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# Design and Planning of Commercial Streets with Cultural Attraction Theme

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Design and Planning of Commercial Streets in Beijing  
with Cultural Attraction Theme

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## ABSTRACT

As a major attraction of tourism and recreation, commercial streets are common gathering places in urban life, offering a constellation of goods, sightseeing and entertainment. According to McKinsey team, history, unique of landscape and business models are key elements that influence the formation of commercial streets. In this paper, I will develop two case studies about Wangfujing Street and Qianmen Dajie Street in Beijing to further demonstrate the importance of those elements. Around those key elements, historical features will be my research focus for the uniqueness of Beijing as an ancient capital of China. Based on the data collected from my case studies, I intend to show that historical features are one of the most influential elements in the formation of a commercial street in Beijing. I also argue that the lack of historic preservation may hamper the development of an already crowded commercial street in the long run.

Key Words: commercial streets, formation, historical features, Beijing

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Commerce in China has a long glorious history. A market occurs when people gathered in the same place to trade or barter. The gathering itself guarantees sufficient competition takes place in markets. Markets integrate new stores and booths that are economically efficient and drive out outdated stores that failed to catch the trends. The two principal factors that shape a certain market place are location and the economical niche. Some markets evolve into complex commercial streets that offer a constellation of goods, sightseeing and entertainment. Different from a simple market place, commercial streets are not easily substitutable with online or mail order shopping since people use commercial streets for recreation, tourism and meeting.

China's tourism has gained its popularity since the Northern Song Dynasty. From ancient time, commercial streets have had been the most active, colorful and attractive public spaces in Chinese urban life. With the development of modern economy and culture, tourism now becomes an indispensable leisure for everybody. The World Tourism Organization predicts, by 2020, China will become the flagship travel destination. With continuous development and improvement of tourism, a commercial street needs to be an integrated tourist site with a large carrying capacity of crowd. Location and theme of a commercial street are the most primary considerations in its planning. Most locations would be places with historical remains that represent a combination of context, places and business.

The modern constructions of newer commercial streets begin from early 1990s. The design often related to culture, environmental protection and humanization. Assembled with a group of fancy restaurants, modern cinemas and historic attractions, the old image of commercial streets to be a sheer destination of shopping is fading away. Now, more and more commercial streets are turning into a combination of tourist attraction and recreation. In this paper, I will use questionnaire to determine what is the reason why people come to commercial streets in Beijing. I also intend to show that the historic scenic is the major

attraction for visitors.

## **1.2 The Significance of the Topic**

Nowadays, it is an unprecedented challenge for any small business to keep their physical storefronts and make a profit continuously in a world changing so rapidly. Especially when their products and services are not distinguishable from their online competitors', which is more and more often the case. Considering a commercial street's probably ascending rent curve, owners of small traditional stores are even more vulnerable in a free market competition with their online competitors all over the world. Hence, some small businesses may find themselves forced to close on commercial streets. Different from small business, the pressure comes from increasing rents is relative low for high-end or luxury stores. Because in comparison with the cost of designing and advertising, rent and other operational cost are often only a small portion of their revenues. Also, luxury stores often feel less pressured from their online competitors since the unique experience of a luxury brand and other values added comes with the brand are hard to be substituted. Therefore, an expensive commercial street becomes a desirable location for those luxury stores. In sum, a well-positioned commercial street develops in a virtuous circle by ejecting low-end stores and attracting high-end stores. Therefore, it is possible to turn a street into a high quality-shopping district under desirable conditions.

As shopping is often the most common leisure experience that people indulge in, it is a primary consideration for planners of a commercial street to focus more on refining its landscape and widening the choices of entertainment it provides. As suggested by the McKinsey team, the six key elements that influence the formation of commercial streets are history, unique landscape and business models, multiple functions, constantly updated pillar business, convenient infrastructure and a good environment, and vigorously promoting of the development of neighborhood management organization. Detailed as it is, however, the McKinsey team mixed the more fundamental factors, such as location and economic niche with the more advanced factors such as good environment together. A successful commercial street must have already been successful in the choice of its location and the position of its economical niche. Therefore, in planning an already developed commercial street, we should pay more attention on the more advanced factors such as history, unique landscape and environment. Therefore, I intend to discuss and

apply mainly those elements in this paper into the analysis of commercial streets in Beijing, China.

This paper will develop two case studies focusing on Wangfujing Street and Qianmen Dajie Street in Beijing to examine the role culture and history play in forming a commercial street. In a desirable situation, construction and protection of the historic scenic should promote the development of a commercial street. However, in some cases, a systemic mismatch in the optimization of short-term profit and long-term profit occurs. Under this situation, willfully cutting the budget of the preservation and remedy of a commercial street's historic scenic might bring a limited short-term profit and the customer flow seems unhampered. Wangfujing Street can be an exact example of this situation. To avoid the protecting of historic scenic seems to be the best choice for storeowners in Wangfujing Street. However, I am trying to illustrate through the paper and the field studies that customer volume might be constant in a short period of time even the historic scenic is irreversibly damaged. Yet the truly changing variable is the willing of customers to revisit a commercial street in the future. I intend to argue that the pursuing of short-term profit might be extremely dangerous to the long-term development of Wangfujing Street. In comparison to Wangfujing Street, I also argue that the strategy that planners of Qianmen Dajie Street took is more sustainable.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

Case studies of commercial streets in China focused on perspective-diversified trend, including position of commercial streets, image design, landscape support, features and marketing. Among them, the McKinsey team compared nine famous commercial streets around the world in the planning of Nanjing Road reconstruction project. They summarized six key elements that influence the formation of commercial streets, which are history, unique landscape and business models, multiple functions, constantly updated pillar businesses, convenient infrastructure and a good environment, and vigorously promote the development of neighborhood management organization. Li Fei (2003) summed up the mall proper length, width and position of the three high latitude quantitative data, as well as position of target customers and characteristics of commercial streets; Wugui Fu (2004) did a field survey on the consumers ratio distribution after the open of Hangzhou Hefang street; Zhao Hang (2005) formatted the first quantitative study based on a questionnaire, which shows that people's aspirations for a commercial street

function is a leisure, entertainment and emotional needs.

One of the most comprehensive studies was “The definition, features and categories of commercial streets” (2009), which included full-featured, variety, division, environment and customer services. In studying the commercial streets of China’s southern cities, Gang Wei and Zhaohui Jiang (2013) were able to determine spatial characteristics of commercial streets in Suzhou, including internal and external differences. An update of the China’s southern cities study by Ying Chen (2010) showed that natural landscape, cultural landscape, regional culture, spirit of place and local orders should be considered as factors of commercial streets. The characteristics of commercial streets were also reported in a study of Istanbul, Turkey (Fatih, Hasan and Vedia, 2006). They found that spatial distribution of commercial streets is the other feature for people to think about. Studying a Japanese city, Taketo Naoi(2009) explored approaches and methods to investigate visitors’ evaluation of historical districts. This study is expected to help tourism managers who seek to match the features of such district with visitor’ demands, particularly in consideration of the results showing mixed feelings on contrived elements in historical districts. Commercial studies of other cities include those for Tokyo (Taketo, David, Shoji and Outi, 2007), Sydney (Eddie, Heng and Ling, 2007), and New York (Sallie and Ali, 2001). Some studies have quantified designing and planning of commercial streets less comprehensively than others. Huang (2006) believed that market positioning is the most cure feature instead of over-reliance on the culture. Collectively these commercial streets studies provide a quantitative appraisal of the difference ways that designing and planning of commercial streets are changing worldwide.

## **1.4 Methodology**

At first, this paper uses historical methods to study commercial streets under cultural attraction theme, analyzing how commercial streets developed and comparing a variety of quantitative and qualitative indicators. I will start by describing the main features and the factors of development of the commercial streets during several periods. This paper also analyzes historical development of commercial streets to better understand development trends. The analysis and comparison of the history of commercial streets is helpful. It will lead designers to a more strategic thinking of the development of commercial streets from a more



holistic perspective.

In order to figure out the reasons why people come to a certain commercial street, I will carry out a field study in two of the major commercial streets in Beijing, the Wangfujing Street and the Qianmen Dajie Street. Wangfujing Street once was one of the most popular commercial streets in Beijing; however, it is losing its old time glory in comparing with other modern commercial streets nowadays. Qianmen Dajie Street, with a history can be traced to 1800, is the most ancient commercial street with typical landscape of old Beijing. With the renovation accomplished in 2008 and the restoring of tram traffic, Qianmen Dajie Street, however, is still the most favored commercial street in Beijing.

The differences between these two streets can be explained by different strategies adopted by their planners toward the preservation of historic scenic. To further explore the underlying reasons, I carried out an interview toward 100 randomly selected customers in each of the two streets. Interview questions are related to nine features or factors, including consumer constitution, commercial activities, business theme, streets form, human scale, architectural design, soft surfaces, landscape sketch and logo design. I conducted short interviews with visitors with the following questions:

1. Do you often go to commercial streets in Beijing?
2. Have you ever been to Qianmen Dajie Street and Wangfujing Street in Beijing?
3. What do you think of these two streets?
4. How satisfied are you with Qianmen Dajie Street and Wangfujing Street in Beijing?
5. What is the purpose for visiting commercial streets in Beijing?
6. What is the most attractive element of the commercial streets?

After interviewing visitors in each commercial street, I intend to interview people involved with the design and management of the streets. Zhi Dou, the vice president of Beijing Institute of Architectural Design who involved in the reconstruction of many commercial streets in Beijing and Fei Li, a professor of School of Economics and Management in Tsinghua University, most of whose research fields are positioning strategy management and retail strategy management. I conducted short interviews with Zhi Dou and Fei Li with the following questions:

1. What features do you think are the main part of a commercial street in Beijing?
2. What improvement do you think is needed of a commercial street in Beijing?
3. In order to attract more people, what features do you think can be the core attraction in Beijing during your planning/designing?

4. What impersonality index do you think measures vitality of a commercial street in Beijing?
5. What factors do you think would restrict vitality of a commercial street in Beijing?

Besides interviews, a survey of customer satisfaction will be hold. The survey of consumer demand mainly adopt structured questionnaire. Questionnaire answers using Likert (R. A. Likert) seven scaling method, from strongly agree to strong disagree, indicated by score 1 to 7. The questionnaire will be statistically analyzed. According to the result from Nunally's research (Nunally, 1967), the sample size should be at least ten times of survey questions. Taking into account the people flow of commercial streets, the number of samples for investigation is 100. All surveys will be random selected and spot filled. Basically, the question in our questionnaire will be coving the following 5 parts. First, I require interviewees' basic information, including their age and gender. Second, I will examine whether people come to the commercial street mainly for sightseeing. For those who come for sightseeing, I will further test whether the major attraction of the given commercial street is its historic scenic. Then, a question related customer satisfaction would be given. Finally, I will test the willingness of customers to revisit the given commercial street in the future.

I asked this question mainly because I am expecting a mismatch in the customers' satisfaction and willingness to revisit of the two commercial streets. The mismatch can be explained by the lack of market competition. Also, there are a lot of other reasons that people may revisit a commercial street even though they are not satisfy with it. A commercial street may be geographical unique that no available substitute can be found in a short period of time. People might be psychological accustomed to a commercial street even though they are not satisfy with it. In sum, sometimes the willingness to revisit a commercial street can be a better index of the popularity of a commercial street than customer volume. This is why I am collecting the data of willingness to revisit as a key statistical index. I will be using STATA to deal all of those data. A linear regression model on the rate of revisit and customer satisfaction will be given after all required data collected. The questions of survey will be hold as follows:

1. Please provide your age
2. Please provide your gender
3. How much do you agree that sightseeing is your major reason to come to this street with? (1-7 scale, from no opinion to strongly agree)
4. How much do you agree that history scene is the major attraction of this street

for your sightseeing? (1-7 scale, from no opinion to strongly agree)

5. How much do you satisfied with this commercial street? (1-7 scale, from strongly unsatisfied to strongly satisfied, 4 is neutral)

6. Are you willing to revisit this commercial street in the future? (1-7 scale, from strongly unwilling to strongly willing, 4 is neutral)

7. If you are willing to revisit this commercial street, can you specific the reason?

Through two case studies in Beijing, Wangfujing Street and Qianmen Dajie Street, several conclusions about designing and planning problems of commercial streets will be shown up. Then this paper will elaborate core spirit of commercial streets, and analyze features from cultural level. Summarize methods of design and plan from micro perspective.

## CHAPTER TWO: CASE STUDY

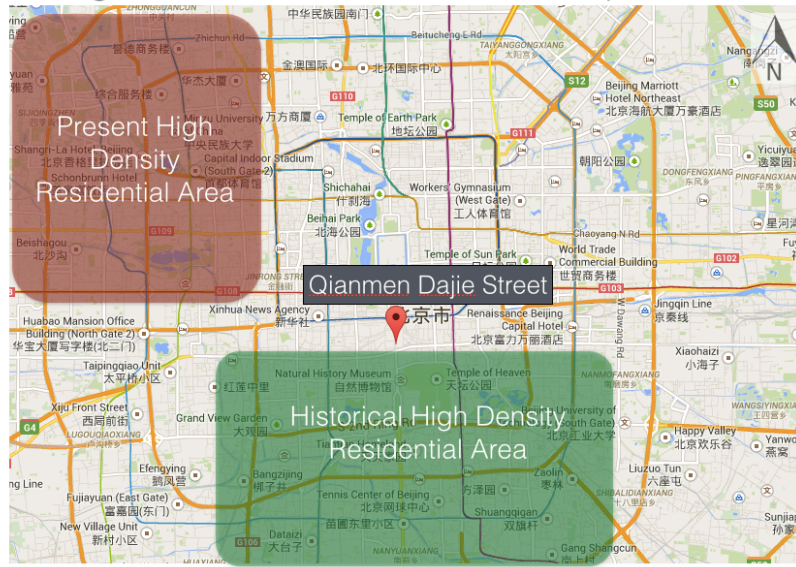
### 2.1 Qianmen Dajie Street

The famous Qing Dynasty style pedestrian street, Qianmen Dajie Street, is located at the central axis of the city, runs from Jianlou all the way down to the Temple of Heaven Park in the south (Figure 1&2).

Figure 1: The location of Qianmen Dajie Street



Figure 2: The Location of Qianmen Dajie Street



It is 840 meters (about 0.53 miles) in length and 21 meters (about 23 yards) in width, after the renovation. Not so spacious as Wangfujing Street, Changan jie Street or other famous walking streets in Beijing.

### 2.1.1 History of Qihanmen Dajie Street

Qianmen Dajie Street is one of the oldest and most famous commercial streets with



a more than 600 years old history in Beijing. From Ming Dynasty, Qianmen Dajie Street has already been a destination of shopping. Because of its convenient position in the capital city and its adjacent high density residential area, specialized outlets gathered on each side of the street, such as meat market, cloth market, jewelry market as well as many craftsman workshops, warehouses and theatres. After the Temple of Heaven built for the Emperors' annual praying for good harvest, Qianmen Dajie Street became the imperial path to the annual worship ceremony, which further boosts the prosperity of this district. During the subsequent Qing Dynasty, Qianmen Dajie Street became the perfect place for commercial activity since it located at the central of the city, with high-density residential area surrounded. It was very convenient for both aristocrats lived in the imperial city and normal people lived in the southern part of Beijing to come for shopping and entertaining. Many theatres of Peking Opera, teahouse and restaurants moved into this street, contributed to an assembly place of time honored shops. (Figure 3)

However, at the last years of Qing Dynasty, with the expansion of Beijing in the scale of its geography size as well as its population. Qianmen Dajie Street is no longer the most accessible area for citizens in Beijing. People found it less convenient in compare with Xidan—a new rising shopping center in Beijing and Wangfujing Street. Qianmen Dajie Street gradually lost its old time glory. Till the time of 1970s, only a few of the old brands were still operating their shops in Qianmen Dajie. To stimulate local economy, Qianmen Dajie Street was facing a large-scaled reconstruction on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The street was rebuilt as it was in the 1920s, when it was extremely prosperous (Travelchinaguide, 2007). After a year of protection and repair, this landmark commercial street reopened with “old” design style and features in a day before 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony. (Figure 4)



Qianmen Dajie Street nowadays is a gathering place of old Chinese famous brands, such as Quanjude Roast Duck Restaurant, Tongrentang as well as foreign brands like ZARA and H&M.

### **2.1.2 Problems of Qianmen Dajie Street**

Throughout history, convenience is always a key feature to lead Qianmen Dajie Street to its prosperity. With the vicinity to be high-density residential area, Qianmen Dajie Street can be a carrier of local folk customs. Vendors of sugar-coated haws on a stick---a popular traditional snack, vaudevilles and street performers constituted the night life of Qianmen Dajie as a important kind of folk customs. This also explains why the busiest hour of Qianmen Dajie Street is during night. Since only during night comes street performers and peddlers in streets. However, if the adjacent residential area were obsoleted, or even a little declined in popularity, the prosperity of Qianmen Dajie Street can be hampered. Actually, Qianmendajie Street has showed an image of cold and deserted. In another word, this street is very sensitive to the population of its adjacent area. Now, as the surrounding area of Qianmen Dajie Street is no longer a major residential area in Beijing, 25% of shops in Qianmen Dajie are under stress of closing their business according to a report in 2013. Even KFC claimed their total income is only 1/5 of other KFCs in other commercial streets. For some central old shops in Qianmen Dajie like Ruifuxiang cloth store, and Zhangyiyuan tea store, the situation is even more serious. 27 of 110 stores in Qianmen Dajie have already been closed, more are consider closing.

The causes of their closing may be complicated. Yet the most important one has to be it's unclear positioning in economy niche. The location and overall layout of Qianmen Dajie is not desirable for a modern shopping street. However, planners still design this street as one in the reconstruction in 2008. 110 stores are in business in this street. However, only 20% among them are original historical stores as shown in the following figure. (Figure 5)

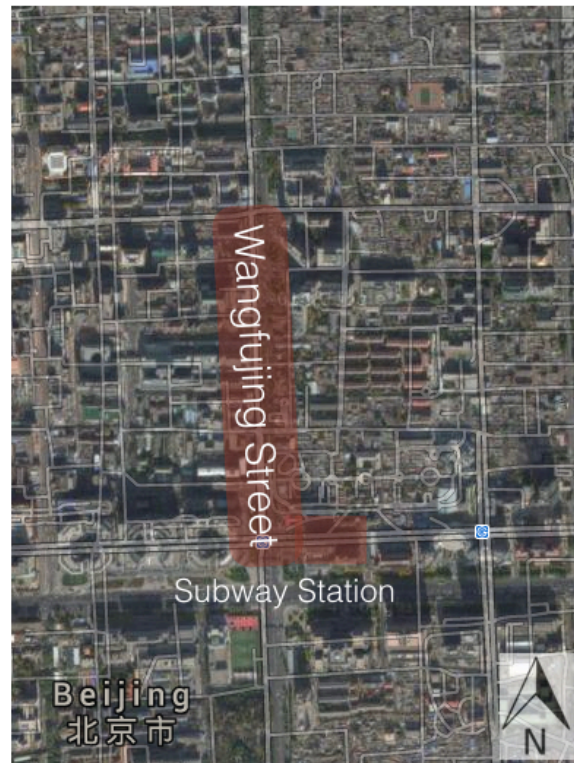




Modern stores in Qianmen Dajie are identical as in other shopping streets in Beijing. Those 25% old stores are also less competitive in the variety of their service and price of their product in comparing with their competitors from Internet. Therefore, Qianmen Dajie is not an ideal commercial street as planners planned it to be. However, Qianmen Dajie does keep the role of a carrier of local folk customs. After the reconstruction of 2008, booths in Qianmen Dajie open business longer till midnight. The refined street square attracted more people to celebrate lantern festival and other traditional Chinese festival in this street. Therefore, I will discuss the possibility of Qianmen Dajie as a destination of sightseeing and a showcase of the history of Beijing rather than a normal shopping street in the following chapter.

## 2.2 Wangfujing Street

Wangfujing is one of the famous local commercial streets and night market in Beijing, located in Dongcheng District. It starts with the East Chang'an Avenue in the south and ends with China Art Gallery in the north (Travelchinaguide, 2007). This commercial street is 810 meters (0.5 miles) long and 40 meters (43.7 yards) wide. (Figure 6)



### 2.2.1 History of Wangfujing Street

The famous commercial street Wangfujing Street can be retraced to mid Qing Dynasty. 1900, Wangfujing Street and its adjacent Dongjiao Minxiang Street became the center of the consular section in Beijing. Many shops that directly serve for foreigners appeared in those two streets. In 1930s, Wangfujing Street became one of the most top-ranking commercial streets in China. People from nationwide came to this street for shopping. After Wangfujing Street had being reformed into a walking street in 1999, remarkably more people came to this street. Nowadays, its daily



visitors flow reached 600 thousand, 1200 thousand during holidays. Having the highest merchandise and service quality, combining with convenient public transit at present, Wangfujing Street became the most popular commercial street in Beijing. Century-old brands such as Tongshenghe Shoe Shop, Shengxifu Hat Heritage Museum, Ruifuxiang Silk and Leather Store, Beijing Hotel and modern international big brands as LV, Herms and etc. are all full of live in Wangfujing Street.

## **2.2.2 Features and problems of Wangfujing Street**

“Diversity” is the most precise word to describe Wangfujing Street. From the old traditional tailor shop to the most fashioned luxury brands, from reasonable priced local handicraft shops to high-end fine arts, whatever you want, you can find in Wangfujing Street. From as small as French cosmetics to as large as American full sized SUVs, it is diversity make Wangfujing Street the most popular shopping street in China. There is an old saying about this street in China: “Buy from all over the nation, sell to all over the nation.”

“Fashion” is another key word of Wangfujing Street. Customers and its merchandises of a commercial street are often indicators of local fashion or custom. Over 100 world-renowned luxury brands have their franchises in Wangfujing Street, many of which are their only shop in China. Also, According to my research, customers aged from 15 to 24 are 48% from the total. From the percentage of its young customers, it’s reasonable to guess that Wangfujing Street is rather fashioned.

However, a few problems laid in the seemingly prosperous image of Wangfujing Street. First, many historical building were damaged or demolished during the World War 2 and the following civil war. Even for the remaining historical building, lacking of properly protection in decades and the over-modernization of those historical building during the transforming into walking street make it nearly impossible to trace the original looks of those buildings. Therefore, Wangfujing Street became a historical street without any attraction of history. It is just another modern fashioned commercial street. You cannot even tell is it in Beijing, Tokyo or New York from the buildings and shopping malls in this street. Lacking of the uniqueness is the first problem. Second, the functional partitioning in Wangfujing Street is very vague. Unlike the most of other world-renowned commercial streets such as Champs Elysees in Paris or the Fifth Avenue in New York, which itself is a good place for wandering around, having a cup of coffee while chatting with one or

two friends, there is not much to do in Wangfujing Street besides shopping. According to a research in 1999, the shopping space in Wangfujing Street is 85% of its total space, while this portion only be 30% in Champs Elysees, Paris and 40% in Ginza, Tokyo. According to modern theory of commercial streets designing, the range of portion of the shopping space in a successful shopping street should be around 30% to 40%. Without doubt, the portion of shopping area in Wangfujing Street is too high under this standard. Furthermore, as suggested by the McKinsey team, the six key elements that influence the formation of commercial streets are history, unique landscape and business models, multiple functions, constantly updated pillar business, convenient infrastructure and a good environment, and vigorously promoting of the development of neighborhood management organization. Multiple functionality, convenient infrastructure and good environment are always the key features of Wangfujing Street. However, Wangfujing Street failed to provide with enough entertainment options and a good historical scenic shopping environment to customers. Under the pursuing of short-term profit, planners and shop owners of Wangfujing Street often ignore the need or willfully cutting the budget of the preservation and remedy of its historic scenic. This act may not hamper short-term profit since as a leading shopping street; there is no substitute for Wangfujing Street for now. However, with the development of online shopping and other shopping malls in Beijing, the competitive advantage of Wangfujing Street is shrinking. As discussed in the first chapter, there is a virtuous cycle in the development of commercial streets. Commercial streets eliminate outdated stories spontaneously through competition. This process enhances the presence of high-end luxury stories and reduces the portion of lower-end stories. This is exactly what happened in Wangfujing Street and the McKinsey team sums up as vigorously promoting of the development of neighborhood management organization. The process spontaneously promotes the neighborhood into a more mature commercial street. Yet it may not spontaneously towards a street with better history preservation and culture inheriting. Sometimes there is a gap between the pursuing of short-term profit and the long-term interests of Wangfujing Street's history inheriting and preservation. History preservation can only be possible with planners' attention rather than spontaneously market behavior.

## **2.3 Comparison of Two Commercial Streets**

The following table is the comparison between Qianmen Dajie Street and Wangfujing Street (Table 1). Besides their roughly equal geography sizes

(Wangfujing Dajie is 30 meters shorter in length and 19 meters wider), both of the two streets have a history beyond 600 years. However, there are huge differences in customer flow per day and average spending per person. Qianmen Dajie Street, as one of the best shopping street in China, has an amazingly huge 18,000 to 100,000 -customer flow per day and an average spending per person of 225 dollars according a recent research. Those indicators reflected the success of Wangfujing Street as a shopping destination. Qianmen Dajie Street, however, is not so popular as Wangfujing Dajie is, the customer flow per day is merely 600,000 to 1,200,000 and the average spending is only 70 to 100 RMB per person according to the data from China's National Tourism Administration. The fact is, Qianmen Dajie Street has already been on its downhill. A recently data shows, 30 out of the total 110 stores in Qianmen Dajie Street has already closed for business. A discussion of another newer transformation or renovation of Qianmen Dajie Street is going intensely those days. I will try to argue that history and culture feature are the most important features to boost the development of Qianmen Dajie Street in the next chapter.

Table 1: the comparison between Qianmen Dajie Street and Wangfujing Street

	Qianmen Dajie Street	Wangfujing Street
Street Length	840 meters	810 meters
Street Width	21 meters	40 meters
History	more than 600 years	around 700 years
Customer Flow per Day	18,000 to 100,000	600,000 to 1,200,000
Average Spending per Person	70-100 RMB (around 11-16 US dollar)	225 RMB (around 37 US dollar)

# CHAPTER THREE: INTERVIEW AND SURVEY

## 3.1 Interview

I interviewed people who involved with the design and management of the streets. Zhi Dou, the vice president of Beijing Institute of Architectural Design who involved in the reconstruction of many commercial streets in Beijing and Fei Li, a professor of School of Economics and Management in Tsinghua University, most of whose research fields are positioning strategy management and retail strategy management. I conducted short interviews with Zhi Dou and Fei Li with the following questions:

1. What features do you think are the main part of a commercial street in Beijing?
2. What improvement do you think is needed of a commercial street in Beijing?
3. In order to attract more people, what features do you think can be the core attraction in Beijing during your planning/designing?
4. What impersonality index do you think measures vitality of a commercial street in Beijing?
5. What factors do you think would restrict vitality of a commercial street in Beijing?

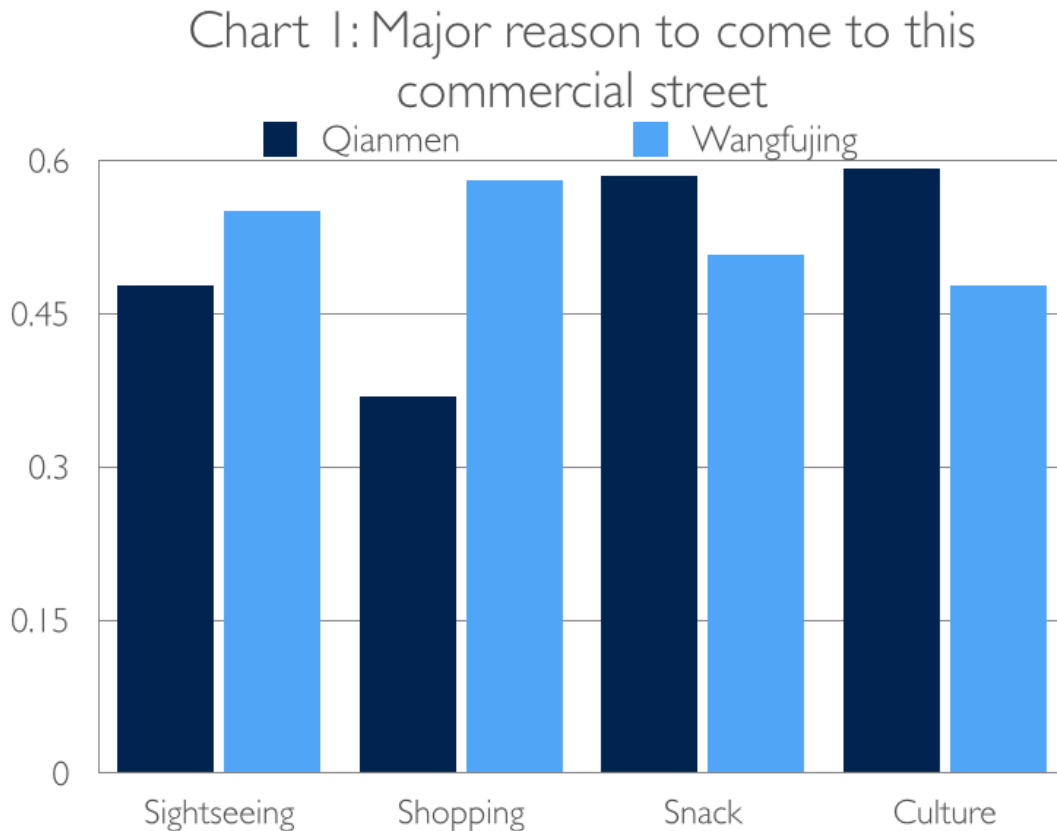
Both the two experts agree with that the modern commercial streets do not just focus on lifestyle and spiritual needs of modern people. The more important is to display the history, cultural heritage and outstanding features, which is also the key to revitalize both Qianmen Dajie Street and Wangfujing Street. Professor Li Fei believed that due to different views of study, we might achieve variety of research results. However, in order to reach a consensus, we need to back to the most basic constitute features of commercial streets. Commercial streets are defined as an area where retail stores agglomerated. Both suppliers and consumers can trade their goods or services under management. This definition give us the research foundation of basic constitute features of commercial streets, including subject form and object form and their transaction behavior. Subject form represents consumers, suppliers and managers; object form represents space form, including location, scale and landscape, and time form, including history and culture of a commercial street.

### 3.2 Survey

I randomly gave out questionnaires to 130 customers at Qianmen Dajie Street and 69 questionnaires at Wangfujing Street during the same period of time. On each of these questionnaires I asked those customers mainly the following questions:

1. What is the your major reasons to come to this commercial street? (Multiply choices from Sightseeing, Shopping and Recreation, Snacks, and getting to know of traditional Beijing culture.)
2. How much do you agree that history scene is the major attraction of this street for your sightseeing? (1-7 scale, from no opinion to strongly agree)
3. How much do you satisfied with this commercial street? (1-7 scale, from strongly unsatisfied to strongly satisfied, 4 is neutral)
4. Are you willing to revisit this commercial street in the future? (1-7 scale, from strongly unwilling to strongly willing, 4 is neutral)
5. Do you live in Beijing?

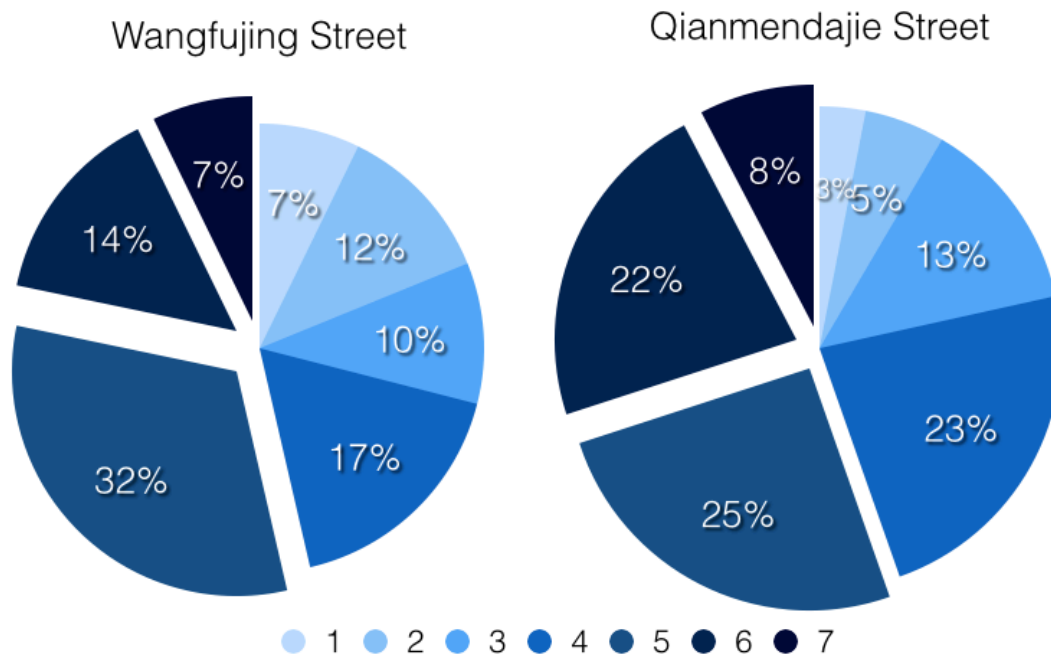
And the survey results are showing as bellow.



As shown above in chart 1, according to questionnaires we received, the result of

first question --- your major reason to come to this street, shows that people found Qianmen Dajie Street less attractive in shopping while Wangfujing Street less attractive in Culture. This result proves our argument in chapter 2 that Qianmen Dajie Street is losing its competitiveness in shopping due to its inconvenient location while Wangfujing Street is lack of uniqueness. Besides from shopping, the second major reason of coming to Wangfujing Street is sightseeing. It means being a destination of sightseeing or recreation is an important function of Wangfujing Street. Thus, planners of Wangfujing Street should enhance the recreation function of this street as we discussed in the chapter 2. As for Qianmen Dajie Street, snack and culture is its relative strength. Therefore, it is reasonable to say the economical niche for Qianmen Dajie is a historical street combined with history display and local unique snacks. Planners of Qianmen Dajie should consider more of enhancing its strength in sightseeing and history showcase. More investment on the shopping environment of Qianmen Dajie could be considered unnecessary.

Chart 2: How much do you agree that history scene is the major attraction of this street for your sightseeing? (1-7 scale, from no opinion to strongly agree)

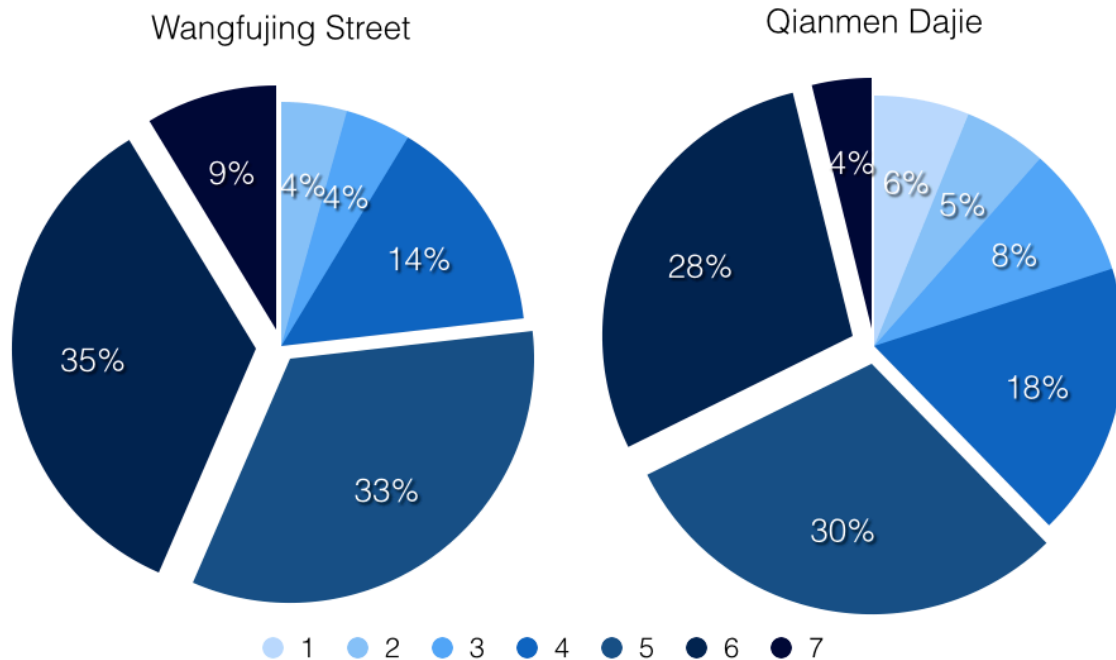


In question 2, I asked how much do you agree that history scene is the major attraction of this street for your sightseeing? (1-7 scale, from no opinion to strongly agree) (Chart 2) We can clearly see that more people strongly agree that history scene is the major attraction of Qianmen Dajie Street. This is not unexpected since

we already know that Qianmen Dajie Street is a tourism attraction rather than a shopping street. However, for Wangfujing Dajie, it seems still quite significant to keep a neat unique history scene for its success. And as we just discussed in Chapter 2, one of the problems of Wangfujing Dajie is the lack of uniqueness. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that planers of Wangfujing Street should really consider more on the preservation of historical scene and the creation of new interesting point in Wangfujing Street.

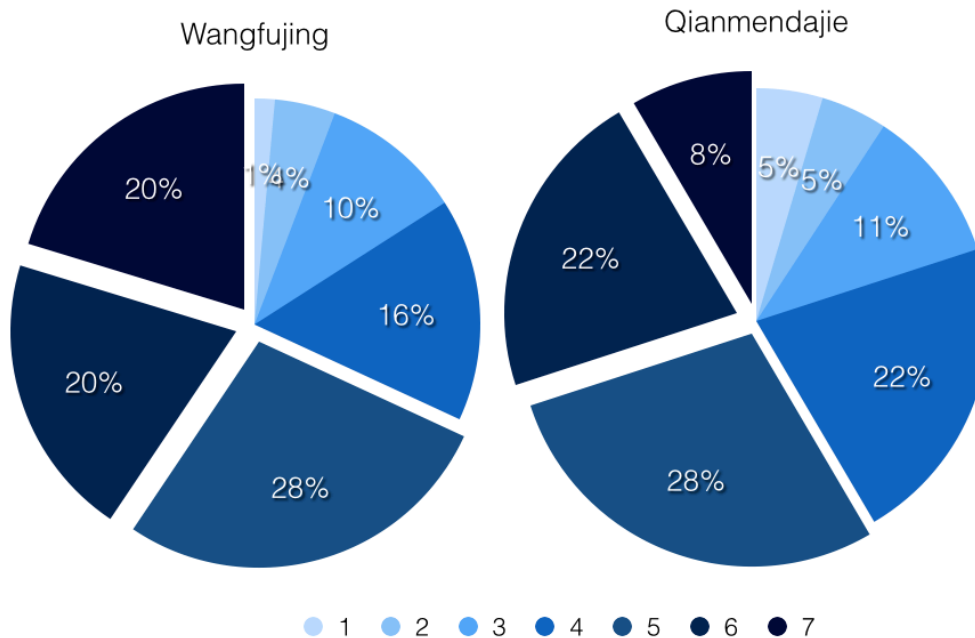
An astonishing fact is Quite a lot people found Wangfujing Street and Qianmen Dajie Street very satisfying and they are willing to revisit those streets. From the chart below (Chart 3), we can see that 44% people rated Wangfujing Street 6 or 7 points and 32% people rated Qianmen Dajie Street 6 or 7 points. Overall, interviewees are satisfied with those two streets.

Chart 3: How much do you satisfied with this commercial street?  
(1-7 scale, from strongly unsatisfied to strongly satisfied, 4 is neutral)



The following chart showed interviewees willingness to revisit those two streets. The percentage of revisiting Wangfujing Street is a little higher (Chart 4). The result is similar as in chart 3.

Chart 4: Are you willing to revisit this commercial street in the future?  
 (1-7 scale, from strongly unwilling to strongly willing, 4 is neutral)

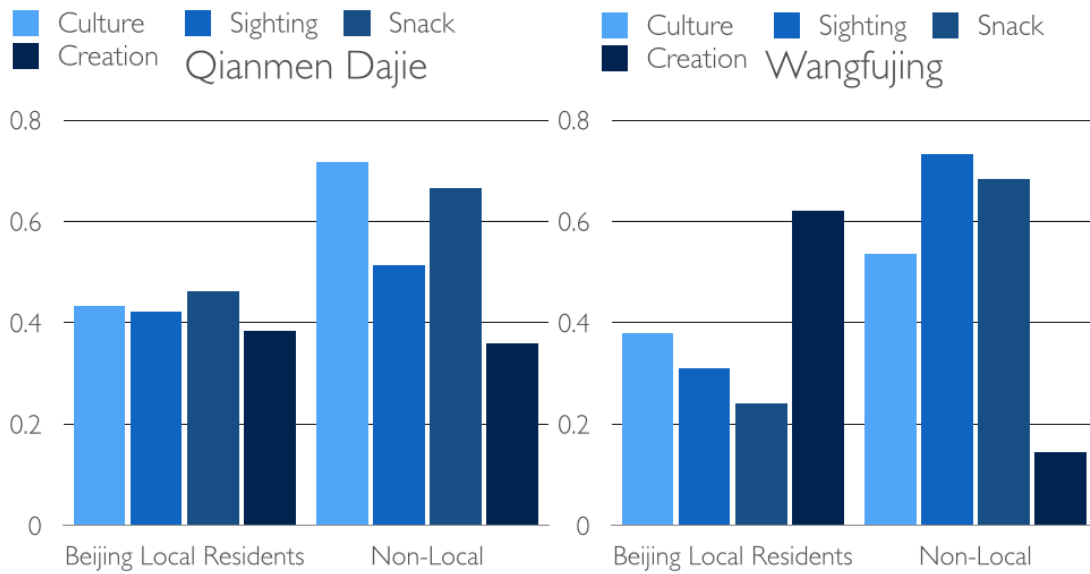


### 3.3 Crossover Analysis

I will use Crossover Analysis to further explore the result of our questionnaires. A Crossover Analysis is to use the different choices of one question as a variable to list a two-way table to show the correlation of the result of one question in questionnaires to another. A fact interested me is the gap between people who lives in Beijing or not. If we use whether living in Beijing as a variable, we can produce a crossover analysis. The result is very illustrative (Chart 5).

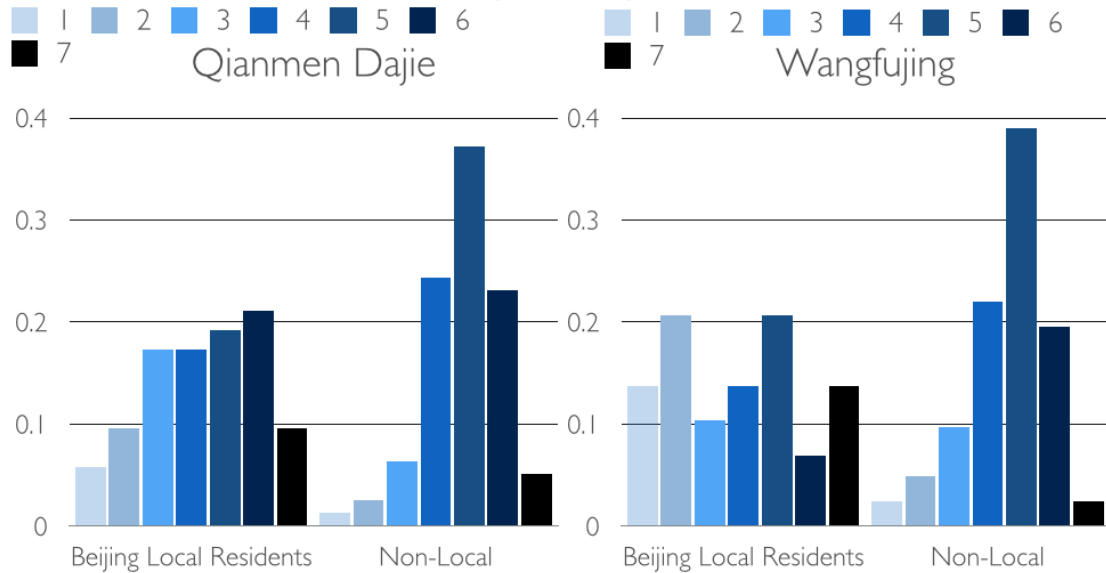


Chart 5: Crossover Analysis of Question 1: Your major reason to come to this Commercial Street



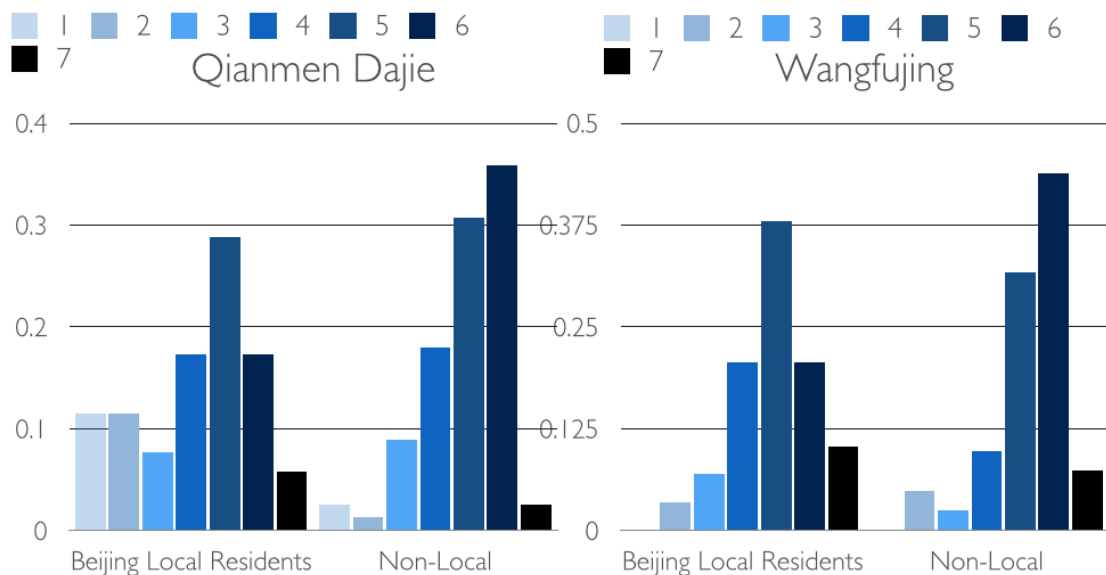
As shown above, people who lived in Beijing found snacks to be their major reason to visit Qianmen Dajie Street. However, for people who from outside of Beijing, culture attraction was obviously the No.1 reason of their visit. As to Wangfujing Street, the chasm of their choice was even more obvious. For people who lived in Beijing, creation was of no question their major reason to visit Wangfujing Street. Only 30% people found sighting to be attractive in Wangfujing Street, which is quite reasonable, as we have discussed in chapter 2 that the lack of uniqueness made Wangfujing Street less attractive in sightseeing. However, for people from other province, sighting and snacks are still the top reasons for their visit. The difference is remarkable, as we consider the fact that the numbers of visitors from Beijing and outside Beijing are 50: 50. This is to say; the need of people lived in Beijing or not is so different that we have to consider the both two groups of people respectively.

Chart 6: Crossover Analysis of Question 2: How much do you agree that history scene is the major attraction of this street for your sightseeing?



The difference in Question 2 is still significant. (Chart 6) For people from outside of Beijing, history factor is definitely the No. 1 reason of their visit. Yet for citizens of Beijing, it is important, but not too important.

Chart 7: Crossover Analysis of Question 3: How do you satisfied with the Commercial Street



Again, when asked about their satisfaction about the two streets, people from other

provinces rated those two streets higher than local people (Chart 7).

This chasm of satisfaction is also reported in Yunzhi Nong's report in 2004. Based on his field survey of 760 customers, the non-local customers' satisfaction rate of Wangfujing Street is 0.81, higher than Beijing Residents' (0.74). Also, non-local customers spend twice the money in this street than local customers. In his study, 48% non-local customers come to Wangfujing Dajie Street for sightseeing, while for local customers; the rate is only 13%. He then summed up that for local residents, the prime role of Wangfujing Street is a place of recreation, while for non-local customers; this street is a major destination of sightseeing.

This kind of difference can be explained as the difference of their needs when visiting a commercial street. For travelers from outside of Beijing, everything in Beijing is unfamiliar and fresh. They are willing to and mentally prepared to appreciate the shortcomings of those two streets. Everything they encountered can be treated as special travel memories. Therefore sometimes the inconvenient of location and transportation of Qianmen Dajie and the lack of entertainment facilities in Wangfujing can be more tolerable for them. However, for Beijing's residence, because they have had been very familiar with those streets and their culture and history behind, they emphasize shortcomings of those street, heighten their expectation, and ignore what other customers may find fresh and novel.

### **3.4 Conclusions and Applications**

- Problems of Qianmen Dajie Street

Shen Xin, a professor in Beijing Architecture Academy pointed in his article that Qianmen Dajie Street is in lack of commercial atmosphere in 3 reasons. First, old brands in Qianmen Dajie are very rare. People come to this street in hoping to find something unique with history heritage of Beijing Culture. However, among 71% of domestic stories, only 14 of them are old branches. Second, stories in Qianmen Dajie Street are indistinguishable or identical with stories in other street in Beijing. Third, besides those indistinguishable domestic stories, foreigner stories are often too high end to attract customers to come to this street. The Qianmen Dajie Street's range of target customers is too narrow in comparing to other commercial street in Beijing.

As discussed in chapter two and the above paragraph, several hidden problems of

Qianmen Dajie Street may hamper the future development of this street. The first is its location. It once was the center of the whole Beijing City with second to none convenience in the whole city. At that time, Qianmen Dajie Street is more competitive than any other commercial streets in Beijing, including Wangfujing Dajie, Xidan and many others. However, with the tremendous expanding of Beijing, Qianmen Dajie Street has lost its advantage in location and convenience. It's still connected to Chang'an Ave, which is the longest avenue in Beijing and the central axis from west to east, and Beijing Metro line 2. However, the most important road transportation pathway from west to east has already changed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ringway, which located in the far south of Qianmen Dajie Street. Furthermore, the residential area with highest density in Beijing has changed from East District, which Qianmen Dajie Street located in, to the West District. Those two factors hindered the opportunity of Qianmen Dajie Street to be successful as a shopping street. In fact, business in Qianmen Dajie has had already been on its downhill. 25% of shops in Qianmen Dajie are under stress of closing their business according to a report in 2013. 27 of total 110 central old shops had already closed their business on Qianmen Dajie. Also, according to my field survey, shopping is the least major reason of people to come to Qianmen Dajie street. A virtuous circle of the development of commercial streets has not occurred on Qianmen Dajie. Shops in Qianmen Dajie mainly are those inexpensive mainstream bands. No luxury bands move in this street nor boutique old stories neither. In sum, planners haven't found the proper niche of Qianmen Dajie in the whole economical environment of Beijing yet.

However, Qianmen Dajie Street is still competitive in sight seeing snacks, culture and history showcase. Both Beijing residence and travelers found Qianmen Dajie Street attractive in culture and snacks and rated high on this street according to my survey. But a little difference appeared in the survey that travelers found culture to be the most attractive features of Qianmen Dajie while Beijing residences prefer snacks. The reason could be that Beijing residences have already familiar with their own culture. Or Qianmen Dajie failed to serve as a carrier of dated modern local culture as well as a showcase of city history. Therefore, the only strength of Qianmen Dajie to local people can only be snacks. Sadly but true, Qianmen Dajie need a transformation very urgently if planners will not satisfy with its present role in Beijing's economical niche as only a obscure snacks street. Hence, a comprehensive strategy of Qianmen Dajie Street should concentrate more on the preservation and creation of culture scenery to enhance the role of Qianmen Dajie Street as a destination of tourism in order to enhance its competitiveness to both local people and travelers. As for the function of shopping street, planners should

accept the fact that the golden time for Qianmen Dajie Street as a central shopping street has already be gone. The 6 basic element of commercial cannot be found in Qianmen Dajie Street. Therefore, any more trails to boost the shopping function of Qianmen Dajie will come to nothing.

- Problems of Wangfujing Street

Wangfujing Street, on the other hand, is located at a more proper location; the shopping environment in Wangfujing Street is more mature. A virtuous circle of the development of commercial streets has occurred in this street. Many luxury band set branches in this street. However the lack of ingenuity and uniqueness is its shortest plate of the cask of this street. Yan Zhai's wrote in her report that: *The modern commercial pedestrian street does not just focus on the care for the lifestyle and spiritual needs of modern people. The more important is to display the history, cultural heritage and outstanding features, which is the key to revitalize Wangfujin area to be a world famous commercial street.* She then argued Wangfujing Street failed to display the history, cultural heritage as the planners and government's inability to protect history buildings and local brands in Wangfujing Street. Furthermore, she stated that the spatial structure of Wangfujing Street is very disorderd and failed to serve as a functional gathering space for recreation and entertainment. She also pointed that travelers rated high on this street yet local people found this street sometimes dull in culture attraction. Which is also my argument from my field study. Also, the only strength of Wangfujing Street for local citizens is shopping according to both Yunzhi Nong's report and my survey. Even though, local citizens still found the first major reason to come to Wangfujing Street is creation. This result is remarkable since even for a street that only has 10% to 20% of its space for recreation, the major attraction for local people is still recreation. This shows a system mismatch in the current strength of Wangfujing Street and the real demands of its customers.

Modern commercial Streets are not just a location to fulfill modern people the need of shopping and social desires. It is also a window showing the city image, history and urban life style. Commercial streets represents characteristic feature of a city and its traditional culture. As mentioned before, the percentage of shopping area in Wangfujing Street is 60% to 70% while the area of creation and history display is only 10% to 20%. Therefore, a long-term-goal for Wangfujing Street should be the rearrange of shopping area for more space of recreation and history display. The need of history element is also highlighted in the results field survey.

- Applications

My interview and survey are not only illustrative in the further planning and development of Qianmen Dajie and Wangfujing Street. More importantly, it has an instructional significance for other commercial streets planning in Beijing in the future. What I'm trying to state from the two case studies and my survey is: First, the foundational elements to planning a commercial street is its location and its niche. Is it big enough to hold a variety of shops as Wangfujing Street did? Is it convenient enough for people to access from all over the city? Is it well connected to public transit like Wangfujing Street did? Is it surrounded by high-density residential area? If we can answer all those questions with a 'Yes', we may say it can be a proper fit of a central shopping street as Wangfujing Street did. If this street is full of folk culture or historical heritages like Qianmen Dajie did. If the scale of this street was not big enough to hold modern hyper malls or its location was not connected with some main vein of the big city. Planners might forget the idea to plan this street to be a local commercial central. A carrier of folk culture or a lively night market may be a better choice. Second, after decided the economical niche of a commercial street, the second major consideration for planners is the functionality of this street. As shown in my survey, different people have different demands for a commercial street. Beijing residences asked for more space for recreation in Wangfujing Street while travelers from other province need more culture attractions. Generally, for culture streets like Qianmen Dajie, more space of culture, snacks and recreation is desirable. For shopping street like Wangfujing, the proportion of recreation should be around 30% to 40%. However, the perfect partition of functionality varies from street to street. Planners should find this partition for every different commercial street respectively. Third, a very important consideration of commercial streets planning is its uniqueness. The convenience and provided options of recreation is only the reason to go shopping. Not the reason to go to a specific street for shopping. Besides location and recreation, people need a reason to go to a specific street. Wangfujing Street might found its uniqueness as the most wide ranged shopping street in Beijing. Qianmen Dajie Street could be the best carrier of Beijing's folk culture. However, when planning a new commercial street, the uniqueness can be extremely hard to found and reached. Therefore, excessive effort of planners should be put into the consideration of newer street's uniqueness and comparative strength.

In sum, in view of the problems in the conservations and renewals of the historic commercial streets, I conclude that the development of the commercial streets should by systematically and respectively researching in environment art, analyzing the characteristics of its unique environment and economical niche and strengthening its advantaged characteristics.

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