

How does Interior Design Create Values – A Case Study of the &Green Café

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Abstract: *The article explores how interior design creates values. The author conducted a case study of the &green coffee shop through direct observation, collecting online reviews of consumers, conducting interviews with the consumers in the coffee shop, and literature review. After analysis, it is concluded that the indoor space layout of the café's creates consumer value and stakeholder value. The different arrangement of interior seats, clear interior circulation, and detailed height difference design create consumer value for the interior space, and the efficient use of space inside the café and the space guidance for customers bring more financial benefits to the stakeholders. In addition, in the interior renovation, the creation of a more open visual experience and the creation of a comfortable space atmosphere both create consumer value. Besides, barrier-free design creates social value and indoor greening creates ecological value for the café.*

Keywords: Interior design, Interior space, Value creation.

1. Context

Interior design refers to the designer's design in the existing building space based on people's functional needs and visual perceptions to create an indoor environment to meet people's material and spiritual life needs, (Muthesius, S., 2003) including indoor space layout and interior renovation. The internal space in this paper refers to the interior space of the coffee shop, which includes six parts: the ground, the ceiling and the four walls. Most of the existing research on interior design focuses on design elements and design methods, and there is less research on value creation, (Lee, S., Alzoubi, et al., 2014, Sloane, M., 2014) so this paper uses a case study method targeting the &green café to explore how the interior design creates values. This paper is mainly divided into the following three parts. The first part is the case description, which includes the location of the café, the indoor space layout of the café and the interior renovation. The second part is case analysis, which analyzes how indoor space layout and interior renovation create consumer value, stakeholder value, social value, and ecological value. The third part is a summary, summarizing how the interior design of the &green café create all types of values.

2. Case Description

2.1 The Location of & Green Coffee Shop

&green café is located at Shop1B, G/F, Harbor Place, 8 Oi King Street, Hung Hom, Hong Kong, which is near the south bank of the seashore of Hong Kong's high-end residential areas, across from the Horizon Hotels & Suites. Also, it is close to the student residences of Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

2.2 Indoor Space Layout

2.2.1 Layout of the seats

Although the café has a spacious space, there are not many tables and chairs in it. Instead, seats of different sizes and materials are used for spatial arrangements. There are not only

sofas that can be used for a group of people to sit together, but also long tables that are available for study and discussion. Besides, there are some rattan seats and hardwood tables suitable for an individual. Therefore, the different arrangement of seats divides the coffee shop into multiple areas: these long table areas are for chatting, wooden chairs areas for viewing street views, and quieter areas for individuals to work and study. Therefore, the distribution of seats in &green café is different, shaping different indoor spaces.

2.2.2 Clear interior circulation

The interior circulation in the interior space of &green café is clear. First of all, the entrance is obvious and can guide customers. The bar at the entrance, combining the backside of the shop, becomes a long strip, which is in line with the long barrier-free ramp on the front side of the coffee shop. Also, it makes a narrow porch and an entrance to guide customers into the side cafeteria of the coffee shop. Secondly, the layout of the canteen is designed for the comfortableness and the privacy of customers. Specifically, some wooden screens are used to distinguish different areas, as well as the plantings and the load-bearing columns. Such design makes the interior circulation clear. Therefore, &green café has a clear interior circulation.

2.2.3 Interior height difference design

In addition to the rich spatial levels of the seat layout, &green coffee shop also pays attention to the details of the height difference in the interior space. At the entrance of the coffee shop, the wooden steps are low and exquisite. In addition, the coffee shop also provides barrier-free ramps to deal with the height differences. Since the whole coffee shop is about one meter below the ground, the interior of the coffee shop forms a sinking space. In addition to dealing with the height difference at the entrance, there is also a small window and some tatami mats next to the floor-to-ceiling windows facing the streets. Therefore, there are many details showing the designers dealt with the height difference inside this coffee shop.

2.3 Interior Renovation

2.3.1 Interior finish

The interior finish of the café is simple but refined. The interior space of the café is spacious and comfortable, with sufficient soft lights. The materials are mostly wood and plain concrete, and the colors are mainly dark yellow and light gray. Although the material of the ceiling is simple, the height is different. There are suspended ceilings above the bar counter and the edge of the coffee shop, in layers. Also, the walls of the café are light gray concrete, and the floor is wooden. In short, the interior finish of the coffee shop has rich spatial levels.

2.3.2 Barrier-free design

Barrier-free facilities have been considered when designing the interior space of &green café. There is a barrier-free design at the entrance of the shop---the disabled ramp, which looks nature by blending with the surrounding wooden tables and chairs, and the exhibition board at the entrance. The brick wall is the background of the table and the side chairs, and the narrow space on the side is used to place various green plants, which is by the glass windows, increasing the texture of the concrete and creates different lights and shadows for the coffee shop. Therefore, the barrier-free design matches well with other designs of the interior space of the café.

3. Case Analysis

3.1 Data Collection

The ways to collect data include direct observation by the author, collecting online comments by the consumers, conducting interviews by the author with the consumers in the coffee shop, and literature review.

According to the scores on the review application named Open Rice, the environmental and sanitation scores are relatively high. Besides, the author randomly interviewed customers in the coffee shop, and found most of the customers mentioned that the environment is comfortable, and the atmosphere is good. When combing the scores, the interview results, it is known that the interior design of the coffee shop is the main reason that attracts the customers. In general, the indoor space layout of &green coffee shop creates a variety of indoor spaces that meet the different needs of the consumers and brings more customers to the shop. Besides, the decoration of the indoor space makes the customers feel relaxed and comfortable. Also, the barrier-free design brings social value to the citizens, and the indoor green plants creates ecological value.

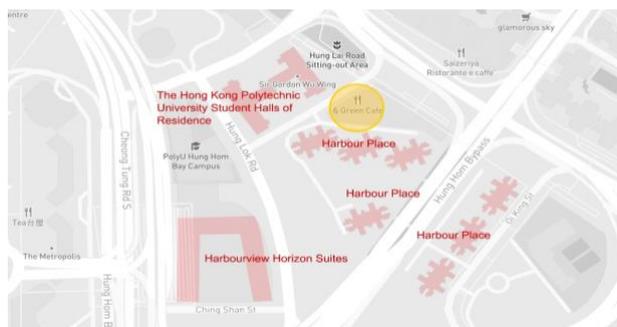


Figure 1: Location analysis of & green coffee shop

3.2 Value Creation by the Indoor Space Layout

3.2.1 Consumer value

According to Ximan Shi's article, interior space design is a process of perfecting space layout functions and improving space quality. Regardless of the nature of interior design, the space design standards of being practical, economic, beautiful, and unique should be considered. (Shi Ximan, 2009) In my opinion, the interior space design of this coffee shop not only satisfies different consumers' spatial layout functions of the area, but also has the spatial quality of a high-end and high-quality coffee shop.

First of all, with the layout of the seats, this coffee shop brings different indoor spaces to consumers. &green coffee shop is combined with the interior design office. The front side of it is the coffee shop, and the back side is the office. Some customers commented that the coffee shop has a large space and the indoor environment feels great. One customer said, "I really like the wooden benches in this coffee shop. People can sit and relax in peace for a whole afternoon", and another customer said, "there are not many people on weekends, so it's quiet, and chatting with friends in this coffee shop or reading a book quietly are both good choices to spend an afternoon." From the comments, it can be seen that the coffee shop not only provides a relaxing place for nearby residents, but also provides a place for students to study or meet on weekends, which meets various needs of the customers.



Figure 2: Long table area where customers can discuss



Figure 3: Wooden chair area where customers can see the street view

Secondly, through the clear interior circulation, this coffee shop guides the consumers and distinguishes spaces for them. &green coffee shop uses the corner to set up an L-shaped bar, which guides the customers efficiently. Through space restriction and guidance, a very simple way leading the customers into the shop is formed in the entrance area, which not only invisibly divides the entrance area and the dine-in area on the inner side, but also distinguishes the customers who need to stay in the café for an afternoon to enjoy life or negotiate and communicate (Orth, U. R., & Wirtz, J., 2014). In addition, the flow in the dine-in area is in a loop, isolating the negotiating crowd from the crowd studying alone or enjoying a quiet afternoon. In general, the clear interior circulation and diverse functional zones in the indoor space bring values to consumers.



Figure 4: Long and narrow corridors to guide customers



Figure 5: Circular traffic flow

Thirdly, &green café uses a variety of design methods to deal with its indoor height differences, creating a good space atmosphere and consumer values. To be specific, the steps at the entrance tell customers that they are about to enter a unique space—a space for relaxation and rest, which is different from the streets outside the coffee shop. On the right side of the entrance is a barrier-free ramp. The long ramp not only becomes another way to deal with height differences, but also makes the step area at the entrance smaller, making the entire entrance more private. Also, some potted green plants are placed on the floor-to-ceiling windows, and the windows are surrounded by comfortable tatami mats. The glass windows make the space inside the coffee shop more transparent. People can not only enjoy the sunshine by the floor-to-ceiling windows, but also observe the pedestrians on the road. Because of the different heights, direct eye contacts with the pedestrians are avoided, providing customers with a leisurely view of pedestrians and relaxing space. It can be seen that the rich height-level design at &green's creates values for consumers.

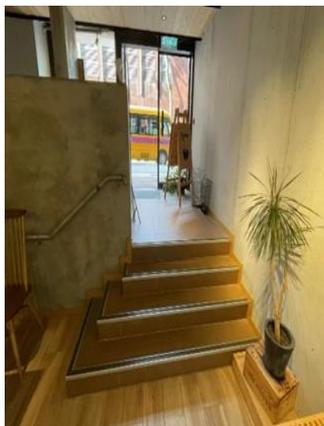


Figure 6: Interior design at the entrance



Figure 7: French windows and windowsills

In general, the space layout of the seats inside the &green café is reasonable, providing consumers with various functions. Second, the overall flow of activities in the indoor space is clear, which is convenient for consumers to enter and exit and for servers to provide great services. Finally, the strategies used to deal with height difference are diverse, bringing consumers great experiences of exploring spaces.

3.2.2 Stakeholder value

Coffee shops need to bring financial benefits to their operators, so coffee shops must maximize consumer values within a limited space. The &green café is not a large-scale coffee shop, so an L-shaped bar is set up with the edge, which not only saves space, but also guides customers, creating higher profits for the café. If the coffee shop has an overly long bar, the servers would be too tired, or the number of the servers might need to be increased, which would bring unnecessary troubles, such as financial pressure to the operators.(Xiyue. Liu ,2016) Therefore, the café effectively uses the edge to set up an L-shaped bar, which not only saves space, but also guides the movement of customers, creating higher profits for the café.



Figure 8: L-shaped bar counter



Figure 9: Narrow bar saves space

3.3 Value Creation by Interior Renovation

3.3.1 Consumer value

In the book *The Production of Space*, it says that “(social) space is a product of the society” (Quansheng Su, 2015). The interior space produces consumer values, and the coffee shop's operators sell the added value of this space, which is a peaceful and comfortable way of spending time that people think of when they come to this coffee shop. So, how does &green café make people happy and relaxed?

Firstly, the Interior Finish design brings a richer and more spacious interior space for customers. The Interior Finish design of the &green café is simple. The ceiling is mainly made with three materials: gray concrete, white plaster, and wood. The floor is made of the same wood as the ceiling materials. In addition, some researchers found that room simulations with a light-gray rear wall look deeper compared with a dark-gray rear wall, and that room simulations with light-gray side walls look wider compared with the dark-gray side walls (von Castell, et al. 2018). In the &green café, the side walls of light gray color increase the horizontal width of the interior space, making the whole space more spacious. Therefore, the overall Interior Finish is concise and matches each other, achieving the effect of expanding the visual space and bringing consumers more spacious spaces.



Figure 10: Three different materials for the ceiling



Figure 11: Light gray wall from the side

Secondly, Furnishing's design brings pleasant emotional value to customers. Pine & Gilmore's found that when consumers purchase an experience, they want to enjoy the entire process. In the &green coffee shop, Furnishing's design helps consumers gain a good spatial experience during the whole process of consumption in the coffee shop. Elements such as green plants, decorative paintings, books, and other elements in Furnishing help customers relax. As Zhang Miao said, in the context of coffee shops, the whole process of a coffee shop experience may include the process of spending a relaxing time in a café and enjoying its service and atmosphere. (Zhang, M. et al. 2018) In this café, different types of plants bring people a pleasant mood. In addition, in the corner of the café near the window, bicycles and wooden screens are combined with large green plants to form a unique scene, which brings customers the aesthetic enjoyment of the indoor space.



Figure 12: Indoor greening and murals



Figure 13: Partial landscape of indoor greening

In summary, these interior decorations create a comfortable and cozy space atmosphere, helping consumers relax in this indoor space, which not only brings them a practical space to rest, but also a good mood.

3.3.2 Social value

The barrier-free design of the interior space brings social value. On the review app, some customers mentioned the slope at the entrance of the café, namely the ramp for the disabled, can facilitate the disabled customers and thus creates

a social value. The barrier-free design promotes the idea of "for people", which embodies human nature, considers human feelings, respects human rights, and pays attention to people's needs. The barrier-free environment fully reflects the care of the coffee shop for individuals to meet their different needs (Haixiao Pan, 2007). Therefore, this kind of life philosophy or cultural beliefs presented by the café provide customers with abundant cultural experience.

In addition, the interior space is a link, connecting people, places, and activities. Then, in the space of the café, the barrier-free design not only facilitates the entry and exit of the disabled, but also enhances the interaction between the disabled and non-disabled people, so both of them can remember the place (Saymanlier, A. M. et al. 2018). Some researchers found that place attachment is the main emotional link between space and its users, which is deeply influenced by people's personal experience and reactions. Whether they are disabled people or not, they can feel the emotions between people and the space. The design is based on the users' perceptions, feelings, memories, senses, and their physical abilities, allowing them to obtain the sense of belonging and the ownership of the space (Woldoff et al., 2013). Therefore, the barrier-free ramp designed by the &green café for the disabled not only provides them with a sense of spatial belonging, but also deepens the memory of the non-disabled people towards this indoor space.

Therefore, the barrier-free design of the &green café has a social value. It can not only bring a sense of belonging to the disabled, but also can awaken the empathy of the non-disabled people and thus increases social attention to the disabled.

3.3.3 Ecological value

Firstly, indoor greening can purify the air. Plants can absorb harmful gases in the air. For example, ivy can inhibit carcinogens in nicotine, and Chlorophytum and Juice can absorb formaldehyde in the air (Wang, B., et al. 2014). In the picture below, it can be seen that there is a bonsai plant combination of many potted small-leaf plants on the wooden frame, including herbaceous plants with leathery leaves, evergreen woody vines with oval leaves, and some small, succulent and pulpy plants. These various plants contribute to the improvement of indoor air quality. In short, indoor greening brings an ecological value to the &green café to purify the indoor air.

Secondly, indoor greening can improve the local environment. Through the breath of stomata and leaf transpiration, plants radiate a large amount of pure water into the surrounding air to regulate humidity. In addition, some plants can also increase the negative ions in the air to purify it, making people feel fresh and comfortable (Moya, T. A., et al, 2018). From the comments on the Internet and the evaluation collected by the author through interviews with the customers, it is found that customers often praise the interior green design of this coffee shop by saying they can feel the improvement of the local environment. Therefore, indoor greening contributes to the local environment and brings ecological value to the &green café.



Figure 14: Various types of plants



Figure 15: The relationship between consumers and indoor greening

In general, indoor greening not only improves the quality of indoor air, but also improves the local environment, creating an ecological value for the &green café. This coffee shop has the word “green” in its name, showing the important role indoor greening plays in the coffee shop.

4. Conclusion

In summary, the article explores how the indoor space layout and interior renovation of the interior design in the &green café create consumer value, stakeholder value, social value, and ecological value. First, the indoor space layout creates consumer value and stakeholder value. The arrangement of interior seats, clear interior circulation, and exquisite height difference design create consumer value. The efficient use of space and the space guidance for customers are create stakeholder value. The open visual experience and comfortable space atmosphere in the interior renovation create consumer value, the barrier-free design brings social value, and the indoor greening creates ecological value.

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