

1 **A Review of a Design Process in the Creative Industry:** 2 **Enerjisa Case, Ankara**

3
4 *This paper aims to investigate the design process starting from scratch and*
5 *explore the sectional interface of managing the dynamics between the clients*
6 *and designers. Ankara Headquarters Office of Enerjisa, a power distribution*
7 *and retail company, is selected as a case study for evaluating the design*
8 *process carried out by an international creative agency, I-AM¹. In this*
9 *research, qualitative methodology was used to analyze the spatial context. The*
10 *data of this study include multiple sets of sources, written, visual, and audio.*
11 *Therefore, to construct the research and investigate the built environment, data*
12 *collection was selected thoroughly. For analysis, a semi-structured interview*
13 *was planned and transcribed. In addition, the inspirational/informative*
14 *materials were shared with the researchers. The design group in the*
15 *exploration, generation, and implementation phases specifically created this set*
16 *of materials for this project. In this research, the design process is examined in*
17 *three major stages in parallel with the project phases including the*
18 *implementation process. As a result, the study focused on the ‘inspirational’ set*
19 *of materials for expanding the insights into the communication between clients*
20 *and designers with an innovative methodology.*

21
22 **Keywords:** *Design Management, Interior Architecture, Inspirational Cards,*
23 *Design Process.*

24 25 26 **Introduction**

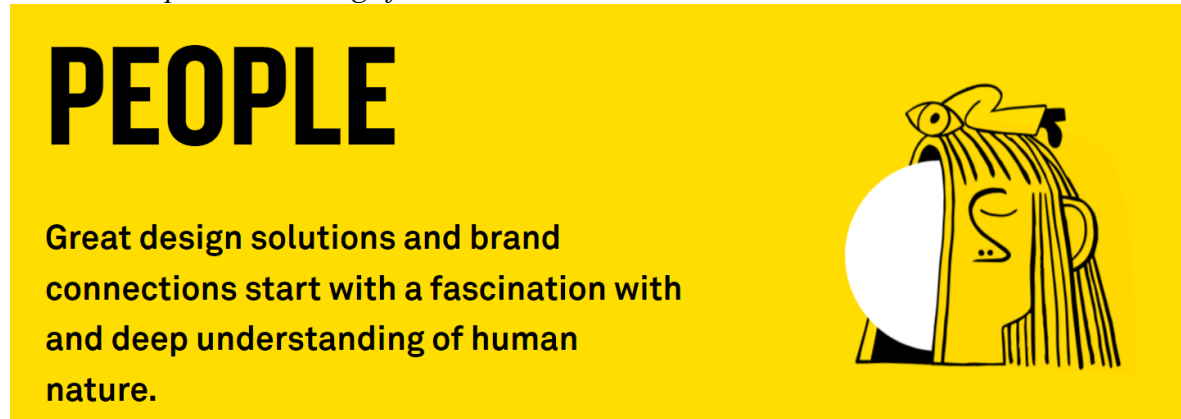
27
28 Design is a transdisciplinary heading in general approach and there is a cycle
29 related to communication within the process (Lawson, 2005, p. 33). This process
30 involves a reversible process involving the client-designer, in some cases the
31 designer-user, and sometimes all of them. The discipline of interior architecture is
32 performed by professionals who organize in a spatial context and create a qualified
33 spatial scheme by meeting user and employer expectations. Design firms and
34 spatial formations themselves, by their nature, are realized through the completion
35 of a series of stages. This research investigates Enerji-Sa Customer services
36 interior space as a case study, to understand the realization of an interior
37 architectural project in a holistic perspective. The project had been designed and
38 implemented by I-AM Associates.

39 The Firm itself has a distinctive approach to a holistic design strategy for any
40 brand. Stating their universal structure with the presence of three studios, the
41 global design company states on their web platforms that they deepen their
42 creative work with a singular mentality (I-AM, n.d.).The design company and its
43 activities on a universal scale and its realized spatial designs. The quote which is
44 located at their interface rhetorically “*We’re independently owned by six designers,*
45 *architects, and digital experts. Creating game-changing designs gets our hearts*

¹In this article, all of the visual materials were provided and approved for usage by I-AM Associates.

1 *pumping*” reflects the approach of the design teams and highlights the keyword of
2 game-changing in every step. It is also possible to read from the interface as a
3 motivation that the design approaches include the global network, but the
4 designer's views focus on local approaches. The design office that is the subject of
5 this article is based in Istanbul. It can be stated that it carries out its designs with
6 the approach of new generation brand analysis, strengthening the design strategy
7 in user and spatial context, in line with the above-mentioned principle.

8
9 **Figure A.** *“Great design solutions and brand connections start with a fascination
10 with and deep understanding of human nature”*
11



12
13 In this context, the design firm that carried out the design and implementation
14 processes of the sample study collectively carries out the preliminary research
15 phases in the early stages of the design, taking a highly innovative approach in the
16 relationship with the user and customer. Specifically, customers are considered
17 within their experiences and thinking of their previous experiences. Thus, the
18 previous experiences are becoming a starting point for an innovative idea that will
19 be built upon.

20
21 **Figure B.** *The motto of the design firm related with interior design and
22 implementations*
23

Our Capabilities ——— **Physical experiences are the
ultimate manifestation of any
brand. The best of them transform,
enhance and inspire.**

**INTERIOR
ARCHITECTURE**

24
25 The design firm and its ideology are focused on "enriching experiences" to
26 establish a connection between human behavior and nature. The firm uses a highly
27 detailed but also precise approach, employing three steps to develop the
28 conceptual notion of the space. The team conducted primary research, gathering
29 information through interviews and surveys, and meticulously analyzed potential
30 consumers and brand stakeholders by evaluating user needs, insights, and the

1 impact of brand expansion. The distinguished part
2
3

4 **Methodology, Materials, and Results**

5

6 This study examines the customer service center of an energy company
7 operating in Ankara with its design criteria and design approach. The company's
8 widespread mission is producing/distributing electricity and spreading awareness
9 issues related to energy saving/usage. Enerjisa carries out social responsibility
10 duties as well as energy distribution, production, and consultancy. In particular, the
11 customer service headquarters examined within the scope of the sample research
12 of this study can be considered as a social awareness center. Therefore, to spread
13 awareness related with renewable energy and energy efficiency offer customers a
14 new experience with interior design and flow.

15 Qualitative research methodology was used as the research method in the
16 study. Qualitative research was used to here is to invite the customer to a new
17 intellectual phase while creating a general cross-section of the customer. At this
18 stage, the first steps of an innovative process are taken. After the impacts and
19 important aspects of exploration, a contextual inquiry targets the gathered
20 information. Which includes the steps of co-design workshops and diary studies.
21 The fundamental and one of the important mapping ideologies depends on
22 thinking all the aspects of the space. The mapping strategy obtains the insight of
23 the experiences as in the definition of holistically.

24 The material of this research was created by Enerjisa's Customer Services
25 Center and the design strategies evaluated during the design process. In the
26 research, documents related to the spatial design process created by I-AM
27 Associates, design samples, customer feedback and semi-structured interviews
28 conducted with I-AM Associates constituted the material of the study. During the
29 meeting with the Chief Customer Manager of I-AM Istanbul Office, the process
30 and documents related to the process were discussed in detail, and the
31 implementation reality or constraints of the project were revealed. This
32 methodology provides a comprehensive analysis of the design phases and interior
33 architectural components of Enerjisa Customer Service Center.

34 Thus, this study focuses on examining the design logic, discovering structural
35 elements and user/customer experience. On site experiences and interviews with
36 designers shed light to the mental and implementational phases of the project.
37
38

39 **Literature Review**

40

41 The Design process is studied by various disciplines interested in developing
42 new products, services, or technologies to create a structured process for firms to
43 identify important metrics for the design brief and verify the outcomes during the
44 projects. Design processes can be explained in three main phases: exploring the
45 field, design concept generation, and implementation. Each of these stages is
46 crucial for finalizing a successful design process.

1 *Design Briefing in Creative Industries*

2
3 The exploration phase can be defined as structuring a design brief including
4 problem definition, evaluation of competitors, the definition of the target market,
5 planning the project schedule, defining testing and verification processes, deciding
6 required staff in the project team, and in the light of these steps planning the
7 budget.

8 The exploration stage is important for analyzing the existing conditions in the
9 field and the definition of the problems to be solved or improved. A successful
10 design brief is based on building good communication between the client and the
11 consultancy. Once both sides state their expectations from the project clearly, they
12 can finalize this document to verify the outcomes of the concepts and designs.
13 Moreover, the design brief affects the project outcome because the communication
14 between the client and the design agency helps companies to share required data
15 and decide the actors' responsibilities (Ryd, 2004). However, Philips (2004)
16 mentions no absolute design briefing process exists due to highly changing
17 variables for different cases. In other words, companies should develop their
18 design briefing processes according to the realities of their sectoral ecosystem. On
19 the one hand, regulations and safety measures become dominant in industries such
20 as toys, medical devices, and defense. On the other hand, innovation and
21 originality promise better competitive advantage in emerging industries such as
22 digital technologies, and entertainment.

23 24 *Aim of Design Research in Creative Industries*

25
26 Design research can be defined as research activities aiming to generate data
27 that will turn into design knowledge with the accumulation of studies in the field.
28 The aim of these studies can be for both academic and professional purposes.
29 Academy and design practitioners share similar design tools in data generation but
30 differences between their aims affect approaches to the research. Design
31 practitioners fulfill their tasks in the project timetable and budget. Limitations in
32 time, budget, and staff make framing the research critical, which is mentioned as
33 one of the ten heuristics by Hannington (2015). Therefore, even if the same
34 methods are shared with academic studies, the practicality of the study is enhanced
35 by methods developed by professionals. These tools can be generated by
36 companies that carry out research repeatedly in their projects and have access to
37 required assets in terms of budget and staff.

38 The methods in design research are quite versatile. In terms of the
39 researchers' aim, techniques are grouped under three themes which are
40 explorative, evaluative, and generative (Hannington & Martin, 2012). Explorative
41 research aims to describe the existing conditions in the project field. This research
42 approach is frequently adopted in design education due to the lack of experience of
43 design students. Students are expected to carry out research to recognize the
44 competitors, actors, and needs in the project field. The same principle is also valid
45 for design professionals. If design consultancies have projects in different fields,
46 companies have two options. They can carry out explorative research or prefer to

1 transfer the tacit knowledge from their clients. The second option depends on the
2 accuracy of the information provided by the client. Moreover, eliminating the
3 research stage in the project schedule will limit the potential contribution of the
4 design agencies. Still, the decision is closely related to the financial limitations.

5 Evaluative research focuses on the evaluation of design ideas and project
6 outcomes. Most research studies in usability labs can be grouped under this theme.
7 Evaluative research helps designers test and improve their design ideas. The
8 iteration potentials in different sectors change the application of these research
9 methods. To illustrate, evaluative methods are frequently used in digital product
10 development. Developers publish their design improvements for their users to try
11 new components of apps. Another example is the simulation of plans in
12 architectural design via computational tools for simulating the performance of the
13 proposed design on issues such as circulation, heating, lighting, etc.

14 Generative research methods are used for design ideation. The design teams
15 use these techniques to expand their ideation abilities and include other actors. The
16 inclusion of actors in the design process can be at different levels. The actors can
17 be a part of the generation of design insights. In other words, clients can take part
18 in the development of these insights in brainstorming sessions. They can be
19 supported with research materials prepared by design teams. Furthermore, design
20 teams can include actors in the design act called as codesign. Designers cooperate
21 with users on equal ground in the development and decision-making process. Still,
22 the involvement of the participants in these sessions should be examined by design
23 professionals in terms of feasibility.

24 *Research Methods used in Creative Industries*

25
26
27 The methods employed in the design research can be grouped under two
28 themes: traditional techniques and creative ones. Traditional research techniques
29 are used in field studies by almost every discipline. The most well-known
30 techniques are interviews and questionnaires. The interviews are used to acquire
31 in-depth information. The outcomes of the method depend on the experience and
32 qualification of the interviewer. Pilot studies are another important step for a
33 successful interview because questions, toning, wording, and the order of the
34 interview should be improved with a series of pilots before the field study.
35 Questionnaires are another traditional method frequently used with two
36 advantages: number of participants and data analysis. The questions in the survey
37 should be tested with a series of pilot studies, especially online questionnaires
38 because researchers will not be present to explain the research material. Thus, all
39 questions and answers must be clear and easy to understand. Once the
40 questionnaire is prepared, researchers can carry out their research with a high
41 number of participants and turn their data into findings easily by coding. Another
42 traditional research method frequently used in design research is observation. This
43 technique helps design teams analyze existing behavioral patterns and routines.
44 The observations can be participatory, non-participatory, or indirect which defines
45 the involvement of the researcher in the process (Ciesielska et al., 2018).

46 Creative methods can be described as the ones that utilize the creative abilities

1 of researchers in the generation of research materials and use these materials to
2 enrich communication between participants and researchers. The most well-known
3 methods employed by design researchers can be listed as personas, inspirational
4 cards, visual ethnography, cultural probes, and storyboards. The appropriate
5 method is selected according to the purpose of the study. If the design team needs
6 to illustrate the construct of target users' characteristics, they would prefer
7 personas, fictive characters created by the design team, to reflect the priorities and
8 key factors of the target group. Cultural probes can be used for monitoring
9 participants' routines in a self-reflective approach like in diary studies. Visual
10 ethnography and inspirational cards can be used to communicate and understand
11 target users through images. The advantage of this technique is the fact that the use
12 of visuals can be more useful compared to texts and words. Storyboards help study
13 the proposed design idea in context. Design teams can create storyboards or
14 journey maps to study the design concept from a wholistic perspective.

15
16

17 **The Project Process**

18

19 The project started with the problem of senior users visiting customer
20 relations office about billing problems. Thus, the office is closely linked with
21 negative conditions and crises that link the office environment with negative
22 experiences. The project aims to turn the overall experience into a positive one.

23 The project lasted seventeen weeks including planning, idea generation,
24 concept design, design embodiment, and detailing. The project process starts with
25 a series of presentations and a workshop composed of inspirational/informative
26 materials. In the idea generation stage, the design team explored potential layout
27 ideas, some of which were eliminated due to their feasibility. Once the promising
28 initial design has matured, the project continues with the detailing of the
29 experience areas.

30
31

32 **Exploration Process**

33

34 Designing a space has a huge impact on people's lives. Workshops Offered
35 by I-AM Associates I AM Associates led interactive workshops for designing the
36 Enerjisa Customer Service Center. Participants in these workshops included
37 regional managers, communications specialists from lower-level offices, and, if
38 available, Customer Experience (CX) experts. The approach was carried out by a
39 team of about 11 people, who incorporated feedback from office personnel and
40 senior executives to develop a multifaceted design perspective. The workshops
41 utilized images, interactive participation post-its, the brand core (archetype,
42 appearance, tone of voice), personas, and user experience maps.

43 Participants in the workshops were chosen to ensure that varied perspectives
44 were represented in the design process. This group included regional managers,
45 customer service professionals from Enerjisa's lower offices, and if possible CX
46 experts. This composition was required to fulfill the demands and expectations of
47 various operational levels and develop a comprehensive design.

1 The workshops are disciplined intensively. Initially, participants and their
2 information were gathered to encourage them to express their ideas. This is a way
3 of building teamwork. Participants were encouraged to freely communicate their
4 suggestions to make a deepened comment. In the workshop, it is also used an
5 interactive post-it strategy to picture and concretize their ideas.

6 The brand key assumption is the roadmap that includes essential components
7 that mold the company's identity and spatiality in the end. This key contains
8 critical elements that represent brands specific goals, values, and customer range.
9 The design firm fundamentally works with three aspects which are the archetype,
10 look, and tone of speech. The essential qualities that define a brand's identity and
11 character are referred to as its 'archetype'. Brand key has a reflection of total
12 behavior reading conceptually. Appearance includes all the components that make
13 up the brand's visual identity. It is also evaluated in both participant groups to
14 improve recognizability and perceivability. The evaluation includes mostly colors,
15 typography, logos, and other visual features.

16 The brand's communication language are determined by its tone of voice is a
17 type of style that creates communication between the brand and the customer. This
18 is also improving brand's expansion through an emotional connection with
19 customers while also increasing interaction. The key of communication and usage
20 of brand key to a consistent brand identity and a strong relationship with
21 customers. This key underlines the brand's distinctness and gives a competitive
22 edge. Unilever's brand key successfully leads the company's brand strategy and
23 adds to the long-term increase in brand value.

24 Brand keys are used by I-AM to help brands communicate effectively in the
25 design processes. A brand key is a handbook that includes critical aspects that
26 determine the brand's identity, strategy, and values (Brakus, 2009). This document
27 outlines the brand's archetype, tectonic or design. To begin, the notion of archetype
28 inside the brand key is critical since it shows the brand's personality and character.
29 It expresses the brand's beliefs, attitudes, and actions. When working with
30 customers, I-AM discovers brand archetypes that help them develop a powerful
31 identity within the structural way. Atmospheric visual aspects such as colors,
32 logos, typography, and other visual components that contribute to the brand's
33 visual identity. These aspects contribute to the brand's recognizability and
34 perceptibility. I-AM provides clients to consult the brand key framework.

35 36 37 **Generation Phase**

38
39 After three main personas are structured and three components of the Brand
40 Key are decided, the main design principles are shaped under three keywords:
41 smartness, flexibility, and interaction. Smartness is the use of smart technologies
42 for building a seamless customer experience. As one of the personas aims at
43 elderly customers who have difficulties adapting to digital tools in customer
44 services, the communication with the customers is not narrowed down to these
45 digital tools. A customer representative companion is employed in a CRM-
46 integrated reception stage to create a sincere atmosphere in helping these

1 customers. The employees and the digital tools used in the tablets support the
 2 learning stage of customers adapting to online reservations reducing the crowds
 3 and queues in the waiting area that create stress and negative experiences.
 4 Flexibility is reflected in the concept by allowing a flexible layout for dividing
 5 spaces for different customer services. The office space is divided into four areas:
 6 Customer Services Area, Experience Hall, Account Receivables Office, and rooms
 7 for individual needs and back services (See Figure C).

8
 9 **Figure C.** *Layout plan of concept design (adapted from I-AM presentations)*



11
 12 As mentioned earlier the project started with the problem definition of
 13 customers' lack of digital skills in bill payment and reception which leads to
 14 crowds and negative experiences. In other words, clients without any problem do
 15 not visit the headquarters. The design consultancy suggested their client to turn the
 16 headquarters into a space which would be visited by not only customers, but also
 17 children from schools and families visiting the shopping mall since the office is
 18 located at the center of the city. The design team created an experience hall as a
 19 result of the idea aiming to create awareness of electricity use by reflecting the
 20 outcomes of excessive electricity use in different scales. The experience hall is
 21 called 'Energy Tunnel'. The tunnel starts from the global scale followed by city
 22 and individual levels (see figure D). On each level, visitors are informed about
 23 issues of energy production and consumption. Visitors can see the outcomes of
 24 their electricity use in daily life on climate as the amount of fossil fuel for using an
 25 old technology light bulb for a year. Another example is about how smart cities
 26 would help increase energy use efficiency through smart buildings, intelligent
 27 transportation systems, and decentralised energy.

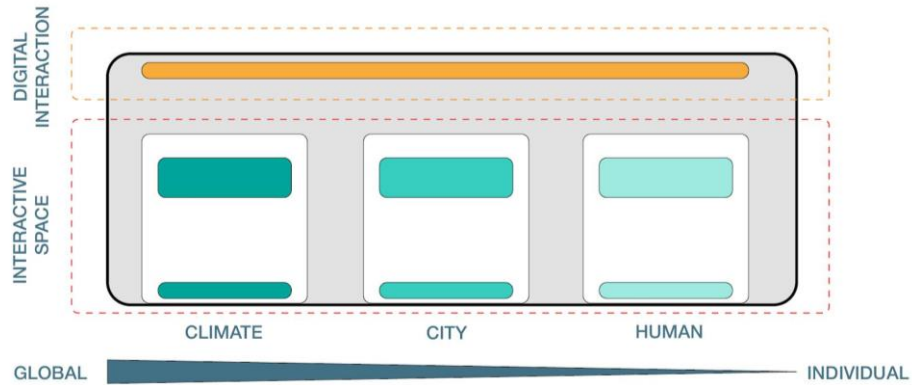
28 After the concept is finished in terms of CMF, layout and furnishing (see
 29 Figure E), the implementation of the 'Energy Tunnel' is continued by a digital
 30 agency. I-AM mentioned that executing graphic and digital components' design
 31 (interfaces, screens, projections, etc.) is critical in the later stages. Still, the
 32 company emphasized that the concept has been kept almost original in the

1 realization stage.

2

3 **Figure D.** *Layout plan of Experience Hall (adapted from I-AM presentations)*

4



5 **Figure E.** *The Energy Tunnel concept renders (adapted from I-AM presentations)*

6



7



8

9 The Energy Tunnel divides the office into two separate spaces. Customer
10 services are located on the left side of the office and the account receivable office
11 is placed on the other side with WC and rooms for back services. The design
12 decision helped divide the customers into two separate areas to keep the customer
13 experience in control. Customer services deal with daily problems customers
14 encounter. However, the accounts receivable office deals with more serious issues
15 such as payment of non-paid debts which is usually a negative experience. Thus

1 the isolation of this area from the main office area helps keep a peaceful
 2 environment. The customer service area is the largest part of the office which is
 3 338 square meters. The area includes desks of customer service representatives, a
 4 waiting area, meeting rooms, a shared office, a screen for activities and
 5 presentations, and a manager's office. The waiting area is located at the center of
 6 the space and is surrounded by the counters (see Figure F). One important design
 7 decision taken is the location of the manager's desk. We expect managers to have a
 8 separate office in the open offices with glass doors or dividers. However, the
 9 manager is located behind the column in this plan which is hidden but still, the
 10 manager can monitor the workspace. This design creates a lateral hierarchy
 11 between the employees and also helps the manager to take action in a short time. A
 12 screen is placed next to the waiting hall for activities with seating units and two
 13 meeting rooms are placed next to the screen (see Figure G)

14
 15 **Figure F.** Customer service space layout plan (left) & render of the waiting hall
 16 (right) (adapted from I-AM presentations)



18
 19 **Figure G.** Screen for activities (left) & shared office and managers office behind
 20 (right) (adapted from I-AM presentations)



1



2

3

4 **Implementation Phase**

5

6 I-AM designed the Enerjisa Customer Service Centre in Ankara, which has a
7 significant character. As a characteristic approach usage of color, especially
8 bright yellow and gray tones create a warm and dynamic atmosphere. Waiting and
9 seating space is organized around a plant-filled island type unit, which promotes
10 relaxation and comfort. Individual client service booths give both privacy and
11 efficiency across the space. Notably, the design combines interactive digital
12 displays and clear signage, which contribute to a well-organized and user-friendly
13 environment. The interior is focused on functionality, attractiveness, and customer
14 engagement.

15 The implementation process is the most important part of realization of a
16 design ideology. While there may be many problems, constraints, and application
17 errors during the implementation phase, project revisions are mostly made at this
18 stage. These problems comprised a set of limits that shaped the space's ultimate
19 layout and characteristics. These limitations are on some design components as
20 well as compliance with safety laws.

21 One of these difficulties was the impossibility to establish a dedicated
22 smoking place on the grounds owing to legislative limits. Furthermore, the
23 existence of unneeded doors inside the space, as well as the need to comply with
24 fire safety rules, resulted in an excess of doors in certain sections, possibly
25 interfering with the flow and aesthetics of the interior. Numerous obstacles were
26 encountered during the implementation phase of the I-AM-designed interior.
27 These constraints imposed restrictions on certain design elements and compliance
28 with safety laws. One of the major challenges was the impossibility of establishing
29 a dedicated smoking area on the premises due to legislative limitations.
30 Additionally, the presence of unnecessary doors within the space, as well as the
31 need to comply with fire safety regulations, led to an excess of doors in certain
32 sections. That creates a potential disruption related with the flow and aesthetics of
33 the interior space.

34 Furthermore, fire safety led to the inclusion of an excessive number of doors
35 in some portions of the interior. It is affecting overall design coherence and spatial
36 functionality. Despite these problems, I-AM is likely to have successfully
37 controlled the obstacles and changed the interior design to suit regulatory
38 standards. The final design would most likely achieve a compromise between

1 regulatory compliance, client preferences, and design integrity, resulting in a
2 visually satisfactory and useful environment.

5 **Discussion and Conclusion**

7 I-AM's design process for the Enerjisa Customer Service Center raises
8 various issues for debate notably. In term of understanding design implementation
9 problematics, collaborative approach arises the concern of transparency. The
10 workshop's absence of service users reduces the possibility to acquire firsthand
11 ideas and preferences, perhaps resulting in a design that does not entirely fit with
12 end users' wants and expectations.

13 The limits faced during the implementation phase show the practical
14 difficulty of carrying out design ideas. The design does not appear to include
15 sustainability ideas or practices, ignoring an increasingly crucial part of
16 contemporary design. Incorporating sustainable features and techniques might
17 improve the Customer Service Center's long-term profitability and environmental
18 responsibility, connecting it with overall sustainability goals. On the plus side, the
19 awareness center's design demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity by catering to
20 a wide range of ages and addressing a variety of needs and interests. However,
21 genuine inclusion involves a more extensive integration of user inputs and
22 perspectives throughout the design process to create spaces that meet the diverse
23 needs of all users.

24 Throughout design process, the selection of the materials and the strategy to
25 gather all the materials for the design process is a major issue. Even though the
26 authors of this article had a semi-structured interview with the designer team
27 member, the methodology of preparing the inspirational materials is not well
28 described.

29 In addition to the selection criteria of these materials shaped by experience,
30 real user experiences and whether the materials have a guiding effect can be
31 studied with different methods in future studies. In this sense, an experience-
32 centered and user-oriented design development can yield better results with a
33 defined tool.

34 In summary, the center designed by I-AM for Enerjisa is important in terms
35 of creating an exemplary design solution with its implementation difficulties,
36 transparency discourse in the design process, and supporting user-oriented
37 approach.

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