

The Lightweight Design Concept: Origin, Impact, and Development

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Abstract:

This study explores the “lightweight design” concept proposed by Stone Brothers Group, investigating its multidimensional value in origin, application, and impact on cultural tourism development. Through analysis of practical projects, it delves into the connection between “light living” and “lightweight design” and contemporary lifestyles, and envisions the future development of lightweight design in urbanization and rural revitalization, offering new paths for cultural tourism, technological innovation, and industry-education integration.

Keywords:

Light Intervention, Lightweight Design, Cultural Tourism Development, Digital Transformation

1. Introduction

The “light” concept holds profound significance in today’s context, representing a quality, aesthetic, and value present across various cultural domains. “Lightweight design,” first proposed and applied by Stone Brothers Group, aims for speed, quality, and cost-effectiveness. It addresses the issue of excessive investment in cultural tourism projects, achieving favorable returns, and during the pandemic, it facilitated a “light operation” model, using “lightweight design” to alleviate the “heavy asset”-induced “pressure” in life.

Stone Brothers Group pioneered the “holistic sensation” design philosophy and registered it as a design trademark, proposing “lightweight design, healing heavy assets.” They continuously upgraded their service model, effectively meeting the demands of the real estate sector during rapid development, and by 2019, had expanded into diverse fields such as rural revitalization, education, and elderly care services.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach, primarily involving document analysis and case study methods. Extensive literature on design concepts, cultural

tourism development, and related fields was reviewed to understand the theoretical foundations and practical applications of the “lightweight design” concept. Several case studies of projects where Stone Brothers Group applied the “lightweight design” concept were analyzed to explore its specific implementation methods and effects.

3. Origin of the “Lightweight Design” Concept

“ism” denotes people’s advocated, ideal viewpoints and propositions. It can be a specific ideology, purpose, theoretical framework, or system of thought, or a set of systematic theories and proposition regarding the objective world, social life, academic issues, etc. In a way, every individual in each era lives on a planet teeming with diverse “isms”.

“Total Sensation” is an “ism” first put forward by Wang Xinshi, founder of Stone Brothers. It refers to the six human senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and intuition. The design philosophy integrates these senses organically to create boundless beauty, dreams, and elegance within limited spaces, offering an irreplaceable framework of memories. This is known as “Total Sensation-ism” and represents a new aesthetic experience (Figure 1).

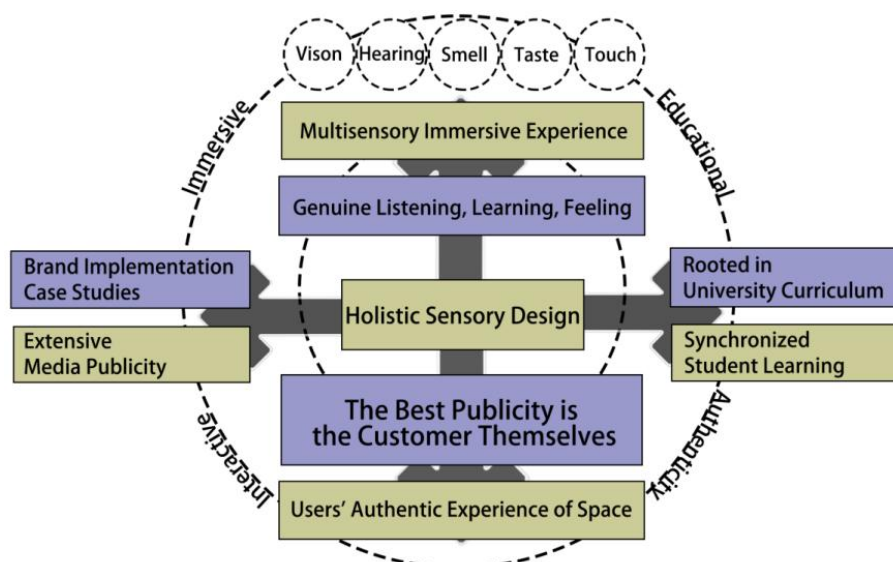


Figure 1. Application of Holistic Sensation Design.

“Lightweight Design” is a corporate development strategy proposed by the company based on market demands and a holistic sensory experience. It aligns with the development of Stone Brothers Group, fulfilling the company’s developmental objectives and practical design requirements. It constructs a new, cost - effective design methodology.

3.1. The Origin of the Lightweight Design Path

In Chinese dictionaries, the character “light” has multiple meanings, primarily indicating small weight, shallow degree, less quantity, considering something easy, or being casual. As a life experience, “light” is a state of language and thought, and a common phenomenon in contemporary life [1]. “Light” and “heavy” are antonyms, where “heavy” signifies excessive focus on life aspects, leading to issues like “involution” and “lying flat,” representing incorrect and incomplete value systems [2]. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic’s unexpected impact and complex

economic, employment, and environmental situations, some people abandoned “involution”, exhibiting behaviors of “low desire, low demand, low consumption, and reduced social connection”, with not fully established values sinking into nothingness. Lightweight design emerged in response to this era. Lightweight design aims for self-adaptive development, featuring a stronger functional life cycle and meeting basic emotional needs.

3.2. The Connotation of Lightweight Design

“Lightweight design, speed, quality, cost-effectiveness” is the slogan of lightweight design. It advocates achieving “lightness” in all things through these three concepts, using lightweight design to create sales scenarios that heal heavy assets (Figure 2). “Speed” is reflected in an average 28-day design and production period, strong coordination, Upfront operation, multi-track parallel processing, focusing on consumer pain points, and precise output. Check from three dimensions: quick decision-making, implementation, and iteration; and Stick to three dimensions: creating content highlights, seeking traffic through experience, and ensuring long-term benefits via iteration. “Cost-effectiveness” involves saving investment, promoting faster capital turnover through reduced investment, marketing, and operation costs.

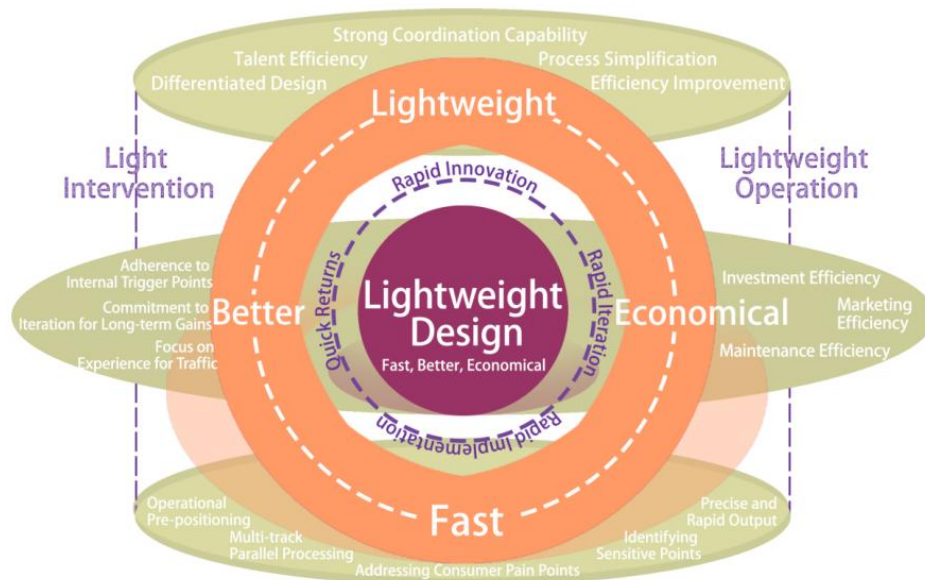


Figure 2. The concept of “Lightweight Design”.

4. Development of Lightweight Design Applications

After repeated adjustments to its design philosophy, Stone Brothers Group highlighted the significance of “lightweight design” across multiple domains, reflecting the important trend of harmony between humans and objects [3], as well as humans and nature.

4.1. Application Methods of Lightweight Design

Stone Brothers Group, through promoting Notoke Folk Hotel, drew media attention by highlighting quality mutton and innovating yurt designs, driving local internet-famous economy using a “quick decision”. In Taoyangli’s design, they recreated the prosperity of a historical block and combined it with modern immersive streets and

myth-themed IP to construct ideal living spaces. For a guesthouse, they scripted in advance, using more economical materials, diverse functions, and high-end services to reduce user choices and pioneered a new property management service model. At Joujiang Beef Hot Pot, they exemplified the extreme application of “speed, quality, cost-effectiveness”, achieving a 25-day opening myth through early design and layout, swift identification, reduced investment, and faster capital turnover, making the shop an internet-famous check-in spot.

4.2. Research Value of Lightweight Design

Lightweight design overcomes industry pain points such as insufficient artistic content conversion, separate multiple businesses, space waste, lack of consumption, incompatibility between offline and online commerce, low customer loyalty, and chaotic brand control. It constructs a full-dimensional business format. Focusing on the “speed” of lightweight design (Figure 3), it achieves cost-effectiveness by saving time, which in turn saves costs in multiple dimensions. It innovates quickly through regular festive activities to avoid aesthetic fatigue, creates phenomenal cultural IP to attract tourists, and ensures quick implementation by avoiding complicated planning, land use, and construction. It offers rapid returns by generating immediate consumer appeal and boosting regional economic growth, and quickly iterates based on market changes.

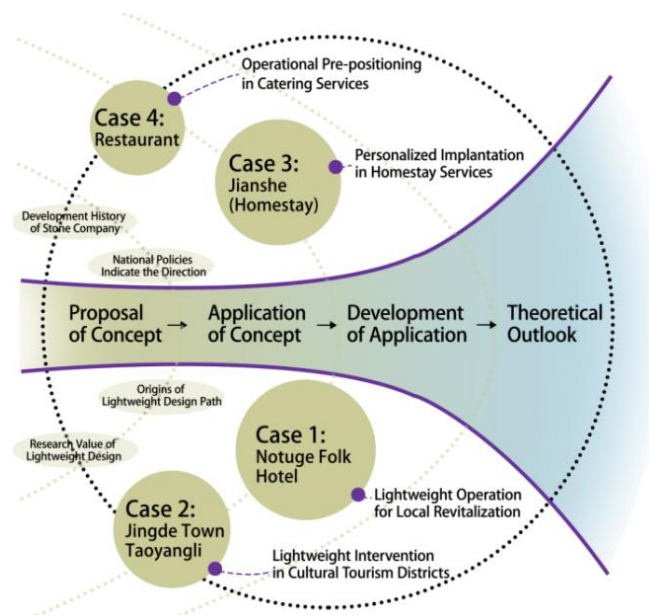


Figure 3. Research Path of the “Lightweight Design” Concept.

In the renewal of old villages and cities, the existing urban micro-renewal system struggles to sustain the regeneration of different regional and cultural contexts. Lightweight design optimizes and upgrades with greater speed, lower costs, and more environmentally friendly materials, minimizing the impact on surrounding residents during the process [4].

5. Contemporary Impact of the Lightweight Design Concept

The value of this study for contemporary exploration can be developed from the four dimensions of “lightweight design” theory, namely “simplicity, digital, low carbon, easy to express”, exploring the theoretical level of light intervention, practical

level of micro-renewal, micro-remodeling to achieve light revitalization, new to light (Figure 4).

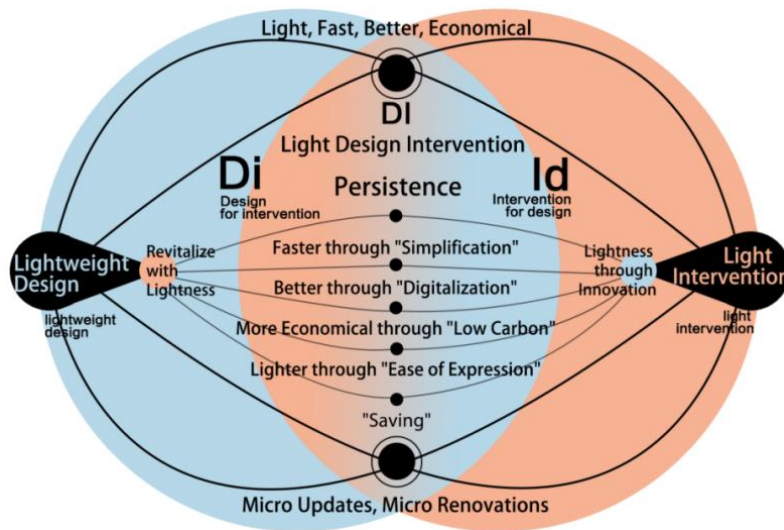


Figure 4. Prospect of the “Lightweight Design” theory.

5.1. Faster and More Streamlined

Whether applied to products or spaces, lightweight design resonates with Generation Z's characteristics of self-expression and uniqueness [5]. Its emergence is closely related to current social progress [6]. In cultural tourism and rural revitalization, lightweight design should focus on regional, spatial, material, and construction “lightness,” integrating deeply into projects by understanding local culture and user experiences, and promoting the inheritance and development of architectural and regional cultures [7].

5.2. More “digital” better

President President of China emphasized that the digital economy, with high innovation, strong penetration, and wide coverage, is not only a new economic growth point but also a fulcrum for transforming and upgrading traditional industries [8]. Lightweight design emphasizes industry-education integration, aligning with national cultural development strategies [9]. The digital transformation of design is a trend, offering cross-sector possibilities for the digital transition of various industries. As a country with severe aging, lightweight design addresses digital aging and all-age lifestyles, with schools and communities jointly exploring its applications and focusing on new technologies, materials, and business forms to spread traditional culture.

5.3. More Low-carbon and Cost-effective

With global warming worsening, low-carbon design in urban development is crucial for sustainable progress [9]. In September 2020, President President of China announced China’s goals of peaking carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 [6]. Lightweight design supports innovative carbon reduction through bottom-up design services combined with top-down carbon emission control [10], transforming design productivity into green services. It enhances flexibility and resilience from a systemic perspective, and under the dual-carbon goals, it creates new business formats integrating green digital technology with humanities and arts.

5.4. *More Expressive and Lighter*

Lightweight design responds to the times, guiding strategies to address people's livelihoods [11]. Design firms should focus on "Chinese elements" to develop a unique "Chinese style," avoiding blind adherence to Western design trends. They should strengthen their stance, explore Chinese-style design expressions, establish design gene banks and evaluation standards, and refine lightweight design operation paths. Cities, built on human dreams, require lightweight design to focus more on cultural confidence and Oriental aesthetics in the future.

6. Conclusions

The saving of light design is to achieve the effect of "saving cost" in more dimensions by "saving time", and to establish the initial mind of fast decision-making, "the only way to achieve the world's martial arts is to be fast" in order to achieve the desired effect with many times of trial and error with all the energy and the fastest time, as designers should constantly nourish themselves and feel the changes of life and the world with all the senses every day. All the energy and the fastest time to achieve the desired results, as designers should continue to nourish themselves, with all the senses to feel the changes in life and the world every day, in the consideration of the "light design" and the future direction of the times, should be "the road to simplicity" respect for the technology but not In considering "light design" and the future direction of the times, we should respect technology but not be held hostage by it, follow the trend of the times, and use the concept of "light design" to provide more services for the rural revitalization, education, and elderly care industries [12].

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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