Research on Design Innovation of Traditional Bookstore Exhibition Space—A Case Study of Liguang Bookstore

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**Abstract.** With the rise of Internet era and development of electronic technology, the emergence of online bookstores has sent traditional bookstores into dilemma. In this circumstance, this research implements rational planning and layout on space through the innovative design of display space in traditional bookstore, so as to establish a complex multi-function bookstore display space that integrates learning and entertainment. In this way, an ecological, quiet and healthy space that is convenient for people’s communication and exchange can be created to meet people’s demands for book culture and provide necessary conditions for interpersonal communication.

1. **Introduction**

Nowadays, as the expansion of electronic information resources, more and more people are obtaining information resources through Internet, so that traditional bookstores are gradually being reduced and some famous bookstores are closed down under the impact of online sales, e-books and rising store rents. Therefore, how to make traditional bookstores more popular among readers despite of unsatisfactory sales performance of paper books is an important topic that interior designers need to ponder.

In fact, people’s basic life needs have been met with the continuous improvement of living standards, so they have put forward higher requirements in spiritual level. That is to say, in the face of work pressure, work competition, interpersonal relationships and parenting knowledge, people need a place to replenish knowledge, improve their quality and relax. As a place allowing people to get access to knowledge, bookstore plays an important role in the learning society.

The old-fashioned display design and single business model of traditional bookstores can no longer satisfy readers' demand for bookstores, so that experiential consumption has become the mainstream business model of the society. Therefore, traditional bookstores shall adapt to the needs of times, transform business model and create glory again.

2. **Development Status of Traditional Bookstores**

China’s traditional bookstores have faced business dilemmas in the past ten years. In particular, the incomplete statistics shows that half of the private bookstores have closed down as they are pressured by rising store rents. For example, in July 2011, Feng-rusong, the famous bookstore in Beijing with a history of 17 years released notice of suspension; in the same month, Shanghai Jifeng Bookstore in Raffles Plaza was closed due to extremely high rent; on September 22, the last two Joint Publishing bookstores in Guangzhou announced suspension.

The collapse of traditional bookstores makes operators feel the real pressure, along with the price impact of online bookstores and young people’s new reading styles, operators are always aware that they need to change marketing ideas to ensure sales performance and stimulate industrial reversal.

3. **Problems in Display Design of Traditional Bookstores**

Although online bookstores are advantaged in low price and convenient purchase, traditional bookstores can provide readers with pleasant reading experience and comfortable communication environment. However, this is insufficient to support traditional bookstores to develop properly. In
addition to changing business model, traditional bookstores shall also adjust the design of bookstore display space accordingly, so as to get out of the increasingly depressed situation, transform crisis into opportunity and win more readers’ preference. Some problems existing in the display design of traditional bookstore are summarized to make improvements in the design of Li guang Bookstore.

3.1 Unreasonable Spatial Arrangement

The biggest difference between traditional bookstores and online bookstores is that traditional bookstores can provide readers with a good reading environment and create a comfortable cultural atmosphere. However, traditional bookstores show strong sales planning and organization in the design of overall spatial arrangement, which greatly weakened readers’ experience feeling since the instant reading of books is not regarded as the key point of design.

The overall spatial arrangement of traditional bookstores is single without specific block division or independent reading area, but just the single book display area and book shelves. The taller bookshelf design and more crowded interval make readers feel cramped and uncomfortable. These designs are always reminding readers to find the books they need and leave quickly after payment. These spatial arrangement designs run counter to bookstore operators’ idea of getting more operating profits.

3.2 Old-Fashioned Display Method

The display in traditional bookstores merely focuses on sales, which is quite old-fashioned. Since the shelves for displaying books are generally in a strip layout, the display space design of traditional bookstores is more regular and rigid. Thus, some changes shall be made in book display to create vivid effects and attract readers’ attentions; such as displaying books in parallel or intercrossing vertically in middle showcase, or separately displaying best-selling books. Such partial decorative display allows readers to feel a touch of freedom and liveliness in a quiet and orderly space. However, the author only saw the library-style book display method during survey of traditional bookstores, which lacks aesthetics despite of in good order.

3.3 Less Prominent Layout

As one of the components of bookstore display design, layout enables readers to clearly know the recent display theme and promotion details of the bookstore. Therefore, appropriate layout design can fully play its role in information dissemination, guide readers to have an in-depth understanding of recent theme contents, and increase readers' curiosity to stay longer in bookstore, so as to achieve sales increase. However, the theme layout is almost absent in traditional bookstores so that it becomes a missing link in the display design of traditional bookstores.

3.4 Imperfect Illumination Design

Apart from the natural light source, traditional bookstores basically adopt overall lighting, which means to illuminate the entire bookstore display space through floodlighting or indirect lighting. This kind of design method will not influence the basic use of the bookstore. However, to add various lighting methods based on overall lighting, such as partial illumination, layout lighting, and booth lighting, a more three-dimensional book display space can be built up.

4. Description of Display Design Constitutions in Wuhan Liguang Bookstore

4.1 Project Overview

This project locates in a shopping mall that can cover about 800,000 visits with convenient traffic because it is in Kaide West City, Qiaokou District, Wuhan, the intersection of Jiefang Avenue and No.2 Gutian Road. The shopping mall aims to create a unique fashion gathering place that integrates leisure and entertainment.
4.2 Project Analysis

4.2.1 Location Analysis
Situated on the third floor of shopping mall, this project occupies a total design area of approximately 700 m² and most stores around are eateries. With about 8.2 meters long public display area at entrance and annular hollow area at the doorway, the project has sufficient visit flow and convenient traffic pathway.

4.2.2 Analysis of Spatial Environment
The overall area of this project is strip-shaped. As shown in the site photo, many columns on the site and complicated equipment pipelines have set many restrictions on the design.

4.3 Project Design Concept
Books are the crystallization of human wisdom and an important symbol of human progress as well as civilization. Moreover, books are like the artwork with the same artistic value as all sculptures, paintings, music and film. With the development of history, books are constantly changing in terms of writing methods, materials application, binding approaches and forms. Book is the core of Liguang Bookstore, so the design concept is to create a bookstore display space like artwork exhibition hall.

4.4 Project Design Contents

4.4.1 Spatial Overall Planning Layout
A good design of bookstore display space can make the most of various functional spaces in a limited space. Except for precisely arranging book display contents and other spatial function partitions, it is also necessary to consider how to make the whole display style harmonious and unified, so that the readers can be attracted by the books displayed, stay and even sit down to read books so as to achieve the ultimate goal of book sales.

Based on the design subject of book display area and reading area, this project is supplemented by hand-made area, electronic product experience area and coffee area. (Fig. 1)

![Figure 1. Layout Plan.](image)

There is a wall shaping of bookcase at project main entrance according to the original space on the site, so as to create extended visual effect, form an inclined guiding space, increase the depth of indoor space, and build up a high-quality store attraction.

The stepped reading space on the right side can both satisfy readers’ needs of reading and be used as a seating area for reading exchanges. The stairs on the left side can fully increase the diversity of indoor space and create more book display areas. Also, it can become a large integrated space together with the ladder reading area on the right side to meet the needs of large-scale exchange activities.
4.4.1.1 Design of Main Entrance

The store design is inspired by movable type printing. As one of traditional Chinese Four Great Inventions, movable type printing represents a great technological revolution of human civilization, and it is also the earliest presentation of human information dissemination and books. With reference to the production techniques of block printing, we re-carved the names of great historical scholars in all ages of the world. Each of the names appears in up-and-down effect just like the seal, and thereby organically combines into a movable type printing plate. "Liguang", the bookstore's logo, is fixed on the wood engraving plate with a metal copper plate, so that the light on the back can go through the hollow metal word. In other areas, the smooth and wood-colored refractory panels are used to create a striking contrast to the engraved plate. (Fig. 2 and 3)

![Figure 2. Sketch of Wood Carving.](image1)
![Figure 3. Design Sketch of Entrance.](image2)

The color design of the whole main entrance is fresh and elegant so that it creates a huge visual contrast with the surrounding colorful dining entrances, which can attract attentions.

4.4.1.2 Design of Book Display Area and Reading Area

By breaking through the display design method of traditional bookstore, this project combines the space between book display area and reading area in a reasonable and orderly manner. The low book stand separates space to show greater flexibility, strong sense of rhythm and layering.

Considering readers’ book-buying experience, the oblique “back-shaped” route design in book display area allows readers to avoid walking the route repeatedly and browse all the categories of books along the design route so as to achieve sales growth. The reading area is closely linked to the book display area, so that readers can sit down and read it immediately when encountering interesting books. This helps increase the experience feeling of purchasing books. (Fig. 4 and 5)

![Figure 4. Design Sketch of Book Display Area and Reading Area.](image3)
![Figure 5. Design Sketch of Book Display Area and Reading Area.](image4)
4.4.1.3 Design of Children’s Reading Area

Based on the design methods such as taking ground as terrace and sloping, children's reading area makes the overall space present an up-and-down effect, and forms a small independent area integrating reading and amusement. The big steps can be used as the passage to higher place and a seating area for parent-child reading. This kind of design can attract children's attentions to stay here to read and play, and also enhance parent-children interaction. (Fig. 6 and 7)

![Figure 6. Design Sketch of Children’s Reading Area.](image)

The design of the book display showcases in this area has been appropriately reduced in scale. On the one hand, it is suitable for children’s use; on the other hand, it will make children feel grow up, bring them a sense of intimacy, and promote their growth.

4.4.1.4 Design of Handwork Area

The handwork area is specially designed for young people fond of handworks, which is semi-blocked by combining original wood frame with transparent glass. This design creates a relatively quiet and independent space for handwork lovers, and also provides opportunities for curious readers to observe. (Fig. 8and 9)

![Figure 8. Design Sketch of Handwork Area.](image)  ![Figure 9. Design Sketch of Coffee Area.](image)

4.4.1.5 Design of Coffee Area

At the end of the bookstore, coffee area is closely linked to the book display area. That is to say, readers can finally stay here, drink a cup of coffee and read a good book by passing through the designed purchase route.
There are two larger structural columns nearby the curtain wall of coffee area with fire hydrants on the columns. Inspired by the "exquisitely bundled books", the structural columns are integrated with a refractory plate to form a larger molding column, and the acrylic painted abstract graffiti on fireproof board gives texture of book pages. Meanwhile, the fireproof board is geometrically divided by edge strips so that it looks like a bundle of exquisitely packed books. There is a circle of lighting troughs on the top of modeling column with warm yellow spotlights and electric projection screens insides. When there is no public activity in the store, the modeling column can be used as a leisure bar. During the exchanges, reading clubs or sharing activities, the modeling column can meet the needs of equipment for related activities by unfolding the projection screen inside top light trough.

4.4.2 Illumination Design of Overall Space
The principal purpose of illumination in bookstore display space is to meet readers’ illumination requirements when reading: it is necessary to meet readers’ visual habits and ensure the exhibiting effect of products. The second purpose is to render the atmosphere and create a good reading atmosphere.

Considering that readers need sufficient illumination when reading, the design of the overall spatial lighting does not set strip-shaped light trough or track spotlight in book display area and reading area. Instead, the warm light source is used at illumination above 500LX (lumen value). With no dim illumination, it is not easy to cause visual fatigue and readers can have sufficient illumination when reading and purchasing books. In particular, the luminescent lamp trough is set in the interlayer of each book showcase, display stand and booth, which can further increase the illumination of book sales area to promote book sales. The use of low color temperature lighting in aisle area will create a quiet reading experience for the bookstore display space, because this kind of light changes in intensity and temperature. Similarly, the low color temperature is also applied in coffee break area to provide a comfortable and relaxing space for readers.

4.4.3 Color Design of Overall Space
The stuff materials used in the display space mainly are warm and simple light colors. The wall is covered by wood-colored veneers and the ground floor is made of wood-colored herringbone floor. Meanwhile, due to the height limitation of indoor space and we hope to create an exquisite bookstore display space, the top color is designed as a gypsum board ceiling sprayed with white eggshell paint, and the top surface of the area with relatively lower height is made of mirror fire-resistant glass. In this way, the richness of interior materials can be increased.

On the basis of the main color, each partition is locally changed according to different functional partitions. In order to strengthen the practicability and openness of book display area and reading area, the public rest area adopts steps and stair terrace instead of using too many furnishings. The leisure area is mainly made up of leather furniture, and embellished by bronze metal furniture in details.

The showcases and display stands for hot-selling books are made of wood-colored veneers and black steel frames, so that the texture of metal and affinity of log will create a rich visual effect.

4.4.4 Display Props Design of Partial Space
The showcase for displaying books is one of the highlights in this project, where every artwork needs a base to set off, so do the books. The design of this showcase is inspired by the decorative form of painting art. It is hoped that the white bookcase will become the carrier of books as canvas, so that books will be presented to customers like mounted artworks. A circle of light troughs is set up in the outer ring of the bookcase, which carries the bookshelves filled with books like a base. Then wooden veneers are used as “picture frames” to mount the exquisite bookcases to manifest the charm of books.

5. Conclusions
Traditional bookstores ushered in a sales decline after experiencing a profit climax, so a large number of bookstores have closed down because of unwilling to change the traditional sales model. On the contrary, the traditional bookstore operators who still persist in adversity are keeping pace with the times and optimizing services by means of changing business models, improving sales environment and enhancing service quality.
In this project, the innovative design of bookstore display space infuses new vitality into traditional bookstores and creates a new opportunity for the development of physical bookstores. During this design process, the author has conducted a lot of surveys by visiting physical bookstores in Wuhan, and made detailed analysis as well as comparative research on current exhibition space between traditional bookstores and new bookstores. By constantly communicating with bookstore operators, readers and operators’ appeals are learned. In terms of function division, the book display area is organically combined with reading area, and the area for electronic product experience, handwork as well as coffee break are added. With this method, the project is designed into a compound bookstore display space that can promote book sales by increasing the sense of experience and attracting more readers. In addition, considering the influence of second child policy on China’s population and poss-80 and 90 parents’ emphasis on education, children’s reading area is separated to highlight the parent-child education and children’s culture cultivation.

By means of the innovative design of traditional bookstores, it is expected to infuse new design ideas and vitality into bookstore display space, create a better reading experience for readers, and build up a bookstore space that brings warmth to the city.

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