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LEGAL DESIGN THINKING IN LEGAL CLINICAL EDUCATION: CASE VISUALIZATION INNOVATION TO IMPROVE PUBLIC LEGAL LITERACY

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the application of Legal Design Thinking in the context of legal clinical education practices as a means of simplifying information and visualizing cases to improve public legal literacy. This study highlights how the model for delivering legal information can be designed to be more communicative through visual media so that the public is able to understand their rights, procedures, and steps to resolve legal problems independently and appropriately. The method used is a normative juridical approach with a statutory approach, through a review of legal provisions related to public legal counseling and relevant scientific literature. The results of the study indicate that visualizing legal cases through infographics, educational comics, and flowcharts can clarify the structure of information, reduce the complexity of legal language, and increase public involvement in understanding and using available legal channels. The core conclusion states that the application of Legal Design Thinking in legal clinical education can be an effective strategy to strengthen public legal literacy, provided there is alignment of messages, social context, and the availability of easily accessible visual media.

Keywords: Legal Design Thinking ,Legal Case Visualization,Community Legal Literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Low levels of legal literacy remain a serious problem in Indonesian society. Many people do not understand their legal rights and obligations, including proper dispute resolution procedures. This situation places them in a vulnerable position, easily exploited, and often leads to erroneous legal actions. In 2022, the National Legal Development Agency (BPHN) recorded that Indonesia's legal culture index only reached 62.79 out of 100, indicating that legal understanding is far from ideal. This inability to understand the law is not simply a matter of limited access to information but also relates to the form and method of delivering legal information, which has tended to be technical, formal, and difficult for the general public to understand.

In a digital society, legal information is widely circulated through government websites, social media, and educational platforms. However, a 2023 survey by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and the Katadata Insight Center showed that 70% of the public still has difficulty understanding legal language in long, formal texts. In legal education practices, including outreach activities by legal aid institutions and community organizations, legal material is still largely delivered through oral explanations, reading modules, or lectures. These delivery methods are often ineffective for groups with varying literacy levels. Meanwhile, visualizations of legal information such as infographics, flowcharts, case illustrations, or educational comics are generally more easily accepted, but have not yet become a standard approach in public legal education.

Previous research generally emphasizes the importance of legal counseling as a means of building public legal awareness. Farida (2023), for example, highlights the role of legal counseling in improving the public's ability to understand their rights, but does not outline more communicative and contextual methods of delivering information. Meanwhile, Putri & Rahman's (2024) research discusses the concept of Legal Design Thinking as an approach to simplifying legal information, but does not specifically link it to the practice of clinical legal education based on analysis and mentoring of real cases. Thus, there is an underexplored research area, namely how Legal Design Thinking can be systematically applied in clinical legal education to produce innovative legal case visualizations that are easy to understand and relevant to community needs.

Based on the above description, this study focuses on the application of Legal Design Thinking in clinical legal education as a strategy for delivering legal information more communicatively. This study aims to analyze how a design approach can be used to simplify legal material, assess the effectiveness of case visualization in improving public legal understanding, and identify challenges and solutions in its implementation. It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to the development of a more inclusive, humanistic, and empowering legal education model for the public to understand law as part of everyday life.

METHOD

This research is a normative juridical study with a statutory approach, namely research that focuses on the study of legal norms contained in various applicable regulations. The focus of the analysis is directed at written legal provisions relevant to the discussion issues, including laws, implementing regulations, official guidelines, and legal documents governing the concept and practice of implementing legal design in legal clinical education. The data in this study were obtained through tracing and reviewing the text of laws and related legal documents. The data was then analyzed by formulating the normative provisions contained in the regulations, comparing the conformity between the provisions, and assessing their implications for the implementation of legal clinical education. The analysis process was carried out in stages, starting from identifying legal issues, collecting and organizing relevant legal materials, formulating relationships between norms, and concluding the analysis results as answers to the research problem formulation. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a clear picture of the position and function of legal design in the context of community development and empowerment through legal education.

DISCUSSION

1. Concepts and Principles of Legal Design Thinking in Legal Clinical Education

Legal clinical education fundamentally evolved from the concept of practice-based legal education, which focuses on providing law students with hands-on experience to understand how law operates in social realities. This concept is intended to equip students with practical knowledge, technical skills in carrying out legal roles, and sensitivity to the values of justice in society. The learning approach is interactive and

encourages reflection on experiences encountered during the legal assistance or resolution process.(Siregar, 2020)

The knowledge elements in clinical education include an understanding of human rights issues, social justice, and the basic principles of the state contained in Pancasila and the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. Awareness of the importance of social justice is a fundamental mandate in national life, so students are expected to not only understand the law as a rule, but also as a means of creating public welfare.

In addition to knowledge, legal clinical education also emphasizes skills, such as litigation techniques, advocacy skills, and client communication skills. These skills are acquired through students' direct involvement in real-life cases, either through individual mentoring or collaboration with government agencies or social organizations. Through these hands-on experiences, students gain a concrete understanding of the legal profession's role, not just in theory.

Values are also crucial, particularly regarding adherence to the principles of social justice. This education seeks to instill an awareness that the role of law extends beyond resolving formal issues, but also to advocate for groups lacking adequate access to justice. Therefore, clinical legal education aims not only to develop technical skills but also to foster a responsible professional attitude that is sensitive to social issues.

Overall, clinical legal education combines mastery of legal theory, the ability to apply it in practice, and the development of students' character and ethical responsibility as future legal practitioners. With this approach, students understand the law not only as a text but also as a tool to advocate for the interests and rights of society, particularly vulnerable groups.

Design Thinking doesn't have a single creator, but rather has evolved through the contributions of various experts and practitioners from the fields of design, innovation, and management over several decades. One well-known early figure is Rolf Faste, a professor at the Stanford School of Design, who introduced the Design Thinking approach in 1987. Faste advocated the application of human-centered methods, emphasizing creativity, collaboration, and a deep understanding of the problem at the heart of the design process.(Kiptyah & Hariyadi 2025)

Since its introduction nearly two decades ago, Design Thinking has remained popular and widely applied in various fields, including business and social innovation. Brown and Wyatt (2015) in Change by Design describe this methodology as helping

people become more creative, innovative, and able to solve complex problems. They describe five main stages of Design Thinking: empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. These stages enable a deeper understanding of users, testing assumptions, reformulating problems, and creating innovative solutions.

Global design firms like IDEO have also played a major role in popularizing Design Thinking. Founded in 1991 by David Kelley, Bill Moggridge, and Mike Nuttall, IDEO has applied these principles to projects across industries. Over time, Design Thinking has become a broad field of research and practice, involving the collaboration of many professionals, academics, and institutions, making it difficult to pinpoint a single inventor. Rather, the approach is the result of a continuous collective evolution.

Conceptually, Design Thinking is a human-centered problem-solving approach, focusing on the needs, desires, and experiences of end users. While there is no single, universally accepted “Grand Theory,” there are core principles commonly adopted in its application:

1. Empathy: Deeply understanding users' experiences and needs by gathering insights into their motivations, challenges, and context. This understanding forms the basis for designing relevant solutions.
2. Define the Problem: Identifying the real problem to be solved, not just the apparent symptoms. Designers develop a clear problem statement to guide the innovation process.
3. Ideation: Generating as many creative ideas as possible to solve an identified problem. Techniques such as brainstorming, idea mapping, and concept exploration are used without restriction.
4. Prototyping: Creating a prototype or prototype of the ideas generated. A prototype can be a physical model, sketch, simulation, or other visual representation that allows for initial testing and evaluation.
5. Test & Iterate: Testing prototypes with users to get feedback, then refining the solution through continuous iteration. This process encourages learning, adjustments, and improvements in the quality of the solution.
6. Team Collaboration: Design Thinking emphasizes cross-disciplinary collaboration. Multiskilled teams contribute with diverse perspectives and expertise, fostering holistic innovation and more creative solutions.

According to Prayogi and Setiyawati (2024), the five core steps of Design Thinking—empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing and iteration—can be applied to design better and more innovative experiences. This approach not only creates relevant solutions but also builds a collaborative character, as team members learn to combine their individual expertise to produce comprehensive and effective solutions.

Thus, Design Thinking is not just a technical method, but also a strategic thinking framework that emphasizes deep understanding of users, cross-disciplinary collaboration, creativity, and continuous iteration in designing innovative solutions that meet real needs.

2. Application of Legal Design Thinking Method in the Scope of Public Law

The application of legal design thinking in the realm of public law fundamentally stems from the need to create a legal system that is more inclusive, understandable, and accessible to all levels of society. Public law essentially regulates the relationship between citizens and the state, making the quality of legal information delivery crucial. However, in practice, rigid legal language and complex regulatory structures often hinder the public's understanding of their rights, obligations, and applicable legal procedures. This creates a gap between the law as an instrument of protection and the public as the party in need of protection.

The legal design thinking approach attempts to bridge this gap by employing user-centered design principles. Its primary focus is no longer simply producing formal regulations, policy documents, or comprehensive administrative procedures, but rather producing legal products that are user-friendly, easy to follow, and relevant to the social problems at hand. This process involves understanding the social context, identifying barriers to legal understanding, formulating visual and structural solutions, and then piloting the design results with the target group.

The application of this method is evident in efforts to improve the government's delivery of legal information through digital media. This includes public information services, the provision of administrative rights, guidance on accessing online legal services, and the publication of new regulations. With the legal design thinking method, legal information is no longer presented in lengthy, complex text, but is instead structured through visual elements such as flowcharts, key points summaries, simple illustrations, and layouts that facilitate reading. For example, in the presentation

of public complaint procedures, steps previously described in lengthy sentences are now transformed into clear, concise step-by-step diagrams that can be understood simply by viewing the sequence of images.

Furthermore, legal design thinking plays a role in increasing public trust in legal institutions. When legal information is presented in a more transparent and non-intimidating manner, the public feels closer to the law. This process helps overcome the perception that law is something "distant" and understood only by certain groups. With open access to information, the state of public law becomes more participatory because the public is not merely an object of regulation but also an understanding subject capable of playing a role in oversight and conveying aspirations.

The application of design thinking in the realm of public law represents a methodological innovation that emphasizes the reconstruction of regulatory processes by placing empathy, iteration, and public engagement at its center. Conceptually, this approach is not simply a technical strategy, but a transdisciplinary cognitive model that combines design sensitivity with legal principles, resulting in more humane and functional policies.(Wibowo, 2025)The main stages in design thinking empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing provide a systematic framework for regulatory designers to understand community needs in depth before establishing binding legal norms.(October 2025)

Legal design works in conjunction with Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), particularly during the stakeholder consultation phase. RIA assesses the potential impact of regulations through data-driven analysis, while legal design enhances narrative and empathy by exploring direct community experiences through interviews, observations, and prototyping legal documents. The combination of these two methods opens up opportunities for a more participatory, reflective, and transparent legislative process.

In practice, design thinking enriches the participatory dimension that is often overlooked in formal legislative processes.(Shafa & Muchayan 2024)Through interactive communication and visual media, the public can not only provide verbal input in consultation forums but also participate in designing the structure, format, and language of the regulations to be enacted. Thus, legal design becomes an instrument of deliberative ethics that respects the capacity of citizens as rational and autonomous legal subjects.

The visual dimension of legal design serves more than just aesthetic purposes. Graphic representations enable the remapping of the architecture of legal norms in an intuitive and easily understood manner for non-legal audiences, thus bridging the gap between policymakers and the public. In the context of iteration, the visualization of regulatory prototypes serves as a social testing tool to assess the extent to which the legal substance is accepted by the public.

The use of legal sketches, flowcharts, conceptual maps, and procedural illustrations creates more interactive legal communication. These techniques enable the public to provide input at the normative level, as well as at the legal structure and language level. Legal visualizations serve as catalysts for public deliberation, as they can accelerate understanding across educational backgrounds and legal experience.

In the iterative phase, visualization serves as a transitional artifact between ideation and legislation. Systematic testing of visualized regulatory prototypes helps policymakers identify potential logical gaps, semantic ambiguities, and normative dysfunctions before the regulations are formally implemented. This approach marks a methodological shift from a top-down model to a co-creation model, embedding principles of procedural democracy in legislative practice.

The visual dimension also influences power relations in the legal process. Transparently visualized regulations reduce the epistemic exclusivity previously attached to lawmakers and open up space for substantive participation for the public as epistemic actors. Laws are not simply obeyed out of compulsion, but accepted because they are understood and perceived as fair.

Furthermore, legal visualization has an epistemological basis related to legal semiotics. Signs, symbols, and visual representations shape the structure of meaning in normative communication. Semiotic integration enables policymakers to develop effective legal dissemination strategies, especially for communities with low legal literacy. Graphic representations, legal icons, and visual narratives based on local contexts increase the absorption and acceptance of regulations. Legal design, therefore, serves as a bridge between semiotic theory and legislative practice, affirming law as a communication phenomenon that is not only text-based, but also visual, symbolic, and interactive.

Overall, the application of design thinking and visualization in public law is not simply a communication tool, but an instrument of transformation that ensures the sociological legitimacy and epistemological integrity of the legislative process.

Through this approach, the law becomes more accessible, understandable, and widely accepted by the public.

3. Case Visualization Model to Improve Public Legal Literacy

The social changes occurring in today's society have led to increased attention being paid to the development of legal awareness and legal culture. The current government has positioned the development of legal awareness as a crucial program in the social renewal process, as the success of law enforcement depends heavily on the level of public compliance. Legislation can only be effective if the public understands the meaning of the law and is willing to comply with its provisions. In other words, the development of a legal culture is a crucial prerequisite for the process of establishing new regulations to be accepted and implemented consistently in daily life. Therefore, public support is the primary foundation for the effectiveness and sustainability of any regulation.z(Ilham Komarudin et al., 2025)

According to Sidharta (2022), legal awareness relates to an individual's ability to assess and distinguish between good and bad, just and unjust, and right and wrong. This awareness develops from a sense of morality and empathy that motivates a person to act in accordance with the values of justice. Legal awareness in society is not formed instantly but is influenced by various factors such as the content and structure of legal norms, the implementation of rules in practice, and prevailing social conditions within the community. Therefore, legal education for the community needs to be carried out continuously through the process of disseminating information, discussing, and internalizing legal values so that the public can understand the urgency of obeying the law.

In the context of social life, law serves as a guideline that regulates social relations, so that its existence is expected to provide real benefits to society. For law to play an optimal role, its application must be aligned with the needs and social realities of society. Legal empowerment is essentially an effort to ensure that every individual receives the rights and protections guaranteed by law. Therefore, legal empowerment is not only a matter of formal application of rules, but also how the law can be accessed and its benefits felt by all members of society as legal subjects.(Prawitasari, Sayudi et al., 2025)

Efforts to improve public legal literacy are inseparable from delivering legal information effectively, easily understood, and in line with social needs. One increasingly popular strategic approach is the case visualization model, which

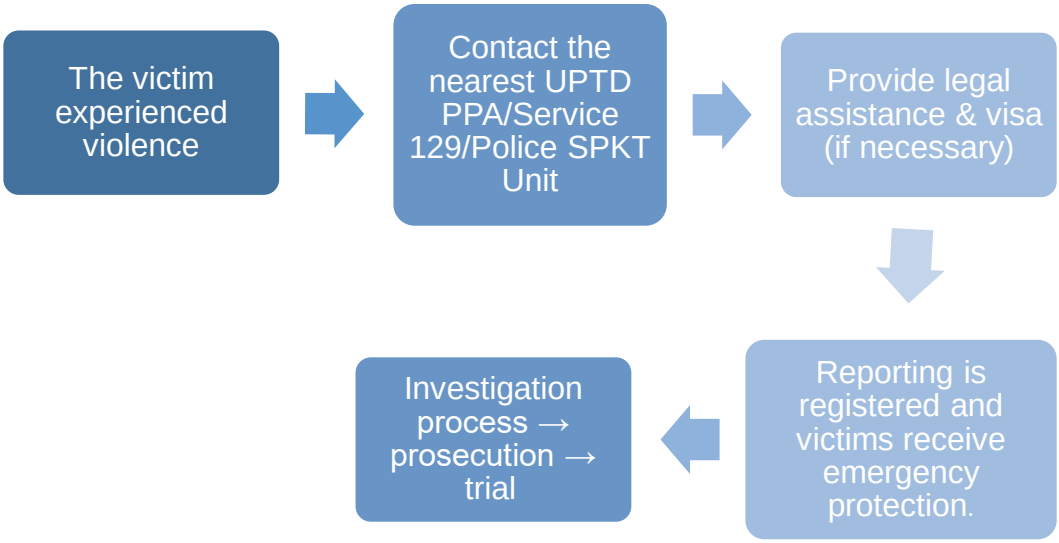
presents legal issues through visual media such as infographics, flowcharts, legal comics, illustrative videos, or storyboards. This visualization helps break down complex legal structures into simpler forms, allowing people who previously struggled to understand the law to clearly understand procedures, rights, and obligations. In other words, the case visualization model not only conveys legal information but also builds public confidence in making informed legal decisions.

Case visualization has several basic principles. First, clarity of context, meaning that all information must be structured based on real-life situations frequently encountered by the public. Second, a simple flow structure allows readers to follow the logic of legal events from beginning to end. Third, the use of non-technical language, replacing complex legal terms with easy-to-understand ones. Fourth, strengthening empathy, meaning that visualizations must position the public not merely as objects but as subjects with rights and roles to resolve legal issues. Through these principles, visualization models can serve as a means of legal empowerment, not simply a means of conveying information.(Siti Thifal Permana Kusumah et al., 2025)

One example of a case that can be used as a visualization model is the case of Domestic Violence (DV). In practice, many victims of domestic violence do not report it for several reasons, including fear of social stigma, lack of knowledge of legal procedures, or the assumption that the case is a private matter. Law No. 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence has provided a strong legal basis, but in practice there is still a gap in public understanding.

For example, there is a real-life case where a woman in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi, experienced physical and psychological violence from her husband for years. The victim was unaware that she could contact the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) or report the case to the Integrated Police Service Center (SPKT). She also didn't understand that evidence doesn't have to be a medical examination alone, but can be corroborated by recordings of conversations, photographs of injuries, or testimony from neighbors. This lack of awareness meant the victim only received protection after a campus legal aid organization stepped in to provide direct assistance.

It is in this context that Legal Design Thinking is applied by creating a visualization of the domestic violence reporting flow, for example:



This visualization was then translated into simple educational posters and comics posted in community health centers, village offices, and on social media. As a result, the public more easily understands that reporting domestic violence has a clear procedure and that victims don't have to face the situation alone.(Sopyan et al., 2025)

Evidence of the effectiveness of this approach is evident in the increasing number of domestic violence cases reported in several regions that have adopted the visual legal education model. Increased reporting does not necessarily mean an increase in domestic violence cases, but rather an increase in victims seeking legal help. This demonstrates that visualization has a real impact on fostering legal courage.

With advances in technology and information, the delivery of information services has become faster and more reliable. Various information systems have been designed and developed to communicate government policies, both those currently in effect and those about to be implemented.(Anggraeni, 2024)

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the application of Legal Design Thinking in clinical legal education and the scope of public law, it can be understood that this approach is not merely an information media development technique, but rather a new perspective on explaining, formulating, and implementing law in a more humane manner. Legal Design Thinking places the user experience of students, the public, and legal officials as the starting point for understanding problems. From there, the formulation of legal solutions becomes more targeted, communicative, and able to bridge the gap between

legal norms and social reality. A key finding that can be noted is that this approach expands the function of legal education from merely transferring knowledge to a process of developing social sensitivity, professional skills, and ethical responsibility.

The significance of these findings is that law cannot be effectively enforced solely by the force of coercive rules, but rather requires understanding and acceptance from the public as legal subjects. When legal language is too technical and abstract, public access to justice is hampered. By presenting visual representations, streamlining procedures, and emphasizing empathy, the law becomes easier to understand and its relevance is felt. In an educational context, students no longer simply study the law as text, but internalize it as a tool for empowering and protecting vulnerable groups. Meanwhile, in public law, visualization models of regulations and procedures provide broader participation for the public to recognize and exercise their rights.

Going forward, several steps need to be strengthened. First, the integration of Legal Design Thinking should be made part of the core curriculum in clinical legal education, not just supplementary material, so that students are accustomed to empathetic and collaborative thinking from the outset. Second, the government and legal institutions need to develop visualization standards for legal policies and procedures to ensure that information is conveyed more uniformly, clearly, and can be implemented locally. Third, collaboration between academics, visual designers, policymakers, and community groups needs to be enhanced to ensure that designed solutions truly meet the needs of the field. In this way, this approach not only improves the way law is communicated but also strengthens the social legitimacy of law and encourages the creation of a more conscious, open, and inclusive legal culture.

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