Research on the Development Characteristics of Urban Commercial Districts in the Consumer Society: A Case Study of Shanghai

Jiayun Zhou

Shanghai Starriver Bilingual School, Shanghai 201108, China

Abstract: With the advent of the consumer era, the spatial structure of urban areas in China has undergone significant changes, exhibiting new development characteristics. This study aims to investigate the consumer space structure, functional structure, and consumer demand from three dimensions. By examining the development history, architectural space, and community form, as well as studying the basic attributes and behavioral characteristics of consumers, it summarizes that Shanghai's commercial communities demonstrate a mutual penetration of consumption and non-consumption. The need for a community-oriented, experiential integration of commercial formats is evident in these areas.

Keywords: urban space; commercial space; consumer demand

1. Introduction

With the deepening of globalization and the acceleration of urbanization, the consumer society has become a significant feature of contemporary social development. Against this backdrop, urban commercial districts, as vital carriers of urban economic activities and essential spaces for citizens' daily lives, have garnered considerable attention regarding their development trends and characteristics. As China's economic center and an international metropolis, the development of commercial districts in Shanghai is highly representative and valuable for research. These commercial districts not only meet the daily consumption needs of citizens but also constitute an important part of urban culture. Therefore, this paper takes Shanghai as an example to investigate and discuss the development characteristics of urban commercial districts in the consumer society[1,3].

2. Survey Analysis

2.1 Selection of Research Scope

This study selects the street sections on both sides of Huangpu Road in Shanghai (east to Huaihai Road, west to Nanjing West Road/Qiantan), with the research scope bounded by surrounding roads and building interfaces, covering an area of approximately 26.2 hectares (as shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1. Research Scope Map

2.2 Characteristics of Consumer Space
2.2.1 Architectural Space Characteristics

Figure 2. Urban Texture of Middle Huaihai Road

Figure 3. Urban Texture of Oriental Sports Center in Qiantan
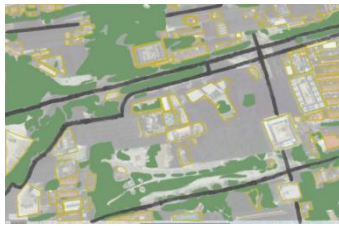
2.2.2 Characteristics of Street Form

Figure 4. Community Texture of Nanjing East Road Pedestrian Street

Figure 5. Community Texture of Hengfu Style Area on Huaihai Road

2.3 Consumer Demand

The survey content includes two parts: ① Basic consumer attributes: This derives the actual user population positioning of an urban-level commercial street, including personal attributes such as gender, occupation, age, workplace, residence, marital status, and consumption preferences. ② Consumer behavior in the research area: This part records every activity, consumption amount, and spatial location of consumers from the time they enter the survey area until they leave. It also includes the main purpose of coming to the area, transportation used, departure time, and arrival time. A total of 179 questionnaires were collected.

2.3.1 Basic Characteristics of Consumers

From the survey of basic consumer characteristics (as shown in Figure 2.4), it is found that most of the consumers are young people aged 16-25, accounting for 69% of the total survey population. Among the survey population, 46% are students, who, despite mostly having no fixed income, have a high consumption capacity and significant shopping expenditure. 41% of consumers prefer shopping venues like Future City and New World Department Store, which have a comprehensive range of businesses and strong fashion appeal. This indicates that in terms of consumption preferences, most consumers favor commercial spaces with leisure and entertainment functions and fashionable personalities.
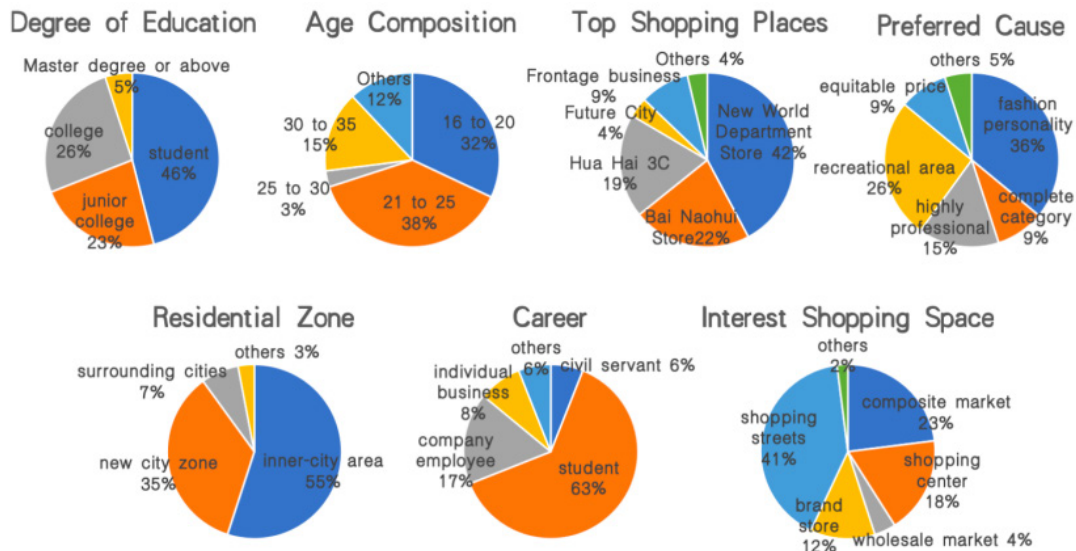

Figure 6. Analysis of Basic Consumer Attributes

2.3.2 Consumer Behavior Characteristics

To objectively describe consumer behavior characteristics, the survey team used total stay times, total consumption amounts, and per capita consumption amounts in 20 study units to reflect the static distribution and consumer spatial flow. The consumer behavior on Nanjing Road is not only about pursuing goods but also about experiencing and enjoying urban life. Huaihai Road, on the other hand, is distinguished by its high-end, elegant consumer behavior characteristics.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Development Trends of Commercial Streets

With consumption upgrading and technological progress, commercial streets in Shanghai are accelerating their transformation and exploring new models of omni-channel integration. Traditional single retail models can no longer satisfy modern consumers' needs. The integration of online and offline, smart retail, and other innovations has become new trends. By introducing smart guides, virtual fitting rooms, and unmanned retail, commercial streets have enhanced the convenience and enjoyment of the shopping experience. Moreover, commercial streets are gradually transforming into comprehensive experience zones, no longer just shopping venues but multifunctional spaces integrating leisure, entertainment, and culture.

3.2 Integration of Culture and Commerce

The integration of culture and commerce is another major trend in the development of Shanghai's commercial districts. Nanjing Road and Huaihai Road incorporate cultural elements into their commercial spaces through art exhibitions, concerts, cultural festivals, and other events. These activities not only satisfy consumers' material needs but also fulfill their spiritual and cultural desires. The fusion of culture and commerce enriches the content of commercial districts and enhances their role in urban cultural development.Through continuous innovation and efforts, Shanghai's commercial districts are poised to become leading global centers for consumption and cultural exchange, making greater contributions to the city's economic development and social progress.

References

[1] Guan,D., Li, M., Zhou, L., et al. (2024). Identification of the Spatial Expansion Characteristics and Future Evolution Simulation Analysis of the Urban Space in Chongqing's Central Urban Area. Resources and Industries, 1-16.

[2] He, J., Lu, M., Shang, Z. (2024). Functional Spatial Distribution Characteristics and Influencing Factors of Listed Companies in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Urban Agglomeration. Journal of Capital Normal University (Natural Science Edition), 1-11.

[3] Ma, S., Chen, X., Ma, J., et al. (2024). Characteristics of the Spatial Association Network and Influencing Factors of the Yangtze River Delta Urban Agglomeration Based on Ride-Hailing Trips. Tropical Geography, 1-13.