



Slow Design Revisiting Slow for Well-being Life

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ABSTRACT

When 'Fast' became a default in this world, people started to disconnect from their daily life. However, the word 'slow' has become more important and supported human life. The faster things become, the more we want to slow them down. Furthermore, people have started to be concerned about their lifestyle and have found ways to reconnect themselves and this world. That is how slow movement arises.

The authors intended to design objects to help people engage and reconnect to their daily life activities. After that, many research and case studies of slow design that created the inspiration of slow products were examined. Following this, the authors found that slowness could affect people through various processes in their life. Therefore, a slow grinder was designed from the understanding of the research on slow design, and several versions of ideas were sketched to make a 3D format. Finally, a prototype was created.

Keywords: Slow design, slow movement, concentrate, well-being life, grinder

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the world is moving faster; as a consequence, humans are making and developing everything in their life to be better and faster to save time because it is the essence of every human being that is limited. The concept of 'slow' goes against the prevailing current of today's society. People are massively disconnected from themselves, and their interactions with digital devices have increased day-by-day. Hence, we have the conceptual birth of a new design paradigm where the role of design is to balance the social, cultural, and individual needs with the well-being of the environment.

What is slow design? According to Beirut (2006), slow design is used for the evolution of nearly unchanging daily lives. When talking about slow design, this does not refer to speed but about thoughtfulness, deliberation, and tender loving care. Slow design is not a new movement. It has been around for centuries, but the current generation seems to have discarded it for "fast" design trends. The six principles of slow design comprising reveal, expand, reflect, engage, participate, and evolve were developed by Strauss and Fuad-Luke (2008). These were not exactly a guide of slow design, but depended on what way people needed to explore this topic. As such, it could have more or less principles. The movement of slow design is called 'slow movement'. There are many contexts of slow movement:



slow food, slow fashion, slow living, slow gardening, slow travelling, slow photography, etc. As such, slow design makes people use more time in each daily activity; simultaneously, it needs to gain something in return, such as experience, knowledge, and feeling. In many daily activities, people are already overlooking some details, so they have lost the essence of life. If people think about their daily life, what are they doing too fast? Do they focus enough on what they are doing? Thus, these are the aspects where slow design would work and be more sustainable. After fully understanding the definition of slow design, the authors' intention was to design objects based on the key directions that they had learned in the research.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. Design a collection of objects that could help people to fully engage in everyday activities and reconnect with themselves.
2. Design objects that would make people slow down their activities.

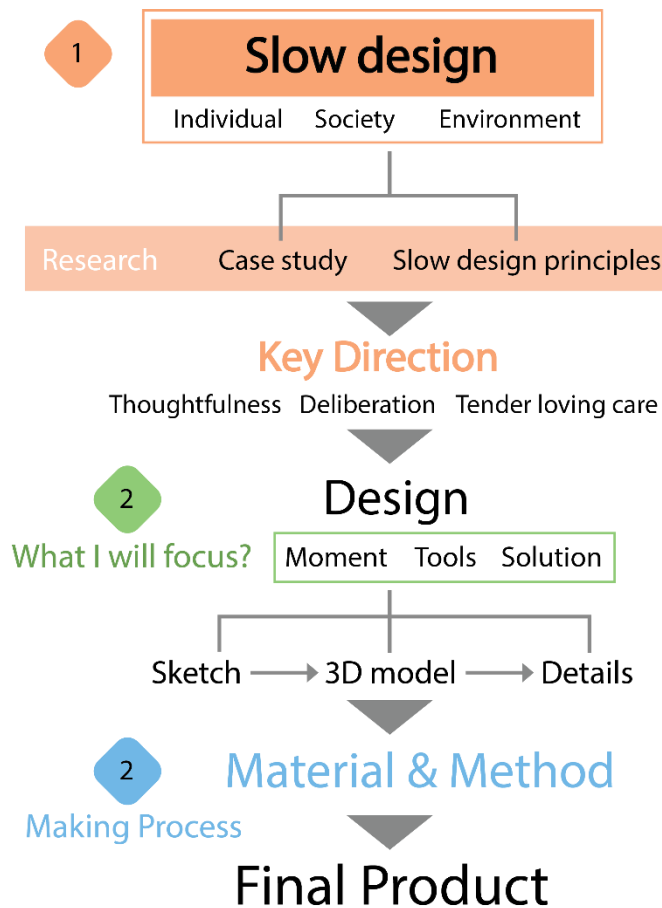


Figure 1 Framework



3. Materials and Methods

The authors found various aspects that referred to the concept of ‘slow’. These were as follows:

3.1 Slow Identity

“A slow approach to identity begins with awareness of self, context and connections to others: from the intimate scale of mind and body, to experienced environments and interpersonal relationships. It creates a bridge between people’s inner and outer dimensions, helping to bring them into fuller resonance with the world around them” (Carolyn & Ana, 2014).

3.2 Slow Movement

Slow movement supports a cultural shift toward slowing down life’s pace. This began with the slow food movement, which was a global organization that was created for the prevention of the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, as well as counteracted the rise of the fast life and combated the people’s dwindling interest in the food that they ate, where it came from, and how the food choices affected the world around us. After that, slow trends were extended into other movements, such as travel, fashion, gaming, gardening, living, etc.

3.3 Slow Design Principles

The principles are the result of research and conversations with design thinkers and also received inspiration from the slow food movement and the debate on sustainability. These design principles were not absolute rules, but rather acted as a guide for slow designing and allowed the designer to reinterpret them and arrive at their own concept. Strauss and Fuad-Luke (2008) defined the slow design principles into six values:

1. Reveal

Slow design reveals experiences in everyday life that are often missed or forgotten, including the materials and processes that could be easily overlooked in an artifact’s existence or creation.



Figure 2 Surprise under the teapot.

Source : Book of Inspiration Slow Design, 2013, p. 32



Example:

As shown in Figure 1, people would find different patterns under each tea set while picking up the cup. This method would make people have more intention in focusing on the details that they rarely would.

2. Expand

Slow design considers the real and potential “expressions” of artifacts and environments beyond their perceived functionalities, physical attributes, and lifespans.



Figure 3 Reclaimed wall

Source : Reclaimed wall cladding, 2019

Example:

The wood walls would make people pay more attention to their texture and make them think about the material. This form of interaction would take place in human beings, objects, and spaces.

3. Reflect

Slow design artifacts/environments/experiences induce contemplation and reflective consumption.



Figure 4 Egg timer.

Source : Egg timer, Flying tiger.



Example

An egg timer is used to tell the user when the time they set is due. At that moment, the egg timer would talk back to the user.

4. Engage

Slow design processes are an open source and collaborative, thus relying on the sharing, cooperation, and transparency of information so that the designs may continue to evolve into the future.



Figure 5 Color lab.

Source : Color lab, 2019

Example:

Let people become part of the design by making a color experiment for using in their products. This method would make people discover something new and understand what they are doing.

5. Participate

Slow design encourages users to become active participants in the design process by embracing ideas of conviviality and exchange to foster social accountability and enhance communities.



Figure 6 Tea bag.

Source : Make green tea, 2022



Example:

The user would participate in the tea process. They would decide the concentration of the tea and put in and take out the tea bag by themselves and become part of the design.

6. Evolve

Slow design recognizes that richer experiences can emerge from the dynamic maturation of artifacts, environments, and systems over time. Looking beyond the needs and circumstances of the present day, slow designs are (behavioral) change agents.



Figure 7 Coffee watch,

Source : The coffee watch, 2022

Example

Using ground coffee that is already used to make another object, this method would increase the value and meaning into the design.

3.4 Sound and Mood

In our modern world, stress and tension-induced diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as addiction and mental illness, are becoming increasingly common. Meditation is becoming more mainstream and is often recommended to encourage relaxation, help alleviate anxiety, and improve well-being (Shanti bowl, 2022). According to the effect of sound on human emotion, research has long shown that sound rooted in major chords tends to produce positive emotions, and sounds rooted in minor chords produce negative emotions. On the other hand, sounds that people hear in everyday life often come to represent something to the listener, which affects their emotional response (Boothby, 2013).

The meanings of the sounds are characterized by four factors: stability, vitality, rhythm, and profoundness. The preference of sounds is expressed differently by various factors. The structure of the meaning of sounds could be utilized for the measurement of the effect of sound meditation and healing with various aspects and more accuracy (Lee, 2020). Furthermore, summarizing the effects of each kind of meditation into three types could be seen as the effect of relaxation, the effect of concentration, and the effect of awakening and insight (Park, 2006).



4. Results

4.1 Music box coffee grinder

In the relaxing zone, there are many activities that slow could be applied. One activity is the coffee making process. The concept starts from how to slow down people. The authors aimed to create a slow design for people instead objects. As such, the music box concept was designed to use with this idea. By using sound, the speed of the grinding coffee could be slowed. If the user rolled the handle too fast, this would result in an annoying sound. Alternatively, if the user rolled the handle slowly, this would result in nice music.

Hence, a music box mechanism was used to support this idea. When turning the handle, it would play music from the metal plate. Consequently, this method could be combined with a coffee grinder with a similar mechanism. This kind of sound could also make people have a good mood.

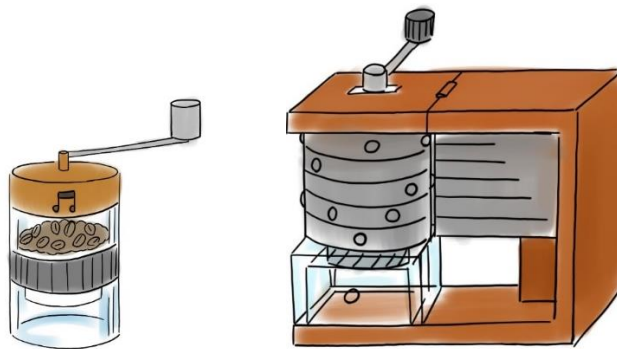


Figure 8 Music box coffee grinder.

When looking at the design, it appears to be too complicated for slow design. Thus, the authors tried to redesign it by deleting some details and adding important details that would be more appropriate for the concept of slow design. From the idea of a grinder, these kinds of activities and their slow process were examined to find the object that was needed to be used to represent the term 'slow design'. Grinding is the process that can be found in many kinds of slow food movements, such as the green tea making process, grinding sesame to put into food, making ground coffee, and others. People grind ingredients with their hands and use different types of grinders. Therefore, this would be the process which people could engage and focus on their actions. As a result, only the grinder part was chosen, which provided more understanding about the process of grinding.



4.2 Final Slow Grinder

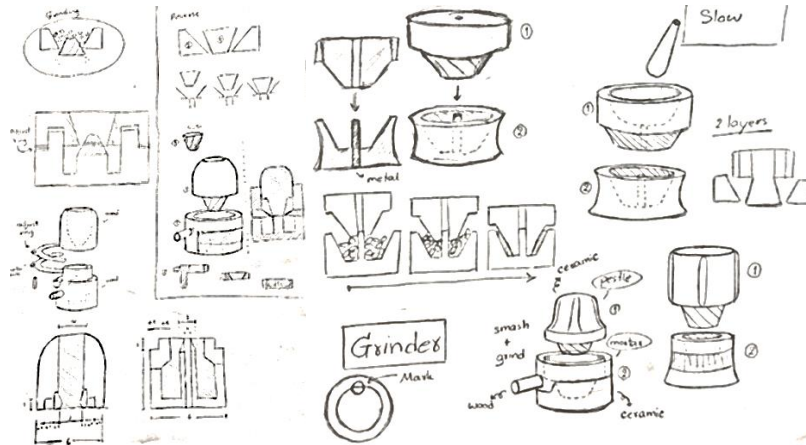


Figure 9 The slow grinder concept.

A slow grinder is the aim to slow people down by using a slow process that would be designed by using a slow, simple, and manual concept. The authors' grinder system was designed with the thought of obtaining some inspiration from a coffee, tea, and sesame grinder and mortar and studying how they worked. Then, the word 'slow' was added into these ideas. Finally, an eccentric idea was used to design the grinder system. It would have a small circle with an outer burr moving around inside the large circular hole that had an inner burr. It would also have a small handle between the two burrs to grind the ingredients.



Figure 10 Outer shape.

This grinder had three main parts: the base, pan, and handle. These parts could be separated to store and clean.

1. Base

At the bottom of the base, a slope was cut to make the grinder lean forward a bit. The advantage of this slope was:



- 1) To make the user feel more practical when using with their hands,
- 2) To be more interesting than a normal square box,
- 3) When adding the ingredients, the slope would help to let them flow onto the same side and make the burr grind more effectively.



Figure 11 Base.

2. Pan

The circular pan has an inner burr. The ingredients would be contained in this part. Therefore, the second part was designed to have a small space only for individual use. For example, if the user wanted to make a cup of tea, they could make tea powder for one cup each time. The groove of the burr of the two parts (pan and handle) would tilt on the opposite side like the common design of a coffee grinder. Moreover, the pan would be able to be removed for cooking or boiling the ingredients.



Figure 12 Pan.

3. Handle

The handle would have a small eccentric burr. It was designed to let the user put one hand on the top and slowly rotate the grinder. The size of the handle between the burrs would depend on the position of the eccentric burr under the handle to support the different types of ingredients.



Figure 13 Handle.

In this product, two types of material were used. The outer parts were made from wood, so long, small planks were chosen to be cut and glued together as a square box, and the burr parts were made from ceramic. Because slow is the opposite of fast, technology and digital, as well as wood and ceramic were the appropriate choices in this case as a natural material.

All of these details of the product represented 'slow' that the authors had learned during the thesis process, as well as understanding about various aspects, such as material, pattern, fillet, method of use, and shape.



Figure 14 All parts of slow grinding.

5. Conclusion

From this research study, it was found that slow movement was very important for people's life that has stress in everyday activities. A lot of slow movement is not needed in people's lives, but just have some aspects of that to become part of their lives. Slow design is a very useful thinking and making method that can create many slow



objects; moreover, people can adapt the slow design process to numerous activities by having good behavior and a careful thinking process.

Initially, the authors thought that slow was about spending time and tried to create a slow clock to represent this concept. After understanding that slow did not only refer to time, the authors realized that it was a process that affected people from the inside and outside of themselves. In addition, the benefit of a slow concept would happen when people started to feel and understand it. Therefore, slow, clean, and simple became the concept of slow grinding in this thesis, so grinding was created to affect slow people in both using the process and being a decoration to attract people in many ways.

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