

The research's methodology used by the researcher in this paper is qualitative research with ethnographic approach combined with case study research (Crouch

and Pearce, 2013). Ethnography itself is an approach where the author as the researcher directly observes and records the phenomenon that occurs in the research's location in a certain period (Neuman, 2014). In this case, the researcher worked as an intern at Axial for at least eight months while observing to collect data for this research. The research data also came from semi-structured interview where the researcher gave freedom to the informant (Axial's designers and principal) to answer and give opinions, but at the same time the researcher also led the informant to stay focus and keep the interview on the right track according to the interview's purpose (Crouch and Pearce, 2013). Instrumental case study is also used, in which the researcher will learn one or several cases considered as a medium or instrument that can increase understanding and image of the issue or phenomenon (Crouch and Pearce, 2013).

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The De Maja project is located in BSD, Serpong, South Tangerang. All its architecture and interior are designed by Axial. This project is handled by three designers, one of them is the principal of Axial (FT). In its design process, FT was involved a lot in the concept making and architectural layout process as well as giving inputs for interior. The researcher chose three rooms of De Maja Project which are the living room and pantry, master bedroom, and entertainment and music room. This decision was based on the potential of every room that according to the researcher can be analyzed further and resulting in an exciting discovery. The potential meant by the researcher is when there are various design elements that can be analyzed also, the relations between architecture and interior exists and important in the room. Before explaining about the analysis of each room, the researcher listed the architectural concept analysis into four approaches: functional, contextual, conceptual, and philosophical. These four approaches were found after processing interview results from the principal about the architectural concept of De Maja project. The interior expression of the three rooms was analyzed from their design elements and design principles. After that, the researcher discovered their relations and synergy between design interior implementation (design element and principle) with the four architectural approaches mentioned before. The analysis strategy is explained further from the diagram below:

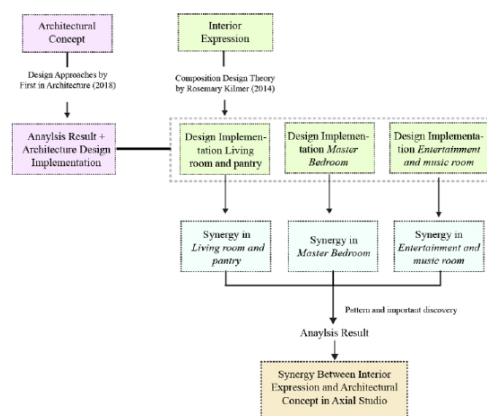


Image 2: Synergy Research Analysis Strategy (Source: Gunawan, 2021)

Synergy in the living room and pantry: the architectural concept and the interior expression look unified as the designer created a thin line that blends both rooms. The continuity is increasingly visible because of the common threads of the design elements such as: materials (textures), colors, and shapes that are connected between architectural and interior concepts. The close relationship between the two spaces is emphasized by the visualization that shows the perspective of the interior and the surrounding environment in one image. The interesting thing about the room is when there is a shift in the design following to the client's wishes unexpectedly added value to the architectural elements and also benefited the aesthetic value of the interior.



Image 3: Living Room and Pantry Perspective (Source: Axial, 2021)

Synergy in the master bedroom: Design elements such as variety of lines in the room are designer's solution in order to show the best potential of the room's layout which was slightly too wide. Even though the interior expression tried to present a common thread to keep its consistency with the architectural concept, variety as one of the design principle was present in the design where the design implementation could create contrast or even dynamic experience for the purpose of the room itself. Secondary skin that overlays the opening of the room has anticipated and gives opportunity in case there are changes in color as it is able to keep the consistency of its exterior/façade according to its architectural concept.



Image 4: Master Bedroom Perspective (Source: Axial, 2021)

Synergy in the entertainment and music room: The design interior has a higher need of self-expression as there are special activities and style (industrial client) from

the client. The variety of its design implementation kept increasing but the designer's effort to stay consistent in maintaining Axial's principle and value are still evident in the room. Challenges from the architectural elements became an opportunity for the designers in order to make a creative design solution that could benefit both fields.



Image 5: Entertainment and Music Room Perspective (Source: Axial, 2021)

The analysis of three rooms of De Maja project results in five points about how architectural concept creates synergy between interior expression in the design development that answer this research's question/problems. Those five points are contrast, repetition, optimization, hierarchy expression, and synchronization. The five points mentioned above are important keywords concluded by the researcher after looking at the pattern and interesting points of every synergy in the chosen rooms. Every analysis came from the researcher's own view as well as the thoughts of principal and designers, which makes the results valid. These points are further explained in the following paragraphs. These points are also supported by composition design strategy theory from a book written by Timothy Samara (2007), where it gives knowledge on how to create a well-composed design. There are several sub-topics in the book such as: enforcing unity, compositional contrast, visual hierarchy, and composition as foundation for meaning, which are suitable to support the result of this research.

Contrast: Synergy happens when there is contrast/difference between design interior implementation with its architecture design. Contrast appears if there's a need in expression that is required to be emphasized. The researcher found out that the effectiveness of a design implementation can improve when there is contrast.

Repetition: Synergy between architectural concept and interior expression is created when there is a common thread that connects both fields so that every room unite as a whole. Repetition can be one of the strategies that can show Axial's characteristics and its principal's design language.

Optimization: Synergy happens when interior implementation or architecture did an alternation/adaptation to optimize value, aesthetic, and potential of each other. Design solution created from those both fields influence and support each other for the sake of user.

Expression Hierarchy: The researcher found three different kinds of needs for a room which are: communal space without particular expression, private space without special expression but specific function, and a space with particular expression. These different needs can influence how the synergy between architecture and interior appear in the design according to each one's needs.

Synchronization: The design result is the result of the discussion and agreement between three party so that it could continue to the building phase. With a synchronized idea between designer, principal, and its user, therefore, the impact of its synergy can be realized for the sake of the user.

CONCLUSION

The research results from Axial's case study succeeded in finding five points of synergy along with their impact on client and designers. These results will be beneficial to designers that wish to present architectural and interior synergies in a design. The researcher believes that awareness is very crucial in fact, it acts as a pre-condition for creating synergy. This means that every designer must be aware of client's problems and how their design choices impact the clients. Moreover, they must realize the interrelationship of architecture and interior design, which must be one of the main consideration for designers during the design development. In the realization of synergy, all five points are not required to be implemented because the appearance of one point already indicates the existence of synergy. This is because synergy in the research is talking about how architecture and interior can work together with same intention, which is creating a quality design. There are no rules of how much synergy that can be implemented in a design. The researcher also does not rule out the possibility of further research or changing the research subjects that result in the addition of other synergy points other than the five points that have been found.

Not only the discovery of five points synergy, the researcher also found the relation between those five points. From the diagram below this paragraph, expression hierarchy becomes the main purpose that influences the other synergy points. Contrast and repetition are the execution/ design implementation which application should adjust the different needs/expression of every room. The end goal of synergy is optimalization where designers will optimize value, aesthetic, and potential of their design. Furthermore, the researcher discovered the pre-condition to achieve optimalization which is synchronization. These relations prove that Axial Studio is a design firm that's aware of the needs of expression either from client or the designer itself. This will encourage architecture and interior to work together and achieve the most optimal result. However, the researcher is open to the possibilities of the emergence of another relations in case there is an addition to the points of synergy or shifting to another research subject following this research.

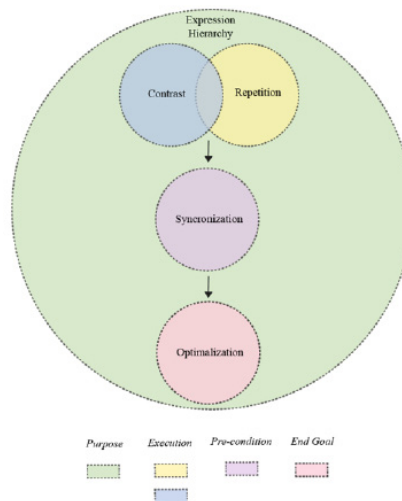


Image 6: The Relations of Five Points Synergy (Source: Gunawan, 2021)

The discovery of the five synergies and its relations remind us of the fundamentals that could complement a professional designer. Two things can be learned from this discovery are the importance of open-mindedness and sensitivity of a designer in a design process. Designers must also be open and respect differences of opinion so that architecture and interiors can find common ground that treats the client and the designer by considering both of their needs of expression. These two attitudes must exist, especially in the new design era because this era gives challenges in which the psychological and physical impact to space/users must be the primary concern, not only that, the design must also be sustainable and durable. This is because people spend more time at home during the pandemic which refers to the increasing demand/preferences to design mainly residential design. Therefore, the author can conclude that the discovery of these five points of synergy can complement each other and also become an essential design strategy in the new design era as it turns out that the harmonious relationship between architecture and interior can trigger impactful and innovative ideas for the design world in the future.

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