

Research on Modern Design Governance from the Perspective of Xunzi's Design Philosophy

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Abstract. This paper studies modern design governance from the perspective of Xunzi's design philosophy. This paper first dissects the core content of Xunzi's design philosophy, then elaborates on the concept and constituent elements of modern design governance, which include policy, industry, and social participation levels, all of which are interrelated and coordinated. Then, explore the implications of Xunzi's design governance. Through research, clarify the connotation of Xunzi's design philosophy, sort out the elements and relationships of modern design governance, and provide new ideas for improving related theories and practices.

Keywords: Xunzi's Design Philosophy; Design Governance; Refined; Gift.

1. Introduction

Modern design governance plays a crucial role in the development of contemporary society. In terms of policy, although the government has introduced some relevant policies, some of them have not been implemented properly. The importance and enforcement of design governance vary among different regions, making it difficult for the policies to exert their maximum effect and fail to guide the healthy development of the design industry comprehensively and effectively. Xunzi's design philosophy contains rich and profound wisdom, providing a new dimension of thought for modern design governance theory.

2. The Core Content of Xunzi's Design Philosophy

Xunzi's design philosophy is based on the theory of "evil nature", emphasizing the practical path of "transforming nature and eliminating falsehood", and advocating the transformation of human nature and the regulation of social order through design. The core ideas are reflected in four aspects: First, design is regarded as a tool for transforming human nature, satisfying survival needs through functional objects, and transforming moral norms into perceptible material forms through symbolic ritual systems, such as the reinforcement of hierarchical ethics through visual symbols in decorative design. Secondly, design should follow the normative principle of "propriety for name", maintain social hierarchy through the correspondence of the form and name of the object, oppose functional redundancy, and reflect practical rationality, such as the use of objects of specific forms by people of different statuses. Thirdly, the design should balance the "distinction between man and nature", conform to the physical laws when transforming nature, and both break through the limitations of nature through technology and avoid abuse, which is instructive for contemporary sustainable design. Finally, design undertakes the function of social integration, promotes division of labor and collaboration through standardized tools, and strengthens collective identity through spatial planning, such as the layout of palaces reflecting the order of hierarchy. Xunzi's design thought profoundly influenced the Confucian design tradition, and his dialectical thinking provided classical wisdom for the ethicalization and ecologicalization of modern design.

3. The Thought of Refinement and its Design Manifestations

3.1 The Relationship between Form and Content in the Concept of "Refined and Courteous"

In terms of design, Xunzi advocated decoration that was both practical and beautiful. "That's exactly what is being refined and courteous. "When the quality is superior to the writing, it becomes wild; When

literature is superior to its quality, it becomes history. Refined and courteous; Then a gentleman." Quality: simplicity, texture, plain content. Wen: Referring to literary talent, elaborate decoration. Shi: Embellishment, embellishment that is exaggerated. Bin: The appearance of a well-matched literary style and texture. More literary than plain, and a bit too vague. It is only when the two are well-matched that one becomes a true gentleman. The use of "refined and courteous" also expresses Xunzi's beautiful pursuit of material and spiritual civilization at a deeper level.

As a key element of Xunzi's design philosophy, "refined and courteous" implies a profound understanding of the relationship between form and content. Among them, "wen" encompasses external presentation forms, embellishment techniques, and cultural displays, while "zhi" focuses on internal essential characteristics, core content, and fundamental attributes of things. The two are interdependent and mutually restrictive.

"Quality" forms the foundation, which is the basis on which the whole thing stands. Without a solid and reliable "quality", "writing" is like a duckweed that has lost its roots. No matter how splendid its appearance is, it is nothing but a facade and lacks substantial value support. For example, if an object has obvious flaws in its function, even if it is beautifully decorated, it will not be able to play its due role in practical use and will eventually become an ornament with no practical value. At the same time, "wen" has an undeniable importance. It is not a simple accessory but can help things break through the limitations of mere functionality and rise to cultural and aesthetic heights, thereby more fully demonstrating the connotation of "quality". Just as in the field of literary creation, the external formal elements such as the elegant expression of words and the ingenious structure of the text (that is, the "text") can more vividly and profoundly convey the thoughts, emotions, themes and contents that the author intends to express (that is, the "quality"), thereby giving the work a stronger appeal and influence. What "refined and courteous" advocates is to achieve a harmonious unity of form and content, so as to maximize the value of things in multiple dimensions such as function, aesthetics and culture.

3.2 The Embodiment of the Idea of "Refined and Courteous" in Traditional Creation Design

In the vast field of traditional creation design, the idea of "refined and courteous" is manifested to the fullest, especially in the balance of function and decoration, practicality and aesthetics. In the case of bronze wares, take the tripod as an example. It has clear and important practical functions such as sacrifice and cooking. The design of the tripod in terms of size, internal structure and overall construction is all centered on how to effectively realize these functions, which is undoubtedly an emphasis on "quality". In terms of appearance, the artisans would meticulously carve a variety of elaborate and exquisite patterns, such as cloud and thunder patterns, taotie patterns, etc. These patterns not only have high decorative value but also carry specific cultural implications and symbolic meanings, reflecting from the side the social hierarchy, religious beliefs and other aspects of the time. This is the vivid presentation of "culture" on bronze wares. By ingeniously integrating function and decoration, the bronze wares not only perfectly met the requirements of practical use, but also demonstrated remarkable artistic value, becoming a typical example of the "refined and courteous" ideology in traditional craft design.

3.3 The Reflection of the Principle of Propriety in Design

3.3.1 The Reflection of the Idea of "Ritual" in the Field of Design

In Xunzi's ideological system, "ritual" holds a core position, and its influence on the design and usage norms of objects is quite significant, clearly demonstrating the close connection between the hierarchical system and design differences. In terms of the design of the vessel, take the bronze tripod as an example. The tripod used by the emperor must be made of superior bronze, exquisitely crafted, tall and imposing in shape, and decorated with exquisite patterns such as dragon patterns that show the majesty of the royal family; As for the tripods used by the feudal lords and officials, they were reduced in terms of material, craftsmanship, shape and decoration, and strictly adhered to the order of hierarchy, and were not allowed to use elements that were exclusive to the higher class.

As for the rules of use, there were also strict requirements of "etiquette". For instance, in important occasions such as sacrifices, the placement of tripods, the order in which they are used, and the other utensils that go with them, all have precise and unbreakable regulations according to different grades. When the emperor offers sacrifices, the tripods are placed in the most critical and prominent positions in a specific order and position, accompanied by a complete set of complex rituals and matching ritual vessels, demonstrating their noble status. In similar events, the number and position of the tripods, as well as the details of the entire sacrificial process, were to be adjusted according to their own rank. Any violation would be regarded as overstepping the bounds and would be severely punished. This connection between hierarchy and design, which ran through the entire system of creation and use in ancient times, strengthened the hierarchical order of society.

3.3.2 The Shaping of Design Principles by "Ritual" to Maintain Social Order

As an important means of maintaining social order in ancient times, "ritual" was fully and deeply implemented through design, thereby exerting a profound shaping effect on design principles. First, it gave rise to the principle of standardization. In ancient times, from the initial design concept to the specific production process and to the final presentation of the finished product, there were clear, definite and fixed standard requirements in many aspects such as size, material selection, decorative techniques and usage. Secondly, the principle of differentiation was formed. When designing objects of different grades, a distinct distinction is deliberately created, which is reflected in multiple dimensions such as the quality of the material, the complexity of the craftsmanship, and the fineness of the decoration. By widening these differences, a strong visual contrast is created among the objects used by different classes, thereby strengthening the boundaries between the classes and making people always hold the "rites" in awe and not dare to cross the hierarchical norms easily.

Furthermore, it highlights the principle of inheritance. Given that the "ritual" itself has the characteristics of being passed down through generations and relatively stable, the design that matches it also shows a strong sense of inheritance. The design style, craftsmanship, and usage norms of an object are often passed down from generation to generation within a family, industry, and society as a whole, maintaining a high degree of stability and consistency. In this way, through design, "rites" continuously and deeply influence each generation, enabling them to accept and follow the established social order from the bottom of their hearts, ensuring the smooth and orderly operation and development of society.

4. The Implications of Xunzi's Design Philosophy for Modern Design Governance

4.1 Implications for the Balance of Function and Aesthetics

Xunzi's thought of "refined and courteous" offers many inspirations for modern design governance to guide designers and enterprises to balance product functionality and aesthetic value. In education and training, design schools and enterprises should incorporate this idea, making designers understand that functionality, like "quality", is fundamental and aesthetics, like "culture", is the charm. For example, in the product design major, both knowledge of functional realization such as engineering and materials is taught, and aesthetic courses such as aesthetics and color matching are strengthened to cultivate thinking that takes both into account, so that designers can consider the whole from the conception stage.

At the level of design evaluation criteria, a scientific system covering both functional and aesthetic dimensions needs to be constructed. Take smartwatches as an example. When evaluating, both the precision and convenience of functions such as timing and health monitoring should be considered, and aesthetic factors such as the appearance of the dial, the material and color matching of the strap should be taken into account, and a comprehensive score should be given to guide optimization. Industry organizations can make it clear through design competitions, exhibitions and other activities that both functionality and aesthetics should be emphasized. For instance, furniture design competitions require

works that combine functions such as sitting, lying down, and storage with a unique aesthetic style, encouraging designers to explore the combination of the two, driving the industry atmosphere, and making enterprises pay attention.

Take smartphones as an example to see the role of design governance mechanisms in promoting the balance between functionality and aesthetics and enhancing competitiveness. Relevant departments formulate quality and technical specifications to ensure basic functions such as communication and computing, and control the functional level. At the same time, innovation in appearance is encouraged, from straight panels to full-screen and foldable screens, with shells made of a variety of textured materials and vivid colors to meet aesthetic preferences. Industry associations collect consumer feedback and convey it to manufacturers to promote optimization. If consumers want a strong camera function and a slim and beautiful appearance, manufacturers will invest in research and development, improve the pixel, optimize the algorithm, use slim materials and optimize the structure to create a simple and elegant appearance, making the phone both practical and beautiful. As a result, smartphones that combine functionality and aesthetics are more favored. Brands such as Apple and Huawei have stood out in the global market, highlighting the importance of the unity of functionality and aesthetics in enhancing product competitiveness and the positive significance of effective governance mechanisms.

4.2 The Transformation and Application of the Concept of Grades and Norms

Xunzi's idea of hierarchical norms based on "rites" has the potential to be transformed into design standards and industry norms in modern design governance. In public space design, standards can be determined by classification based on the importance of the place and the people it serves. Important Spaces such as urban landmark buildings and large transportation hubs, which carry the functions of showcasing the image and serving the public, have strict design standards in terms of safety, appearance, etc. Ordinary Spaces such as community leisure squares are regulated with a focus on meeting the daily leisure needs of residents. In product design, hierarchical norms are established based on consumption levels and usage purposes. High-end custom luxury goods, in order to meet the high net worth clients' pursuit of quality and uniqueness, have extremely high standards in material selection, craftsmanship, details, etc. Mass daily necessities focus on basic functions, quality and safety, and general aesthetics. From the perspective of industry norms, designers can be classified according to their professional qualifications and working experience, and the scale and complexity of the projects they undertake can be limited to ensure the professionalism and quality of the design and help the industry operate in an orderly manner, just as in ancient times, duties were defined based on status.

Establishing a reasonable regulatory system is of great significance for ensuring design quality, promoting fair competition and maintaining market order. In terms of ensuring design quality, through clear and detailed design standards, there are corresponding normative requirements for every link, from the preliminary research and conceptual conception of the design, to the drawing of specific plans, model making, and the final review of the results. For example, in architectural design, it is stipulated that thorough site analysis and environmental assessment must be carried out, structural design must be carried out in accordance with relevant building codes and technical standards, and material selection must meet quality and environmental protection requirements, etc. In this way, designers and design teams must strictly follow these standards to ensure that every design project meets a certain quality bottom line. To avoid quality issues due to arbitrariness.

5. Summary

Through in-depth exploration of modern design governance from the perspective of Xunzi's design philosophy, multiple achievements have been made. First, we have clarified the core content of Xunzi's design philosophy, such as the emphasis on the balance of functionality and aesthetics in the "refined and courteous" thought, which makes us realize that design should take into account both practicality and beauty; The sense of hierarchy and norms embodied in "the principle of propriety"

reveals that design needs to construct orderly standards according to different situations and objects; The idea of conforming to nature and exerting human effort emphasizes that design should respect objective laws while actively innovating; The emphasis on functionality further highlights the crucial role of meeting practical needs in design. At the level of modern design governance, its constituent elements are analyzed in detail, including policies, industries, and social participation, as well as the mechanisms of interaction and synergy among these elements.

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