Design for social enterprises: A comparative case study of design support programmes in the United Kingdom and South Korea

Hyejin Kwon

College of Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences, Brunel University London, Uxbridge, United Kingdom

Youngok Choi

College of Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences, Brunel University London, Uxbridge, United Kingdom

Busayawan Lam

College of Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences, Brunel University London, Uxbridge, United Kingdom

Corresponding author email: Hyejin Kwon@brunel.ac.uk

About the Authors:

Hyejin Kwon is a doctoral researcher at Brunel University London with a background in design and branding strategy. Her research interest centres on design for the growth of social enterprises.

Dr Youngok Choi is a senior lecturer and MA Design programme director, Brunel University London. Her research interests encompass the role of design in economic growth and improving the quality of people's lives, and hence sustainable development. The strategic use of design underpins much of her research activities.

Dr Busayawan Lam is a senior lecturer at the Design Department, Brunel University London. She specialises in the areas of New Product Development (NPD) process, Innovation Strategy and Management, and Design Strategy. Her research interests include co-design and community-led design.

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The expanding role of design suggests design is crucial for more than merely improving innovation and competitiveness for businesses. Although some studies have investigated the role and impact of design for social enterprises, there is little evidence that design is supported in social enterprises as a strategic driver of sustainable growth. This study analysed Design Support Programmes (DSPs) for social enterprises in the United Kingdom and South Korea, with similar awareness of design and different approaches for DSP development, to explore the mechanisms for supporting design in such enterprises[HK(1]. A qualitative research approach was employed, including case studies of DSPs and exploratory and in-depth interviews with academics and practitioners in the social enterprise and design fields. The research results reveal the countries share some issues regarding the operational and strategic levels of the current DSP mechanisms. The findings highlight the critical role of design and strategic stakeholders for social enterprises.

Keywords: design, design support programmes, social enterprises, social enterprise support system

Introduction

Design is currently recognised as a strategic driver of sustainable growth in businesses as it increases operational efficiency, improves business capabilities (Buley 2019; Lawlor et al. 2015) and enables innovation and differentiation in the marketplace (DTI 2005; Design Council 2013). However, effective design utilisation remains a challenge because businesses lack an understanding of how to use design strategically to develop products, services and systems that meet market expectations (SEE Platfor 2013; Gaynor et al. 2019) and reduce the risk of failure (Design Council 2020A)[HK(2].

Because of this challenge, many governments and design institutions have recently developed Design Support Programmes (DSPs), which offer various forms of design

support, including design consulting services, matchmaking between design practitioners and businesses, design education and training, and disseminating information about design (Lawlor et al. 2015) for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Within the DSPs, design is a tool to address form-giving/styling issues or an approach that can be applied in the creation of better products, services, processes and business models by providing contextual insight to define innovation opportunities and strategies (Innovate UK 2015; 2020). [HK(3)]Examples include the Design Leadership Programme in the United Kingdom (UK), Design Boost in Denmark and Design Innovation Company Promotion projects in South Korea, all of which aim to improve design awareness and utilisation (Choi et al 2012; Gaynor et al. 2019). These programmes have significantly impacted businesses growth by improving companies' viability, productivity (sales growth) and employment prospects (Bonner et al.2017; Design Council 2017; SEE Platform 2013).

However, social enterprises (i.e. businesses pursuing economic success and societal value) are generally not regarded as the beneficiaries of DSPs and have relatively few opportunities to learn how best to utilise design in their business contexts. A 2019 survey which is the *'Survey on demand for design support policies for social enterprises'* conducted by the Korea Institute of Design Promotion (KIDP) revealed that most social enterprises never experience design support (KIDP 2019A). Thus, many social enterprises lack an understanding of the role and impact of design in enhancing their commercial value (DesignThinkers UK Limited 2017). This suggests that well-developed design supports should be available at various levels (e.g. national, local and organisational) for social enterprises to enhance their awareness of design and gain crucial knowledge and skills to help them grow and sustain their businesses. Moreover, although some studies have examined the role and advantages of design in social

enterprises (Douglas et al. 2014; Selloni and Corubolo 2017) few have researched how design can be encouraged and supported in social enterprises (Pérez et al.2017). In this context, the following research question was raised: *How can DSPs help social enterprises establish design as a strategic driver for sustainable growth?*

This research aimed to explore the mechanisms of DSPs for social enterprises and identify key drivers and barriers in the development and operation of DSPs. To address the research question and achieve the aim, this study took the following steps: (i) examining the awareness and utilisation of design among social enterprises; (ii) exploring the existing design support practices provided to social enterprises (e.g. the characteristics of the DSPs), especially the mechanisms employed by the DSPs; and (iii) identifying key drivers for and barriers to supporting the sustainable growth of social enterprises through design. To gain an extensive understanding of the complex issues surrounding DSPs for social enterprises in different cultures, this study employed a comparative case study methodology. The UK and South Korea were selected for the case study because their perspectives on social enterprises and design exhibited similarities (e.g. the maturity of institutional support for social enterprises and the recognition of design value) and differences (e.g. the degree of design utilisation in businesses and approaches to design support: bottom-up approach in the UK and top-down in South Korea. The researchers anticipated that this study's key findings would provide a greater understanding of existing DSPs for social enterprises, resulting in improved design support mechanisms for social enterprises. The findings are expected to form the basis for a design-innovation ecosystem (DInE), which is an interpretative construct. A DInE is an environment that initiates and supports the design of social enterprises to promote their growth. Furthermore, this systematic approach could help expand the strategic role and influence of design in social enterprises.

Research Background

Current studies on design in social enterprises can be divided into two types: (i) those that focus primarily on applying design thinking to the social enterprise process (Design Council 2020B; DesignThinkers UK Limited 2017; Selloni and Corubolo 2017) and (ii) those that demonstrate the impact of design on social enterprises in terms of their contribution to social innovation (Manzini 2015; Pérez et al. 2019). Few studies have shown how design is used and supported in social enterprises (Pérez et al. 2017; Hands et al. 2019). Therefore, this study analysed design in social enterprises in the UK and South Korea, which both have highly developed social enterprise sectors (Agapitova et al. 2017). The two countries exhibit similarities and differences in their social enterprises and design perspectives.

One similarity between the UK and South Korea is that both countries have mature policy frameworks for social enterprises (Agapitova et al. 2017). Specifically, since the late 1990s, the UK has had the most highly developed institutional support structure in the world (Nicholls 2010), and South Korea was the first country to enact laws to promote the development of social enterprise (Agapitova et al. 2017). Additionally, both nations have fully acknowledged the role and value of design in innovation (Design Council 2018A; KIDP 2019B) and actively promote design to businesses (MOTIE 2016; KIDP 2017; Design Council 2020A; Innovate UK 2020). However, the two countries have demonstrated slightly different perspectives regarding the definition of a social enterprise. In the UK, the government defines a *social enterprise* as ‘a business with primary social/environmental objectives, whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or community rather than mainly being paid to shareholders and owners’ (DTI 2002), but this definition is not legally established. In contrast, the South Korean government legally defines a social enterprise as a business that pursues a social objective (MOEL 2012). The difference

between these definitions influences the level of government intervention. For instance, the UK government tends to pay more attention to investing in social impact rather than providing direct support to social enterprises, so social enterprises often struggle to survive in the competitive market, whilst the Korean government endows both national and local governments with the responsibility of cultivating new markets for social enterprises and providing direct financial support to social enterprises to improve their survival rate (Choi et al. 2020).

The two countries also differ in their degree of design utilisation. For example, 64% of UK businesses and 83% of Korean businesses never or rarely used design or used it only as a 'last finish' (Design Council 2018B; KIDP 2019C). In the UK, 17% of companies considered design an essential component of their strategy (European Commission 2016), compared to only 6.7% of Korean companies (KIDP 2019C). Finally, the UK and South Korea have different approaches for DSP development and operation, with DSPs in the UK oriented around NGOs and those in South Korea led by government intervention. The scope of this research includes social enterprise (including social enterprise ecosystem), design and DInE, and it provides an overview of each area and unites theory and practical knowledge of design in social enterprises (see Figure 1).

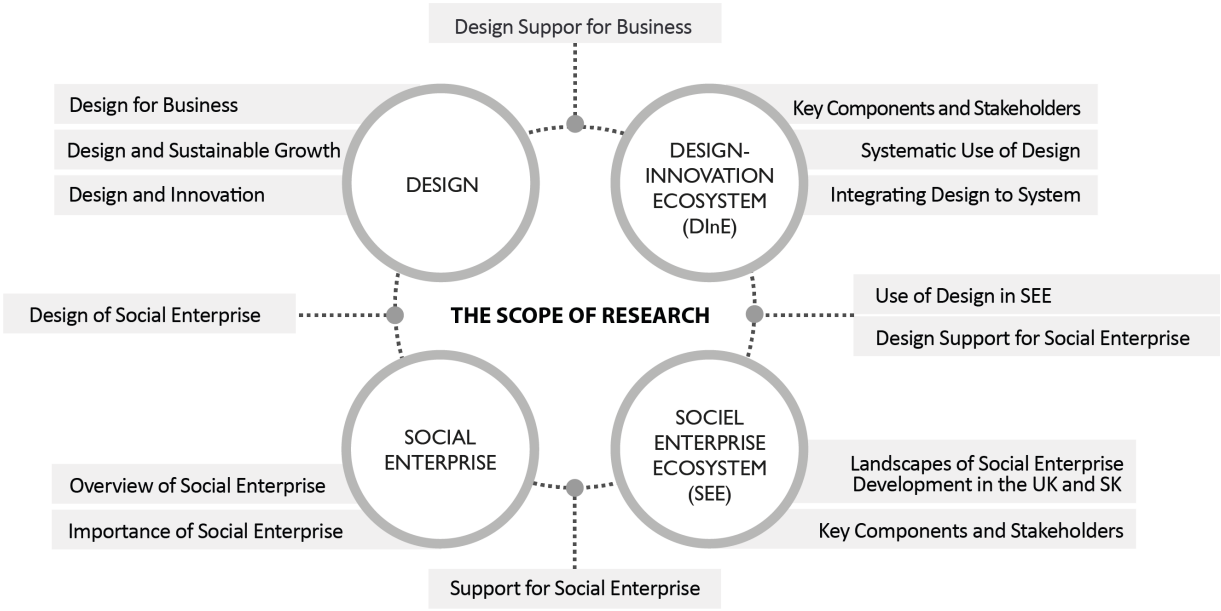

Figure 1 Scope of the research

Research Methodology

Because this was an exploratory study, an in-depth understanding of the current issues with DSPs and why they occur was essential. Therefore, a qualitative research approach was employed to determine underlying reasons, rationales and opinions rather than a mere snapshot or cross-section of events (Gray 2014). A case study methodology, which is closely associated with qualitative research (Gray 2014), was used to evaluate multiple perspectives, identify critical issues related to design support practices provided to social enterprises and seek meaningful avenues for improvement. This methodology enabled the researchers to conduct an in-depth assessment of each issue, event and phenomenon of interest in its practical context (Crowe et al. 2011). Because the research question addressed the reasons why certain processes (Goodrick 2014) supported social enterprises' design, this study adopted a comparative case study approach to analyse similarities, differences and patterns across DSPs in the UK and South Korea and produce generalisable insights into how these programmes work. This

study consisted of two phases. The first phase was an exploratory study examining stakeholders' awareness and utilisation of design in social enterprises. This phase also identified the existing design support practices provided to social enterprises and comprised exploratory interviews with social enterprise and design experts and case studies of DSPs in the UK and South Korea. The second phase was an in-depth study of the DSPs, including their development and operation mechanisms, key drivers and barriers. This phase evaluated the case studies and included in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. Figure 2 illustrates the research process. The experts who participated in the exploratory and in-depth interviews were chosen based on their practical work experience in social enterprise or design support. A semi-structured interview format was employed to ascertain the details of DSP operation, including an overview of each programme, the roles and relationships of stakeholders, and key challenges and opportunities. The data from the exploratory and in-depth interviews were analysed using thematic analysis and comparative analysis. The details of each method are provided in the following subsections.

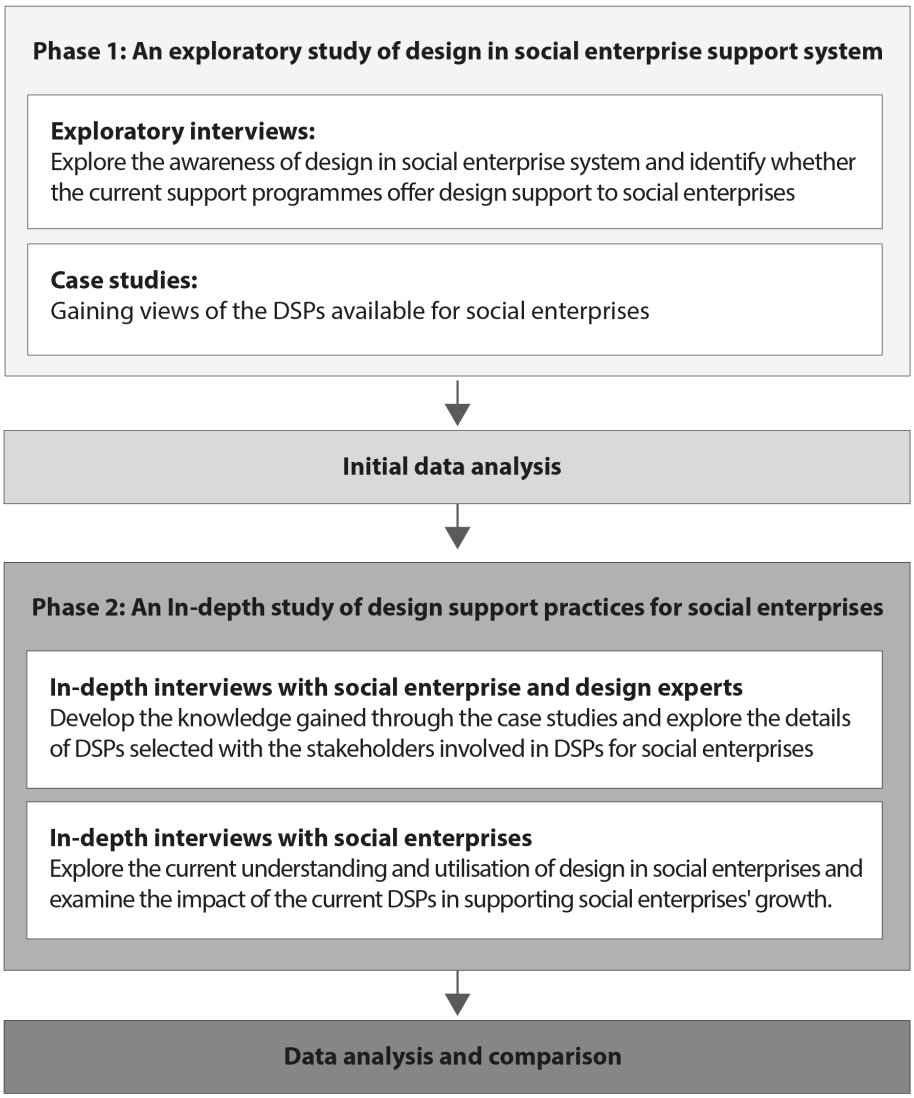

Figure 2 The research process

Exploratory interviews

The exploratory interviews were conducted with 20 social enterprise and design experts, comprising 11 respondents from the UK and nine from South Korea, to (i) identify their role in social enterprise development, (ii) explore their awareness and utilisation of design, and (iii) gain an understanding of their relationships with other organisations. In the exploratory interviews, some issues regarding the characteristics of DSPs for social enterprises were raised, such as the type of design support provided,

key stakeholders and barriers to implementation. These issues were then addressed through case studies and in-depth interviews.

Case studies

The case studies of DSPs focused primarily on how the programmes operated in practice to identify their mechanisms. 11 DSPs from the UK (n=5) and South Korea (n=6) were selected based on the following criteria: (i) the programme is aimed at social enterprises or considers social enterprises one of its beneficiaries and (ii) the programme provides design support as a tool or an approach to support the growth of social enterprises. The study identified four types of design support, corresponding to four different design roles: (i) *designing*, which supports tangible aspects of design to strengthen the market or design competitiveness of the products, services or brands of social enterprises; (ii) *designing process*, which focuses on improving current products, services or brands to strengthen competitiveness and innovation; (iii) *design strategy*, which focuses on supporting design as a business tool to improve the sustainability and scalability of social enterprises; and (iv) *design for systematic change and culture*, which focuses on improving design understanding among social enterprises and facilitating the use of design by encouraging interaction between social enterprises and design practitioners. The details of the design support types are shown in Table 1 and Figure 3. The selected cases were supported by an extensive literature review and exploratory interviews to provide documentation and practical evidence to support social enterprises' design.

Table 1 Overview of the selected DSPs

	DSP	Operation period	Execution area	Key driver	Main type of support
United Kingdom	UK-DSP 1	2013 – 2015	Regional	Public body	Designing process
	UK-DSP 2	2016 – 2018		Design agency	Design strategy
	UK-DSP 3	2017	Local	Local social enterprise support organisation	
	UK-DSP 4	2019 – present	Regional	University	Designing process
	UK-DSP 5	2015 – present	National	Design centre	Design strategy
South Korea	SK-DSP 1	2011 – 2013	National	Government agency	Design for systemic change and culture
	SK-DSP 2	2016 – present		National social enterprise support centre	Designing
	SK-DSP 3	2016 – present	Local	Local social enterprise support centre	Design for systemic change and culture
	SK-DSP 4	2017 – 2018			
	SK-DSP 5	2018 – present	National	Social enterprise support organisation	
	SK-DSP 6	2019 – present		National design centre	Designing process

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews with key stakeholders in DSPs were conducted in two parts. The first part included with 11 respondents involved in the development and provision of DSPs for social enterprises, comprising five respondents from the UK and six from South Korea. The key issues discussed in the interviewees were: (i) the main challenges of running the programme; (ii) key differences from other support programmes; (iii) the relationships among the stakeholders of the programme; (iv) the financial resources of the programme and (v) the influence of government support on the emergence of the programme.

In the second part, 16 social enterprises (ten from UK and six from South Korea) were contacted to (i) examine current design understanding and utilisation in their business; (ii) explore design support experiences; (iii) identify key drivers and barriers

in current design support and (iv) obtain critical and practical insights regarding improvements to design support.

Data analysis

This study employed thematic analysis to examine the perspectives of multiple research participants, highlight similarities and differences, generate unexpected insights and summarise the key features of the large data set (King 2004, Braun and Clarke, 2006, Nowell, Norris, White and Moules 2017). In particular, the analysis focused on the following key themes: (i) type of design support; (ii) key stakeholders of the DSPs; (iii) relationships among key stakeholders and (iv) the impact of DSPs on the sustainable growth of social enterprises.

Principal Findings

Type of design support

The classification of design support content was crucial for identifying the characteristics of each DSP and the main tendencies of design support in the UK and South Korea. In addition, this classification helped identify how key stakeholders in the programmes perceived and applied design in terms of encouraging social enterprise growth in a larger context. Based on the case studies of 11 DSPs, this study confirmed that a wide range of design-related support, including all 18 listed support content types, had been provided to social enterprises. As shown in Figure 4, the content types were divided into four categories: (i) designing (graphic and visual design, visual identity design, product design and online platform development), (ii) the design process (service design, market or user research, existing product or service improvement, new product or service development and prototyping or model development), (iii) design

strategy (marketing strategy, brand development, business strategy development, new business area and model development and design thinking), and (iv) design for systematic change and culture (intellectual property of designs; design education; the introduction or recruitment of design agencies or experts; and grants, funding and subsidies for design utilisation).

	Designing				Designing process						Design strategy				Design for systemic change and culture			
Type of design support	Graphic and visual design	Visual identify design (BI/CI)	Product design	Online platform(s) development	Service design	Market or user research	Existing product or service improvement	New product or service development	Prototyping or model making	Marketing strategy	Brand development	Business strategy development	New business area and model development	Design thinking	Design intellectual property	Design education	Introducing or recruiting design agency or expert	Grant, funding, subsidy for design utilisation
UK-DSP 1					●	●	●				●	●						
UK-DSP 2					●						●	●	●	●		●		
UK-DSP 3	●			●	●	●					●	●	●					
UK-DSP 4			●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●				●	
UK-DSP 5			●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●					●
SK-DSP 1	●		●				●	●			●		●	●			●	●
SK-DSP 2	●		●								●						●	●
SK-DSP 3	●		●				●	●			●					●	●	●
SK-DSP 4	●	●					●				●							
SK-DSP 5																	●	●
SK-DSP 6					●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●

Figure 3 Classification of design support type[HK(4)]

Figure 3 illustrates the clustering of support content types to show the main DSP support areas in each country and related similarities and differences between the countries. The similarities are that (i) brand development support is the most common support content type (10 out of the 11 programmes offered this type) and (ii) DSPs

rarely provide visual identity design, marketing strategy and intellectual property protection of design in either country. These findings demonstrate a lack of design understanding among key stakeholders; these stakeholders acknowledge the impact of design and its importance for brand development but are unaware of the role of design in visual identity design and marketing strategies, both of which are crucial in brand development.

The main difference between the two countries was that the UK-DSPs appeared to focus more on aspects related to long-term development, such as the design process and strategies, whereas the SK-DSPs primarily focused on providing short-term support for practical design issues, such as applying and developing design practices. Specifically, UK-DSPs used design to identify problems and often provided workshops where participating enterprises could gain a greater understanding of design and stakeholders for social enterprises. This approach enables the programme participants to (i) learn how to use design tools such as persona, customer journey, and stakeholder maps; (ii) develop a greater understanding of end-users; and (iii) have a direct impact on the organisation's mindset. In contrast, most SK-DSPs used design as a tool to solve practical design issues (e.g. styling or form-giving) for social enterprises. Thus, many DSPs included financial support such as grants and subsidies for design applications and assistance in hiring or contracting design experts. The provision of financial support to encourage social enterprises to participate in DSPs and efforts to promote interactions between social enterprises and design fields appeared to be unique features of the SK-DSPs. However, this type of support often led social enterprises to perceive expenses related to design as optional or unnecessary costs rather than essential investments in the business. Additionally, a lack of design support was observed, which affected an organisations' mindset and culture, as well as the strategic management aspects of

social enterprises. These problems may influence the overall understanding of the strategic value of design in social enterprises.

Classification and the role of key stakeholders

An understanding of the characteristics of the key stakeholders in UK and South Korean DSPs was crucial to address DSPs' mechanisms for supporting social enterprises. The main objectives and nature of a DSP depend on its stakeholders and primary coordinator. The DSP stakeholders came from a range of fields, including government, the public sector, design, social enterprises and academia. They were divided into the following categories based on their roles: programme organisation, financial support for programme operation and programme delivery (see Table 2). This classification was organised based on case studies and in-depth interviews. For instance, the interviews required stakeholders to define their roles and their key partners in the DSPs with which they are involved. The classification was confirmed by the key participants in the DSPs, including UK-DSPs 2, 3 and 4 and SK-DSPs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Table 2 Classification of the key stakeholders in DSPs

	Organiser	**Implement cost provider**	**Deliverer**
UK-DSP 1	Public body	Public body	• Design agency • NGO
UK-DSP 2	Design agency		• Design agencies • Intermediary organisations
UK-DSP 3	Social enterprise support organisation	Local government	• Design agencies • Design academics • NGO
UK-DSP 4	University	• Public body • University	University academics and students
UK-DSP 5	Design centre	Public body	• Design centre • Design associators
SK-DSP 1	Government agency	Government department	• Design and brand agencies • Intellectual property specialists

SK-DSP 2	National social enterprise support centre		Design agencies
SK-DSP 3	Local social enterprise support centre	Local government	• Local design support centre • Design agencies
SK-DSP 4			Design academic and students
SK-DSP 5	Social enterprise support organisation	Commercial bank	Design experts
SK-DSP 6	National design centre	Government department	Design agencies and experts

As shown in Table 2, the two countries exhibited similar programme deliverers (i.e. the organisations that provide the actual design support). Design agencies and design academics (often including students) were identified as key stakeholders in DSP provision. Their role in the programmes was primarily limited to delivering support; thus, they had no substantial influence on the programme development. This finding raised a practical problem related to the current DSPs in both countries: they are missing many opportunities to increase the design awareness of other key stakeholders and develop advanced support content because of the passive and limited involvement of design agencies during programme development.

Table 2 also reveals some distinctions between the key stakeholders in the UK and South Korean DSPs. In the case of the South Korean DSPs, the government was identified as a key stakeholder in financial support and programme organisation. Five programmes (SK-DSPs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6) received government funding and were organised by government-funded or -affiliated organisations. Of those programmes, three (SK-DSPs 2, 3, and 6) appear to have emerged due to government support. South Korean government published a five-year master plan for social enterprises starting in 2008; the plan included design support to promote the quantitative growth of social enterprises. Although design was mentioned as an aspect of management consultancy systems to support social enterprise management in the first national plan (2008–2012),

its role was unclear (Ministry of Labor 2008). In the second social enterprise development plan (2013–2018), design was recognised as an essential aspect of support for social enterprises and thus was integrated into the social enterprise support system (Korean Government 2012). This indicates an increased awareness of the importance of design in social enterprises among governments, intermediaries and social enterprises in recent years. During this period, the South Korean government also enhanced practical support to improve the market competitiveness of social enterprises. According to the key stakeholder of SK-DSP2, "SK-DSP 2 is developed based on the idea included within the 3rd government plan for social enterprises. At the same time, there was an internal recognition and motive to support social enterprises' products or services improvement" (SK-DSP 2 2019). [HK(5]This measure encouraged the launch of SK-DSPs 2 and 3, which made relatively good use of design and developed their brands effectively.

Design is considered a core element of improving social enterprise products in the third government plan (2019–present) (MOEL 2018). Therefore, the national design centre launched SK-DSP 6 in 2019 to enhance social enterprises' innovation capability through design and ensure that government support is effective. Additionally, the national social enterprise support agency has led the country's social enterprise product improvement programme (SK-DSP 3) since 2016. These two programmes not only support the development of social enterprise design but also form a support structure that can strategically analyse and improve designs to secure market competitiveness and further increase sales and social impact through connections with design agencies, distribution channels and social service providers. This type of support, which encourages the use of design at the system level and affects the long-term growth of social enterprises, is particularly effective in establishing innovative business models

that enhance sustainability (KIDP 2019D). These findings indicate that South Korean DSPs rely heavily on government support for programme organisation and operation and lack private investment and support.

In contrast, the UK DSPs were led by various stakeholders, including design centres, design agencies, universities, public bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), that were aware of the importance of design for growth. Among these stakeholders, public institutions appeared to provide the most financial support (UK-DSPs 1, 2, 4 and 5). This study reviewed documentary evidence of government support plans for social enterprises (including Scottish and Welsh government plans) and conducted in-depth interviews with five stakeholders involved in UK-DSPs 2, 3, and 4, but the researchers had limited access to information. Therefore, the researchers were unable to clearly identify how the UK government influenced the emergence of DSPs; however, opportunities to employ design to support social enterprises were observed. For instance, the Scottish government's action plan for social enterprises included the use of design to enhance competitiveness through the digitisation of social enterprises (Scottish Government 2017). According to the programme organiser of UK-DSP 3 in Scotland, social enterprise support bodies could accept design as a further channel of support for social enterprise growth, depending on the intermediaries' understanding of design and the availability of design-based government support[HK(6)]. This finding indicates the importance of raising design awareness among social enterprise support bodies and developing government support for intermediaries.

Differences were also observed in the number of design agencies participating in each programme in the UK and South Korea. In South Korea, each programme was connected to various design agencies affiliated with the national design centre to provide practical one-to-one design support based on its needs. In the UK, in contrast, a

small number of design agencies (often only one or two) that had established partnerships with programme organisers, were responsible for delivering design support to each programme. This structure allows social enterprises to identify and use design relatively independently; however, programme organisers and deliverers miss the opportunity to directly explore the types of design social enterprises require. Figure 4 illustrates the key stakeholder types in the UK and South Korean DSPs and their roles and relationships for the programme development, as well as similarities and differences among DSP organisers, providers and financial supporters.

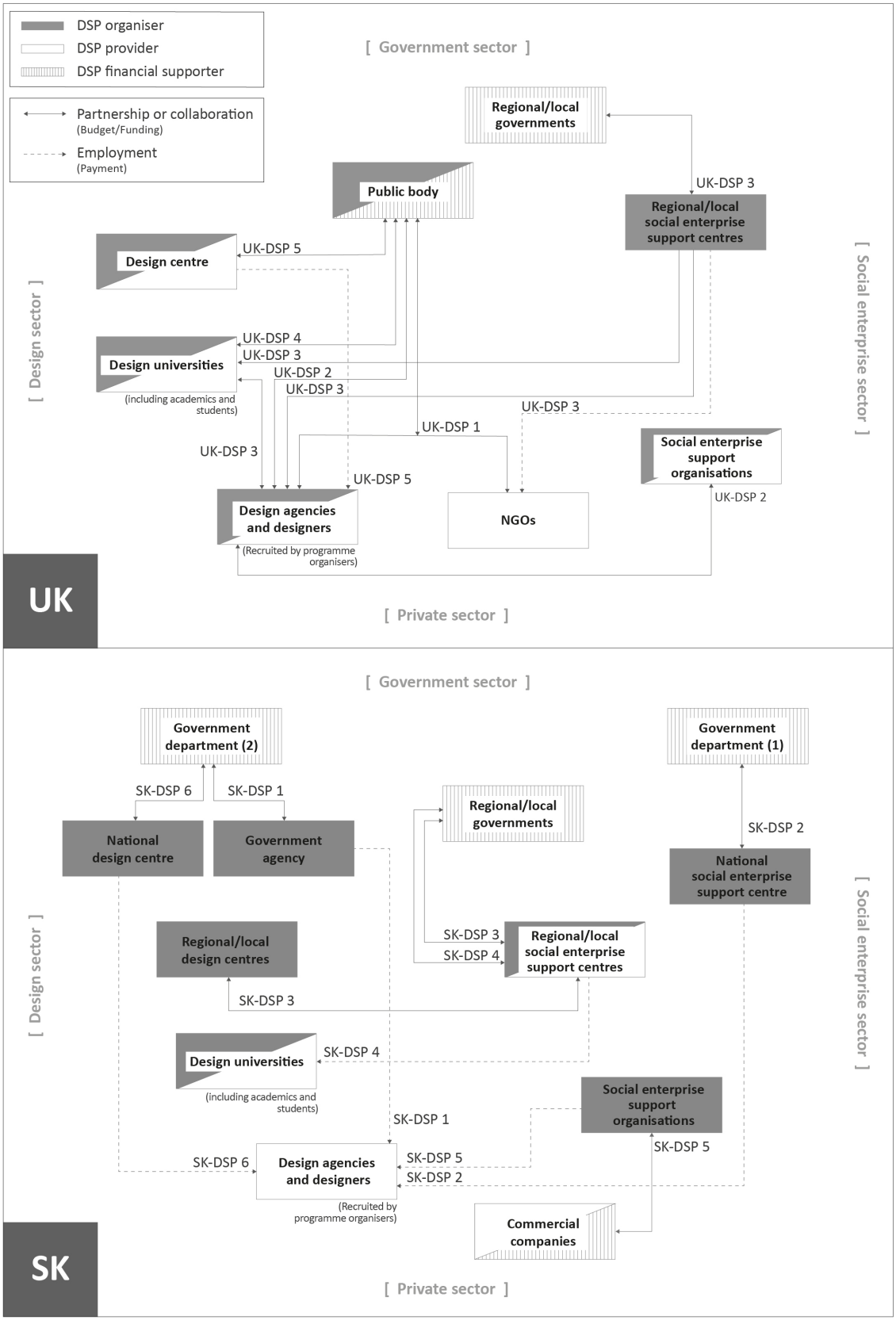

Figure 4 Key stakeholder map for DSP development in the UK and South Korea[HK(7]

Relationships between key stakeholders[HK(8)]

In this study, the key stakeholder relationships were classified based on the type of relationships between the organiser and deliverer of the programme, the form and origins of the programme's operating costs and the cost of participation.

Table 3 Classification of the key stakeholders' relationships

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Type of relationship</th><th>Type of implementation cost</th><th>Cost to participants</th></tr>
<tr><td>UK-DSP 1</td><td rowspan="3">Partnership</td><td rowspan="5">Grant funding</td><td rowspan="5">£ 0</td></tr>
<tr><td>UK-DSP 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>UK-DSP 3</td></tr>
<tr><td>UK-DSP 4</td><td>Collaboration</td></tr>
<tr><td>UK-DSP 5</td><td>Partnership</td></tr>
<tr><td>SK-DSP 1</td><td rowspan="3">Employment</td><td rowspan="4">Subsidy</td><td>5 – 10% of design development costs</td></tr>
<tr><td>SK-DSP 2</td><td>20% of design development costs</td></tr>
<tr><td>SK-DSP 3</td><td>10% design development costs</td></tr>
<tr><td>SK-DSP 4</td><td rowspan="2">Partnership</td><td>£ 0</td></tr>
<tr><td>SK-DSP 5</td><td>Grant funding</td><td>50% of invoice for one staff member</td></tr>
<tr><td>SK-DSP 6</td><td>Employment</td><td>Subsidy</td><td>0 or 20% of invoice for one staff member</td></tr>
</table>

As shown in Table 3, the following three broad categories of stakeholder relationship could be observed in the programmes, namely partnership, collaboration, and employment (including employees and contract workers).

- Partnership: six of the 11 DSPs (UK-DSPs 1, 2, 3, and 5 and SK-DSPs 4 and 5) operated based on a partnership between the programme organisers and deliverers. In this relationship, a social enterprise support body or, in some cases, a public body acted as the programme organiser, and a design agency or university typically assumed the role of programme deliverer.

- Collaboration: only one of the 11 DSPs (UK-DSP 4) operated through collaboration between a university and social enterprises. This DSP provided design support through diverse resources from the university in the form of academic expertise, knowledge assets and facilities. In particular, the programme provided design support through collaborative projects that benefitted social enterprises and students.
- Employment: four of the six South Korean DSPs (SK-DSPs 1, 2, 3 and 6) operated through employment-type relationships. These programmes were led by governments. The employment relationships were divided into two types: contract (SK-DSPs 1, 2, and 3) and hire (SK-DSP 6). The contract relationships provided design support to social enterprises that had participated in a programme for a specific period through design agencies that signed contracts with programme organisers. The hire relationships encouraged social enterprises to employ in-house designers by introducing experts and providing labour funds.

The different types of relationships among key stakeholders varied in how they affected various aspects of the DSPs, including the programme operating period, the area and manner in which programme was delivered and the repeatability of the programme. For example, DSPs in both countries were primarily implemented in the short term (less than one year); most programmes were provided as one-off events without follow-up support because of a lack of effective partnership and collaboration among programme organisers, deliverers, and financial supporters. To address this problem, the social enterprise support bodies and design agencies or design universities should be encouraged to establish strategic partnerships to form a cohesive support system.

The impact of DSPs on the sustainable growth of social enterprises

Most participating social enterprises were aware of the benefits of design utilisation for market competitiveness, existing or new products and services and organisational culture. There is also evidence that DSPs impact economic growth (Kim 2012; Kennedy and Sharp 2015), interactions with customers and organisational system improvements (Creative Dundee 2017; DesignThinkers UK Limited 2017; KIDP 2019D). However, the social enterprises had limited knowledge of how to utilise design and identified some issues with the DSPs, including: (i) a lack of funding for design application and development; (ii) difficulty accessing the information on design, including practitioners and support programmes (e.g. although five UK-DSPs were explored in this study, none of the UK social enterprises knew about the programmes); (iii) limited understanding and competency in design among social enterprise support bodies; and (iv) design practitioners' minimal knowledge about social enterprises.

In South Korea, where more DSPs were identified the social enterprises pointed out issues with the quality of the DSPs, including a lack of (i) considerations of social enterprises' business stage; (ii) interrelation between support content; and (iii) follow-up support. These findings demonstrate that current DSPs have a minimal impact on social enterprises (with most support focusing on the operational level of design), so they have a limited understanding of how to strategically use design in their business context. This leads to a disagreement about the systematic approach that should be developed to encourage the use of design in social enterprises as a strategy for long-term business growth.

Discussions and Recommendations

This study explored DSPs in the UK and South Korea and analysed their development and operation mechanisms. The interviews with social enterprises and analysis of documentary evidence confirmed that DSPs positively impact the growth of social enterprises. Similarities and differences in the development and operation of DSPs were observed between the two countries, as were current and potential issues that should be addressed to improve the programmes and develop a systematic approach to enhance the awareness and use of design among social enterprises and their stakeholders. All key findings regarding DSPs in the UK and South Korea are shown in Figure 5.

		UK	South Korea
Principal approach		Bottom-up	Top-down
Main type of design support		• Designing process • Design strategy	• Designing • Design for systemic change and culture
Impact of design support		Long-term development	Short-term support for practical design issues
Similar issues in current operating mechanisms of DSPs	**Operational level**	• Limited design support content • Insufficient time for programme operation • Lack of funding support for design application and development • Lack of follow-up support	
	Strategic level	• Lack of design competency among social enterprises and support bodies • Lack of understanding of social enterprise among design practitioners • Lack of partnerships between stakeholders • Passive and limited involvement of design support practitioners • Difficulties in securing financial resources for the programme • Insufficient accesible on design	
Different issues in current operating mechanisms of DSPs	**Strategic level**	• Lack of DSP for social enterprises • Lack of initiatives and implementers for DSP development • Insufficient participation of design agencies	• Fragmented and disconnected design support content • Lack of consideration of social enterprise business stage • High dependence on government support • Lack of participation of public bodies and NGOs

Figure 5 Key findings of regarding the DSPs in the UK and South Korea

Similar issues indicate that current DSPs are not strategically developed; they provide fragmented rather than comprehensive and step-by-step support. This is caused mainly by the (i) lack of design understanding among most social enterprise support bodies involved in the programmes and (ii) limited and passive involvement of design support practitioners (including support bodies, agencies and academics) in DSP development.

In the UK, multiple stakeholders (e.g. local governments, public bodies and universities) recognised the importance of design for supporting social enterprises, but a lack of initiatives and facilitators to develop and operate DSPs was observed. In South Korea, in contrast, the government was the main financial supporter and initiative developer for DSPs, so most DSPs relied heavily on government support rather than seeking support from various institutions. These issues were caused by (i) the insufficient role of design in the current DSPs and (ii) the imbalance in stakeholder intervention in DSP development (e.g. the lack of government, social enterprise and design support practitioner intervention in the UK and the high degree of government intervention in South Korea).

To address these issues and develop a systematic approach to enhance the awareness and use of design among social enterprises and build effective operating mechanisms, this research proposes the following recommendations.

- Social enterprise support bodies and design support practitioners should be considered as the main strategic stakeholders, who responsible for the overall process of DSP development and operation as organisers, providers and supervisors. They should build strategic partnerships and design support initiatives at the organisational level to develop effective design support. They should lobby the government to build a practical setting in which to

develop DSPs, by emphasising the impact of design on the growth of social enterprises. Furthermore, they should listen to social enterprises to understand their design needs and guide each other to improve their understanding of design and social enterprise.

- Design support practitioners should strategically promote design for social enterprises to other stakeholders, primarily social enterprise support bodies. They should highlight the role of design in (i) increasing business growth by identifying market opportunities, improving the competitiveness of products and services and developing business models and (ii) improving long-term sustainability by identifying and addressing the challenges that social enterprises face, improving organisational culture and developing organisations' system. Moreover, they should be involved at the DSP development stage to provide insight into design support and cultivate diverse and optimised support content to meet social enterprises' needs.
- Governments should focus on creating an environment and groundwork that encourage social enterprise and design support bodies to develop DSPs for social enterprises, rather than being directly involved. They should develop design support initiatives (including comprehensive financial resources) at the national or local level. These initiatives should be interrelated with a national plan for social enterprises and should guide social enterprise support bodies and other stakeholders (e.g. public bodies, businesses or NGOs) to understand the strategic role of design for the growth of social enterprises and to build partnerships with other institutes, especially social enterprise support and design support bodies.

- Social enterprises should examine and clearly articulate the design support they need and the issues they face in using design. They should also critically evaluate current DSPs' impact on the growth of their business.

Conclusion

This study reviewed and compared DSPs for social enterprises in the UK and South Korea to enhance understanding of their mechanisms and identify key issues in their development and operation. The findings indicate the necessity of developing strategic partnerships to (i) enhance design awareness in social enterprise support organisations; (ii) improve design practitioners' understanding of social enterprises; (iii) promote the crucial roles of key stakeholders; and (iv) optimise design support to effectively meet the requirements of social enterprises and maximise the impact of design on sustainable growth. In addition, the findings support the development of a systematic approach to solve the issues identified in the DSPs.

By a comprehensive exploration of the mechanisms of DSPs for social enterprises, this research makes the following theoretical contribution. First, this research dealt with design support specifically for social enterprises, which existing design studies have rarely explored; thus, researchers can use this research as a basis for research on design support for social enterprises. Second, the research provides a unit of construction for a theory development of establishing an appropriate design-innovation ecosystem for social enterprises by evaluating different approaches and operating mechanisms of DSP development. [HK(9]The findings of this study will aid policymakers, social enterprise and design support practitioners and design academics who are interested in supporting the design and growth of social enterprises. This study can also guide those who are unaware of the impact of design support on the growth of social enterprises.

Further research is recommended to help establish strategic partnerships between the strategic stakeholders in DSPs, specifically to promote the use of design and raise design awareness. Further research should also investigate how best to develop a design-innovation ecosystem, as a systematic approach to incorporate design into the social enterprise support system and generate effective results.

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