

Soul Healing Design - Exploring the Afternoon Tea Restaurants in Taiwan and Decoding the significance of their Corporate Identity Systems

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Abstract: In our cosmopolitan contemporary society, people easily get stressed from their occupation and lot in life. In order to face the increasing tension of the global recession, coping with the stress has become a social phenomenon and issue for everyone. An alternative solution has thus come up to reduce this kind of anxiety in Taiwan. Many of the afternoon tea houses have sprung up all over the country. These soul healing restaurants offer the gourmets a place to heal their heart by creating an environment with delicacy design, costumed maids, tea sets and assorted dessert. They have also developed their own brand images and Corporate Identity System (CIS). These will help the consumers to enjoy their afternoon moment with friends, colleagues and loved ones because of the unique services they provide.

Soul Healing Design in the afternoon tea houses has become an exclusive, creative style extracted from the spirit of the brand image. The use of light and colorful schemes in the background décor to increase the happiness atmosphere is but one example of the many creative trends. This has increased the desire to purchase and building added brand loyalty from the customers. In this study, we are using the Comparative Analysis and Content Analysis as methodologies for analyzing the renowned afternoon tea restaurants in Taiwan. It is to compare and evaluate the meaning of the Soul Healing Design. We are also applying the Emotional Design and Kansai Engineering as theories to illustrate the ambiance and customers' feeling and rationale to go to the afternoon tea houses. In the previous research on emotion and cognition it has been shown that the attractive things really catch customers' heart better, as Donald Norman stresses why we love or hate everyday things. Emotional Design and Kansai Engineering articulate the profound influence of the feelings that objects evoke. This study expects that the results will provide researchers, designers, as well as consumers of helpful information in investigating the afternoon tea houses.

Keywords: *Soul Healing Design, Corporate Identity System, Color Schemes, Emotional Design*

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Motive

In today's world of global economic recession, economic depression and rising prices and wage stagnation, people are easily stressed and anguished. Therefore, they need an outlet for their stress. So the afternoon tea has become a brand new choice. And the tea café is getting more and more thriving in Taiwan and Japan. Because there are small dim sums of various tastes in the tea cafés, the afternoon tea has become a new choice of light meal for office workers and the young people. Some afternoon tea enthusiasts would rather have the afternoon tea than have lunch and supper, leading to the introduction of afternoon tea in many large hotels. For some popular tea cafés, guests even have to make reservations one month ahead.

The afternoon tea has become a popular culture in Taiwan, which is not only about dim sums but also has evolved into a ritual. Exquisite dinnerware, tables and chairs, elegant atmosphere, colorful and diverse dim sums with different tastes, and the cordial service are all factors that gain the afternoon tea its rapid popularity. The most important reason why customers are flocking to it is that they can get their mind and heart healed and pressure released. Does this have anything to do with the overall color of the cafés and CIS (Corporate Identity System) or are there other important factors? These questions will be further studied and discussed.

1.2 Research Objectives

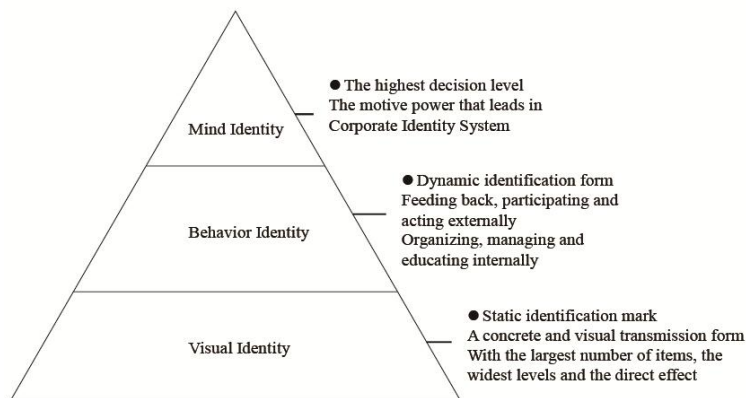
This research hopes to find out the elements that can heal mind and body through comparative analysis and induction of Dazzling, a famous tea café in Taipei, Taiwan, and two other famous tea cafés, Perfume Dance and Muffin Princess. The reasons for comparing these last two cafés are the high popularity of both, the decoration styles similar to Dazzling, and the same specialty dessert they shared, i.e. the honey toast. Therefore, as research objects, the cafes' healing and pressure releasing effects can be discussed from the perspectives of vision and CIS. Through this, people who want to create new tea café brands and those with original brands can make a proper use of visual identification system and brand style to maximize their benefits. It's hoped that this can give concrete suggestions to the planning of Taiwan tea cafés. To sum up, this research hopes to reach the objectives below.

1. To provide designers with color matching suggestions for CIS of tea cafés based on the research results
2. To find out the reasons why tea cafés can heal heart and release pressure from the perspectives of vision and style.
3. Hoping that heart healing factors may be applied to other designers so that the modern people who are stressed out can be relieved both physically and psychologically

2. Literature Review

2.1 Brand and CIS

Scholars and experts in different fields have different explanations and views for the definition of brand. However, the brand is not only about the product. The most important is how consumers see it. Therefore, the brand is, in fact, an image that an enterprise creates in the minds of consumers, and it's also an aggregate of the enterprise's promises to consumers product quality and consumer experience (Cheng, 2003). Meanwhile, Don Sexton (2007) put forward that the brand was a symbol which must be managed with caution, and changing the identification mark of the brand was changing the brand, the most valuable asset. Building a brand with good image is increasingly valued by enterprises, resulting in Corporate Identity System (CIS), which is composed of Mind Identity (MI), Behavior Identity (BI) and Visual Identity (VI) (Lin, 1985). The infectivity and transmissibility of visual identity are the most concrete and direct. It can make consumers be absolutely clear and grasp the information that enterprises want to transmit. Therefore, the design of visual identity is the most effective method in experience marketing for building brand awareness and image (Lin, 1985). It can be known from Fig. I that visual identity is the most important cornerstone of CIS.



Data source: Pang-Soong Lin

Fig. I

2.2 Color Emotion

The visual identity of the brand contains an important visual factor, that is, color, which makes the world become colorful, can change our mood and affects our views and behaviors towards certain things (Lin, 2007). Besides the visual sensation on a physical level, people's feelings toward color can be affected by personal preference (Wu, 2007). Just like price, type and quality, color is a factor that must be considered in commodity plan (Nomura, 1985). Meanwhile, the emotional impact that color has is multifaceted, including intoxicating effects, weight sense, strength and weakness and beauty effects of color and personal preference. It's generally acknowledged that there are many other color effects (Zhu, 1994). We can say that people's emotion for color is color association, which derives from consumers' accumulated experience in daily life. It can be split into natural impression and culture impression, that is, the inspiration from nature, people's living environment and life experience (Intelligence Culture Editing, 2004). Some colors can make people feel cold or warm, happy or sad, because consumers have feelings toward the color at both perceptual level and emotional level. The emotion generated by color sensation or color perception like this is called color emotion (Yamanaka, 2003). At last, the concept of color emotion is put in CIS and its effects are analyzed.

2.3 Kansei Engineering

Kansei Engineering is put forward by Kenichi Yamamoto, the president of Mazda. It's a set of consumer-oriented new product development technology. Kansei is a mental feeling for things, which can also be explained as people's feeling or imagery for things. In the 1970s, Mituo Nagamachi, a former professor of Hiroshima University, put forward Emotion Technology, which is different from Kansei Engineering in name but the same with it in essence.

Kansei Engineering is a human factors engineering research about the relationship between mental feelings and entity object. Simply put, it manages to quantify people's emotions (emotion quantity) with engineering technique and then find out the function relationship between the emotion quantity and various physical quantities used in engineering to be used as the basis of engineering development. This emotion quantity should contain physiological sensation quantity and psychological feeling quantity (Lee, 2004).

Simply put, Kansei Engineering is a method that transforms emotions and feelings into design elements. It integrates the model, color and other imageries into design to make products that meet customer expectation.

The imagery in Kansei Engineering is a perception produced by abstract feelings. Jyun-Hong Chen (1999) mentioned that the imagery mainly stressed mental feelings and gave people positive feelings. Drucker (2001) also mentioned that imagery was a comprehensive feeling and perception obtained through consumers' observations and feelings both externally and internally. On the whole, putting sensuous elements in design can generate consumers' intuitive association for design through sensory perception. And consumers can feel satisfied and joyful through the association of design. From the perspective of heart healing, it's absolutely necessary to put Kansei Engineering in the overall design of the tea café.

2.4 Dazzling Profile

Dazzling is a boutique where there are European and American brand products. It owns many foreign famous brands for accessories. Janet Yang, the person in charge, hopes to bring the most popular accessories to consumers. At present, Dazzling has 6 stores in Taiwan. Besides accessories, it also introduces bags, scarfs, T-shirts and other fashion accessories. It's the newest concept store in Taiwan.

However, Janet Yang expands Dazzling. So now we have Dazzling Café where the food is mostly dessert, with Honey Toast as their specialty (See Fig. II) (Dazzling café 123, <http://bit.ly/Xsm8nx>)



Fig. II

Image source: <http://abeyasuaki.exblog.jp/14192406/>

3. Research Method

CIS and color of afternoon tea will be studied and discussed with the method of comparative analysis.

3.1 Phenomenography

The word, Phenomenography, derives from the Greek word Phainomenon, i.e. appearance and graphein. Literally, it is a “description of appearances” (Hesselgren & Beach, 1997).

Phenomenography is a qualitative research methodology that is designed to answer the ways in which people understand questions related to their experience.

Marton (1981: 180) described phenomenography as a research methodology aimed at describing, analyzing and understanding the experience. In other words, this research method describes experience directly. Through phenomenography was mentioned in literature in 1954 (Sonnemann, 1954), it wasn't used widely in the research methods until 1970.

The research method is shown in Fig. III below.

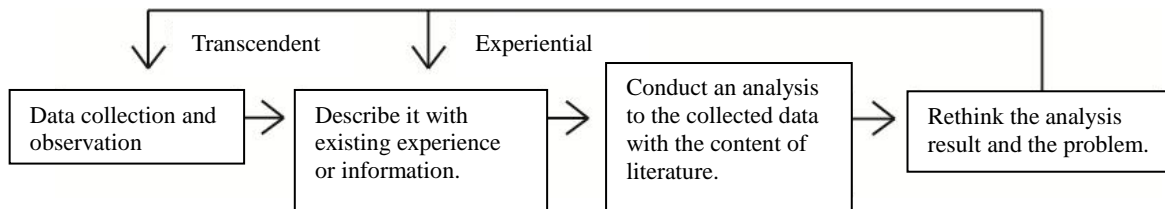


Fig. III

3.2 Method of Comparative Analysis:

The method of comparative analysis compares objective things to know the essence and law of things and make correct judgments.

This research conducts a comparative analysis to decorations, tableware, dishes, CIS and colors of Dazzling, Perfume Dance and Muffin Princess to find out elements of the tea cafés that let people relax most.

4. Research, Analysis and Result

Bitner (1992) considered that the store atmosphere planning is the key to the success of corporate business. Therefore, the emphasis should be put on the store atmosphere in the service industry, which should be treated as the principal axis. This means consumers' purchases are stimulated by physical environment. Therefore, creating an influential store atmosphere is an important marketing strategy for consumption (Turley & Milliman, 2000).

Kunkel & Berry (1968) thought what consumers could feel through their sense organs could be defined as the store atmosphere. And the store atmosphere that can trigger positive feelings is shown in Fig. IV below.

Conditions that can trigger positive feelings
Warm, comfortable and bright
Mild climate
Feelings, sound and shape that can trigger the sense of beauty
Colors with high brightnees and saturation
Sweet taste and smell
Smiling faces
Attractive people
Hugs
Symmetrical things
Smooth things
Soothing sound and simple melody
Music and sound pleasing to the ear
Rhythmed beat

Data source: modified from Donald Norman (2005)

Fig. IV

The conditions that can trigger positive feelings are analyzed with phenomenography based on the common elements of the three cafés.

Cafés Conditions that can trigger positive feelings	Dazzing	Perfume Dance	Muffin Princess
Warm, comfortable and bright			
Feelings, sound and shape that can trigger the sense of beauty			
Colors with high brightnees and saturation			
Sweet taste and smell			
Smiling faces			
Attractive people			
Symmetrical things			

Comparative analysis of tea cafés

Color of CIS of cafés (using the method of comparative analysis)

	Dazzling (see Fig. V below)	Perfume Dance (see Fig. VI below)	Muffin Princess (see Fig. VII below)
Color	Red, yellow, green, blue, purple	Blue, purple	Pink, red
Saturation	High	High	High
Lightness	High	High	High
Light	Warm light	Warm light	Warm light
Menu	Red, yellow, green, blue, purple	Blue, purple	Pink, red
Tableware	White	White	White
Decorations	Black, white	Multi-color, white	Pink, white
Clothes of service staff	Black, white	Purple, white	Black, white
Wall	Red, yellow, green, blue, purple and white	White	Purple, pink, white
Table	White	Brown	White
Chair	White, black	White, black	White, black

Dazzling



Fig. V

Perfume Dance



Fig. VI

Muffin Princess



Fig. VII

5. Conclusion

It has been shown from this research and analysis that the elements that can heal mind and body have a close relationship with positive feelings which can be used as a remedy. The positive feelings created by the store atmosphere can relax people and release their pressure. That's why many modern afternoon teas are thriving. From the integration of the result of the experiment above it is revealed that color, sound, smell, temperature and behavior and interaction of field staff are important factors of the store atmosphere that affect the healing process. It can be known through the experimental data that a tea café that can heal both physically and mentally usually has the common design elements as listed below:

1. Warm, bright and comfortable light
2. Both DM and Menu are colorful with high saturation and brightness.
3. Besides sweet taste and smell, the dishes are usually bright-colored and decorated.
4. There are usually many decorations in the tea cafés, which are usually bright-colored, beautiful and expensive.
5. Waiters and waitress are often dressed with special clothes, making people feel they are like maidservants or servants. The consumers will feel they are like princesses or noblemen. It's like the role play where everyone jumps out from their original identities.
6. Though many decorations and visual systems are highly bright and saturated, the dinnerware, table tops and walls are mostly white, which can bring out the color of the food and other CIS.

Based on heart healing and pressure releasing, the CIS planning of the tea café is dominated by clean white or light color, and supplemented by highly bright and saturated decoration colors to make people feel joyful. Warm lights providing a relaxing atmosphere and colorful dishes can make friends speak out freely, spend a happy time and release their pressure in mind and body and heal their hearts.

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