

Research on the Differences, Causes and Solutions of Commercial Development Levels Within Cities

-Take Guangzhou, China as an Example

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Abstract: Guangzhou is a very important commercial city and commodity distribution center among the four major frontiers. Its business has been prosperous for thousands of years. Guangzhou has been a commercial capital for thousands of years, and commerce is one of its most significant urban features. However, as one of the windows through which modern China connected with the world, Guangzhou did not excel in selling imported luxury goods into China. This is not only reflected in the number of stores, but also in the sales of luxury stores. Compared with other first-tier cities in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, Guangzhou's luxury goods sales are not outstanding; even among the second-tier and first-tier provincial capital cities of Hangzhou, Chengdu and Nanjing, Guangzhou does not have the upper hand. As one of the traditional commercial centers, why does Guangzhou perform poorly in the field of luxury goods sales and fall behind? This article will analyze the current situation of Guangzhou's business development, discuss the current differences in Guangzhou's business, analyze the current problems of Guangzhou's business, propose solutions to this problem, and look forward to its future development.

Keywords: Guangzhou, luxury goods, culture

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of uneven urban commercial development is an important development issue today. Taking first-tier cities as an example, Shanghai's commercial scale ranks first in the country. Its total commercial volume is twice that of Beijing, the second-largest city, and its growth rate is also twice that of Beijing. Shanghai's retail industry development is in a leading position in terms of scale and level, playing a leading role in the country. The total retail sales of consumer goods increased from 186.528 billion yuan in 2000 to 1.183027 billion yuan in 2017, with an average annual growth rate of 11.5%. [1] It can be seen that there is a big gap between the level of commercial development in Shanghai and Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, which are also first-tier cities, and there is already a big gap between the level of commercial development between Shanghai and other cities across the country. The qualitative gap. It can be seen that the phenomenon of unbalanced urban commercial development has become very obvious and has become a social problem that we cannot ignore.

The level of urban development is mainly measured by three aspects: city size, economic and financial strength, and the level of public facilities. [2] The evaluation index system for urban business development level is determined by comprehensively evaluating the overall development status of urban business based on the three major aspects of urban consumer perspective, urban planning perspective and urban business development perspective, while adhering to the principles of establishing the indicator system. of. [3] The imbalance of urban commercial development will not only affect the driving force and efficiency of the city's overall economic development but also directly affect the quality of life, happiness and sense of gain of urban residents. When the imbalance of urban commercial development is serious, it will lead to the loss of population and capital in some cities or regions, the imbalance of urban image and culture, and other problems. At the same time, it will also make some cities become commercial centers and economic growth points, while other cities will fall into economic recession and backwardness, especially at the critical point where the country is vigorously building a national consumption center city and an international consumption center city. Since the construction of an international consumption city plays a leading role in China's overall opening-up process, it will also have a positive impact on the Asian region and "Belt and Road" partners. As well as the overall driving effect of the global market, the radiation of relevant cities will lead to the agglomeration of talents, capital, logistics, and other elements, provide global solutions for high-level consumption scenarios, and promote the formation of a high-level opening-up pattern. [4] At this time, cities the imbalance of commercial development among enterprises will continue to intensify as this policy continues to be implemented. Cities with excellent commercial development will attract talent and gather businesses with the help of policies, thereby rising step by step and even taking off, while cities with weak commercial development will lose support due to tilted policies. Therefore, in order to prevent the degree of commercial development between cities from being further increased, it is urgent to resolve the imbalance of urban commercial development. Solving this problem requires joint efforts from all parties to achieve balanced and sustainable urban commercial development through policy guidance and market regulation.

Taking Guangzhou as a case, we analyze the causes of differences in commercial development within the city, explore solutions, and promote the sustainable development of urban commerce. Next, this study will focus on discussing the current development status of Guangzhou's business, the causes of differences, current problems, and future development strategies.

2. Current Situation and Problems of Commercial Development in Guangzhou

2.1. Current Situation

2.1.1. Low-End Retail

The basis of commerce is the collection of people, goods and places. As the southern gate of China's opening up to the outside world, Guangzhou has a dense flow of people and goods, as well as countless trading markets, so it has a natural advantage in developing low-end retail.

The development of mid- to low-end retail in Guangzhou presents two characteristics. First, the market competition in mid- to low-end retail formats is fierce. Guangzhou's small and medium-sized commodity trade is prosperous, and its transaction volume and transaction volume are among the best in the country. It is an important small commodity distribution center in the country. This is related to Guangzhou's strong commercial atmosphere and profound business heritage during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. During the several hundred years of the Ming and Qing dynasties, Suzhou, located in the south of the Yangtze River, was the most prosperous city in terms of commerce. Relying on its foreign trade advantages, Guangzhou has become China's most important foreign trade port and the commercial center and largest metropolis of Guangdong. Therefore, hundreds of years of commercial

heritage are reflected in Guangzhou's current commercial development, which has contributed to the prosperity of Guangzhou's mid- to low-end retail industry.

Guangzhou's high-end retail industry is not outstanding nationwide but judging from the overall development level of its retail industry, the competitiveness of Guangzhou's retail industry is at the forefront of the country. Although it is still far behind the first group cities of Beijing and Shanghai, it must be at the forefront. [5]

Second, the number of mid- to low-end retail formats is growing rapidly. Guangzhou's mid-to-low-end retail sales are not only large in scale but also growing rapidly. In the Guangzhou urban area, medium and low-end retail formats such as large supermarkets, convenience stores, small supermarkets, and vegetable markets can be seen everywhere. In addition, there are some traditional mid- to low-end retail formats, such as small commodity wholesale markets, furniture and building materials markets, etc., which are also continuing to develop and grow.

2.1.2. Luxury Merchandising

Compared with the vast mid-to-low-end retail market, Guangzhou's luxury goods market is much smaller. Compared with Shanghai, which is also a first-tier city, Guangzhou has only one luxury shopping mall, Guangzhou Taikoo Hui, in Tianhe District. As the city with the largest number of luxury shopping malls in mainland China, Shanghai has nearly ten luxury shopping malls, and there are three shopping malls that can house several top luxury shopping malls. Not only that, the number of luxury stores in Guangzhou is also significantly less than that of other first-tier cities and even less than Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Nanjing, which are also provincial capitals. Table 1 shows a comparison of the number of top luxury stores in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Hangzhou, Nanjing, and other cities.

Table 1: Comparison of the number of luxury stores in Guangzhou and other cities in China.

	Shanghai	Beijing	Chengdu	Hangzhou	Shenzhen	Nanjing	Guangzhou
Hermes	5	5	3	2	2	1	1
Chanel	3	3	3	1	1	2	1
Dior	6	6	4	2	2	2	1
LV	8	7	4	3	2	2	1
Cucci	9	6	4	3	4	2	2
Total	31	27	18	11	11	7	6

As can be seen from Table 1, the number of mainstream luxury goods stores in Guangzhou is much smaller than in other cities. There is no need to even compare with Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen at the same level. Even compared with cities such as Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Nanjing, the number of mainstream luxury stores in Guangzhou is still at a disadvantage.

2.2. Questions

From the current situation of Guangzhou's business, we can conclude that there are two problems in Guangzhou's business development.

First of all, it needs to be emphasized that Guangzhou presents diversified development levels in the retail industry. The mid to low-end retail market is booming in Guangzhou, with huge transaction volumes, reflecting the city's economic vitality. However, in stark contrast, the luxury retail market is relatively small and cannot compete with the mid- to low-end market. Nonetheless, Guangzhou, as an economic powerhouse in southern China, and its vast city size provide huge development potential for the luxury goods market.

Secondly, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of the competition situation in Guangzhou's luxury goods market. Not only is the luxury goods industry relatively uncompetitive when compared with Guangzhou's own mid- to low-end retail markets, Guangzhou is also facing competitive pressure compared with other Chinese cities of the same level. First-tier cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen have made significant progress in the luxury goods market, increasing their attractiveness. In addition, powerful provincial capital cities such as Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Nanjing are also actively promoting the growth of the luxury goods market and forming a competitive relationship with Guangzhou.

3. Analysis of the Causes of Urban Commercial Development Differences in Guangzhou

3.1. Impact of Urban Planning and Land Use Policies

The current situation of Guangzhou's luxury goods industry is largely caused by urban planning. The urban planning factors that lead to the lack of luxury shopping malls are mainly reflected in two aspects: the lag in the reconstruction of old cities and the short-sightedness of new city planning.

The first is the lag in the reconstruction of old cities. Referring to Western countries and domestic first and second cities, luxury goods tend to be located in old cities and historical building areas with a stronger business atmosphere and historical heritage. Due to domestic land use policies, domestic luxury goods locations are mostly dependent on excellent developers. Therefore, combining these two characteristics, most of the current domestic luxury shopping malls are built in new CBDs established after the renovation of old cities. Or in the business district. As a commercial capital for thousands of years, Guangzhou has a rich history and culture and a vast old city. It should attract a large number of excellent developers, and naturally, there should also be a large number of excellent luxury shopping malls. And this is not the case.

Unlike Shenzhen, Guangzhou has a third-level finance system, which means that part of Guangzhou's finances needs to be turned over to the province. Therefore, Guangzhou's finances are not as rich as Shenzhen's. In 2021, Guangzhou's general public budget revenue was 188.43 billion yuan [6], and in the same year, Shenzhen's general public budget revenue was 425.78 billion yuan. [7] Unlike Sichuan Province, where Chengdu is located, Guangdong Province is a major transfer payment transfer province rather than a beneficiary of transfer payments. Chengdu's general public budget revenue has exceeded 170 billion yuan [8]. Compared with Guangzhou, Chengdu has less financial needs, so these fiscal revenues are more than sufficient. These factors combined have resulted in Guangzhou's finances not being very abundant. Demolition is an unavoidable part of the reconstruction of old cities. Without sufficient finances, it is naturally impossible to support huge demolition funds. Therefore, Guangzhou's finances are unable to support the renovation of Guangzhou's old city, resulting in a lack of high-quality developers, and naturally unable to attract luxury residents.

The second point is the short-sightedness of new town planning. As a first-tier city, urban CBD planning is essential. The CBDs of first-tier cities are also popular locations for luxury goods, such as Shanghai IFC to Lujiazui in Shanghai, Guomao Mall to Beijing Guomao CBD, Shenzhen Bay Mixc to Shenzhen Houhai CBD, and Hangzhou Mixc to Qianjiang New Town in Hangzhou (Table 2). These luxury stores are located in the core locations of the CBD and are located at the bottom of office buildings in the form of commercial offices. Guangzhou's Taikoo Hui is already some distance away from the core area and central axis of Guangzhou's Pearl River New Town. It is more like an accessory to Pearl River New Town than a unified entity. This is the short-sighted problem existing in the early stages of new town planning. But after all, the planning of Zhujiang New Town has been some years away and has obvious characteristics of the times. It would be cruel to say that it is short-sighted. However, leaving aside Zhujiang New City, taking the Guangzhou Financial City planned in

recent years as an example, the planning of Guangzhou Financial City also does not pay much attention to the planning of luxury shopping malls. The Shanghai Qiantan, Shanghai West Bund Financial City, Beijing Lize CBD, Nanjing Hexi CBD and other projects planned at the same time all have certain plans for luxury venues. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that Guangzhou's planning for new cities is somewhat short-sighted.

Table 2: Luxury shopping malls and their locations in major cities.

	Luxury venue name	Location
Shanghai	Shanghai Plaza 66	Nanjing West Road
	Shanghai IFC	Lujiazui CBD
	Taikoo Li Qiantan	Qiantan CBD
Beijing	Guomao Mall	Guomao CBD
	BeijingSKP	Huamao Business District
Shenzhen	Shenzhen Vientiane City	Luohu CBD
	Shenzhen Bay Vientiane City	Houhai CBD
Hangzhou	Hangzhou Tower	Wulin Plaza Business District
	Hangzhou In77	Hubin Business District
Nanjing	Deji Plaza	Xinjiekou business district
	Nanjing IFC	Nanjing Hexi CBD
Guangzhou	Guangzhou Taikoo Hui	Tianhe business district

3.2. The Influence of Population Distribution and Social Concepts

3.2.1. Population Distribution

The population center of Guangzhou in 2010 was 113. 3624° E, 23. 1597° N, close to the junction of Wushan Street and Changxing Street in Tianhe District, Guangzhou City; the population center of gravity in 2020 is 113. 3615° E, 23. 1582° N, located inside Wushan Street, Tianhe District, Guangzhou City, showing a slight shift to the southwest. [9] Therefore, it may not be a coincidence that the only luxury shopping mall in Guangzhou is located in the Tianhe Commercial District in Tianhe District.

Returning to the map, the old city of Guangzhou has a dense population but a small number of luxury shopping malls, while Tianhe District is close to the old city and has an objective population, a large number of high-quality shopping malls, and more high-end commercial expressions. Therefore, in terms of population distribution, Guangzhou's luxury shopping malls are most likely to be established in Tianhe District. In fact, Guangzhou Taikoo Hui also happens to be located in Tianhe District, Guangzhou. Although there is an element of coincidence, it can also explain the rationality of the location of Taikoo Hui and the reason why there are no luxury venues in other areas of Guangzhou.

3.2.2. Social Concepts

First of all, Guangzhou, as a thousand-year-old commercial capital, has a long history and profound cultural heritage. Influenced by traditional culture, Guangzhou people have a pragmatic life philosophy, focusing on practicality and economy. In Guangzhou culture, the cultural traditions of frugality and exquisite production have always been respected by people. This seems to be one of the reasons why Guangzhou people do not pursue luxury goods.

Not only that but more importantly, Guangzhou people's appraisal of luxury goods is even more unique. In today's society, most people's definition of luxury goods is Western clothing, leather goods, and jewelry brands, while Guangzhou people more often define luxury goods as no matter ancient or modern, Eastern or Western, only exquisite and artistic things are called luxury goods.

This social concept permeates the lives of Guangzhou people and promotes the continuous development of Guangzhou's consumer market. In today's prosperous market economy, luxury goods have become a symbol of lifestyle and consumer culture. However, in Guangzhou, this consumption concept and cultural connotation are not popular. In other words, Guangzhou people may pay more attention to the quality of life rather than exposed brands.

3.3. Impact of Urban Location and Transportation

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is located in the densely populated Pearl River Delta, which includes major cities such as Hong Kong, Macau, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. As the center of Guangzhou culture and the geographical center of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Guangzhou should have become the consumption center of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area at the same time. However, due to the existence of Hong Kong, Guangzhou failed to become a consumer center. Hong Kong is much more open to the outside world than Guangzhou, and its modernization process is much earlier than Guangzhou. Therefore, Hong Kong has relied on its first-mover advantage and its political independence to become the consumption center of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. As an international shopping paradise, Hong Kong isQiangang has the characteristics of being tax-free and has a price advantage, so it has many consumers, so it has a large number of luxury stores with high specifications and a full range of categories. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area has convenient transportation. It only takes two hours from Guangzhou to Hong Kong. Many Guangzhou people who love luxury goods prefer to go to Hong Kong to buy luxury goods. In a word, the urban location in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is too close to consumer centers such as Hong Kong and Macau and has convenient transportation, which makes Guangzhou's luxury consumption behavior more likely to occur in Hong Kong and Macau.

Urban location and transportation affect the city's business more through competitors, and Guangzhou's business competitors are by no means weak.

In sharp contrast are Hangzhou and Chengdu, both provincial capitals. Unlike Guangzhou, Hangzhou and Chengdu, as typical representatives of strong provincial capitals, can be said to have gathered most of the talents and resources in the province. Guangzhou has strong competitors like Shenzhen in the province, and it is unable to fully gather the resources in Guangdong Province. Therefore, in the field of luxury goods sales, Chengdu and Hangzhou have larger consumer groups. Chengdu can attract consumers from the entire Sichuan Province and even the entire southwest region, and Hangzhou can attract consumer groups from the entire Zhejiang Province and even Jiangxi Province. Not only may Guangzhou be unable to attract consumers from other cities in Guangdong Province, but consumers in its own city will be siphoned off by Shenzhen, Hong Kong and Macau.

Although Nanjing is also the provincial capital, it is different from Hangzhou and Chengdu. Its economic status in Jiangsu Province is somewhat similar to Guangzhou. The economic leader of Guangdong Province is Shenzhen, while the economic leader of Jiangsu Province is Suzhou. Neither is the forerunner or leader of the provincial economy. However, Guangzhou's commercial status in Guangdong Province is completely different from Nanjing's commercial status in Jiangsu Province. Guangzhou's luxury goods sales are not on par with Shenzhen's in the province, but Nanjing's luxury goods sales are much higher than Suzhou's.

One of the reasons for this phenomenon is closely related to the competitiveness of its competitors. As a special economic zone, a sub-provincial city and a city under separate state planning, Shenzhen

has a higher city status. A higher city status means greater development autonomy. Suzhou is just an ordinary prefecture-level city, and its urban status is completely inconsistent with its economic development level. Therefore, Shenzhen's siphoning effect in the province is very strong, while Suzhou's radiating influence in the province is much smaller. In comparison, Shenzhen is naturally much more competitive than Suzhou. In this case, Nanjing's luxury sales position in the province naturally has an advantage over Guangzhou.

Not only that, but Nanjing's market radiation ability is also stronger than Guangzhou. Nanjing is located in the southwest of Jiangsu Province and is close to Anhui Province, so Nanjing can siphon luxury consumer groups from Jiangsu and Anhui provinces. Guangzhou's market radiation range is limited to the Pearl River Delta. However, even the consumer groups in the Pearl River Delta have been cut into pieces by competitors such as Shenzhen, Hong Kong and Macao, leaving very few consumer groups in Guangzhou.

4. Strategies and Plans to Solve Differences in Urban Commercial Development

4.1. Regional Coordinated Development

The prerequisite for regional coordinated development is the integration and planning of urban commercial layout.

Take Guangzhou as an example. One of the important reasons why Guangzhou lags behind its own mid- to low-end retail development in the field of luxury retail is that it has not done a good job in urban business planning. As pointed out above, if Guangzhou does a good job in the transformation and renewal of the old city, it will do a good job in commercial planning when renovating the old city; it will do a good job in commercial construction when planning the new city, and consider commerce, especially luxury shopping malls, in the new city planning. Among them, Guangzhou will definitely not lag that far behind in the field of luxury goods sales. Therefore, the integration and planning of urban commercial layout is very important.

4.2. Policy Support and Formulation of Preferential Policies

Due to China's special land policy, luxury single-family homes that are common abroad are very rare in China. Most domestic luxury goods are located in specific luxury properties. Because of this, for the domestic luxury goods industry, the ability to introduce excellent developers is the key to luxury sales. Policy support and preferential treatment are important factors in attracting high-quality developers. The government can support high-quality developers through financial subsidies and other methods. In this way, it can maintain a good cooperative relationship with developers, so that we can look forward to multiple cooperation and win-win cooperation.

4.3. Improvement and Expansion of Infrastructure and Transportation Networks

Businesses tend to prefer places with complete infrastructure and developed transportation networks. For luxury goods, it pays more attention to the coordination of the surrounding atmosphere, wide but not excessive roads, and sufficient public space.

Take Taikoo Hui in Guangzhou as an example. It is surrounded by office buildings in Zhujiang New Town and some high-end residential buildings in Tianhe, which is in line with the tone of luxury goods. The surrounding roads are neither two-way two-lane like the old city, nor are they like some new urban areas in China. With sixteen two-way lanes, it is not too cramped and does not lose its commercial atmosphere, which is very suitable for the location requirements of luxury goods.

Therefore, for the subsequent location planning of urban luxury shopping malls, the improvement of infrastructure and the reasonable transportation network are very critical and should be considered.

5. Challenges and Future Development Trends

5.1. Complexities and Challenges in Addressing Disparities in Urban Business Development

For businesses, consumer spending power is always the most important issue to consider. Especially for luxury goods, the requirements for consumer groups are much higher than those for mid- to low-end retail. Therefore, even if a city can meet the location requirements of luxury goods, when the consumption power of the city's consumer groups is not good, luxury goods parties and developers will not consider choosing a location to open a store. This is closely related to the city's economic development status and city energy level. Therefore, even if the hardware requirements of luxury goods are met, luxury goods will not settle in when the city's energy level is insufficient. Therefore, the key issue causing differences in urban commercial development lies in the differences in urban economic development levels and urban energy levels. Solving the differences in urban economic levels is a very arduous and complicated task. This is the biggest challenge in solving the problem of urban commercial development differences.

5.2. Prospects for Future Urban Development Direction and Commercial Layout

In terms of business, the State Council has approved Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Chongqing, and other places to take the lead in building international consumption centers. More cities with certain strengths can regard building international consumption center cities as their future development goals.

Taking Guangzhou as an example, from the city itself, Guangzhou should strengthen cooperation between Guangzhou and Shenzhen and the development of Guangzhou-Foshan City, and give full play to its advantages of being located in the center of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and as the cultural center of Guangzhou [10], Siphon A larger customer base will increase consumption in the city.

Guangzhou's consumption capacity is sufficient to support the construction of multiple luxury stores and more luxury stores should be built appropriately to give full play to Guangzhou's local consumption capacity. In fact, Guangzhou has signed a contract with Swire Group. Swire will build another project in Baietan, Guangzhou, in the next few years. This is undoubtedly good news for Guangzhou.

Of course, the commercial layout should be based on the city's own economic foundation and consumption habits. Taking Guangzhou as an example, while promoting the construction of luxury goods markets, it should also establish shopping malls or trading platforms for "luxury goods" that are highly recognized by local people to fully meet the consumption habits of Guangzhou people.

6. Conclusion

This article analyzes the current development status of the luxury retail industry in Guangzhou, analyzes the causes of differences in commercial development within the city from the perspective of the luxury retail industry, and explores solutions so as to promote the sustainable development of urban commerce according to local conditions.

This study has insufficient understanding and analysis of Guangzhou's business data, and there are too few available materials and data; the analysis of the causes is not comprehensive enough, so there are limitations and needs further analysis. Solutions can be updated and supplemented in the future.

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