

# Strategy Research for the Development of Thematic Commercial Streets - Based On the Survey of Eight Typical Thematic Commercial Streets in Harbin

Wang Zhenzhen, Wang Xu, Hong Liangping

**Abstract**—The construction of thematic commercial streets has been on the hotspot with the rapid development of cities. In order to improve the image and competitiveness of cities, many cities are building or rebuilding thematic commercial streets. However, many contradictions and problems have emerged during this process. Therefore, it is significant, for both the practice and the research, to analyze the development of thematic commercial streets and provide some useful suggestions. Through the deep research and comparative study of the eight typical thematic commercial streets in Harbin, this paper summarize the current situations, laws and influencing factors of the development of these streets, and then put forward some suggestions about the plan, constructions and developments of the thematic commercial streets.

**Keywords**—Thematic commercial streets, laws of the development, influence factors, the constructions and developments, degrees of aggregation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE commercial street is an essential component of the city, and it provides modern urban public space and acts as a window, which not only shows the level of economic development of the city, but also shows the commercial culture and the civic life in the city. To develop commercial streets is an important way to promote the development of commercial industry, to meet the diversified consumption needs, and to perfect the urban functions. Therefore, it is meaningful to construct and develop sustainable prosperous commercial streets.

In recent years, in order to enhance the image of the city and strengthen the competitiveness of the city, many cities in China are building or rebuilding thematic commercial streets. The thematic commercial street, which is similar to a large-scale collection of exclusive shops originating from Europe and the United States, specializes in certain types of goods and provides services for specific customers. According to the incomplete statistics collected by the Chinese Federation of Constructions and Managements of Urban Commercial

Outlets, the present number of thematic commercial streets in China has reached over 1000. If the average length of each street is 600 meters and the average area is 50000 square meters, the cumulative length has succeeded 1800 kilometers and the cumulative area 150 million square meters [1]. The construction of thematic commercial streets has become a boom, and the situation in Harbin is also the same. There are 40 thematic commercial streets currently in Harbin (Table I, Fig. 1). Among these, 7 streets are formed by planning and 33 streets are formed spontaneously. 17 streets are located in secondary main roads and 23 in branches; most of them are adjacent to residential areas.

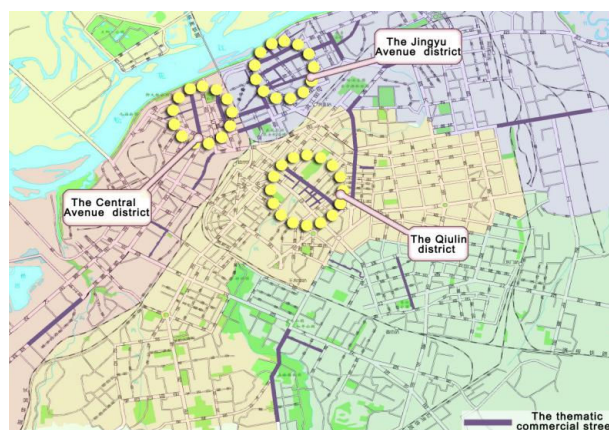


Fig. 1 Distribution diagram about the thematic commercial streets in Harbin

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION ABOUT THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS IN HARBIN

Business Districts	Qilin	Jingyu Avenue	Central Avenue	Others
Numbers of Thematic Commercial Streets	7	15	4	14

In 2004, in order to build a name card of the city and improve the cultural taste of urban streets, the Nangang District and Xiangfang District all constructed some special streets, including some exotic streets like the India Amorous Street and Korean Street, and some thematic commercial streets like the Woman's Street and Children's Street. However, after several years, the India Amorous Street sells Russian goods while the Children's Street lost its character. These thematic commercial streets are not thriving anymore and become unworthy of the name. What is worse, these streets are having negative effects

Wang Zhenzhen, is a graduate in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan 430074, China (e-mail: 823975701@qq.com).

Wang Xu, is a graduate in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan 430074, China (phone: 8615926392776; e-mail: 248566136@qq.com).

Hong Liangping is a professor, a PhD supervisor and the associate dean of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning in Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan 430074, China (phone: 8613907133017; e-mail: 852166136@qq.com).

on the living environment for surrounding residents. As a result, how to stop constructing those unnecessary ones has become a key for the health development of thematic commercial streets.

Therefore, this paper aims to find out the existing problems of these streets and sort out the influencing factors and the laws of their development, through the deep research and comparative study of the eight typical thematic commercial streets in Harbin, and then put forward some suggestions about the plans, constructions and developments of the thematic commercial streets.

## II. THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION AND THE RESEARCH METHODS

### A. Objects of the Investigation

The Gogol Area in the Nangang district and the Taigu Area in the Daowai district has most of the thematic commercial streets. (Fig. 1)

The formation of those streets is different: some were constructed by the government completely, while some were formed spontaneously. Some were formed spontaneously at first and then were rebuilt by the governments. In addition, they also formed in different period of time. Therefore, the thematic commercial streets in these two areas are kind of representative and are selected as objects of the investigation (Fig. 2, Table II).

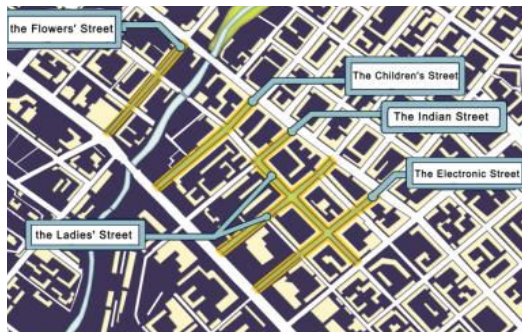


Fig. 2 (a) Distribution of thematic commercial streets in the Gogol Area

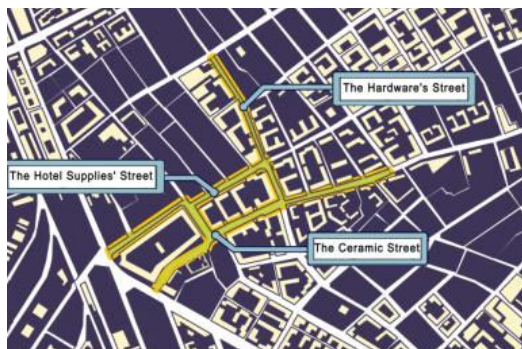


Fig. 2 (b) Distribution of thematic commercial streets in the Taigu Area

TABLE II  
DISTRIBUTION ABOUT THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS IN HARBIN

Districts	Thematic commercial streets	The formation of the streets	Completed year
Gogol area	Flowers' Street	Formed spontaneously, then was rebuilt by the government	1990
	Children's Street	Built by the government	2004
	Indian Street	Built by the government	2004
	Ladies' Street	Formed spontaneously, then was rebuilt by the government	1990
	Electronic Street	Formed spontaneously, then was rebuilt by the government	1990
Taigu area	Ceramic Street	Formed spontaneously	1990
	Hardware's Street	Formed spontaneously	1990
	Hotel Supplies' Street	Formed spontaneously	1990

Furthermore, after the preliminary investigations of the 40 thematic commercial streets in Harbin, we decided to choose the Ceramic Street as a typical case to investigate the development tendency of thematic commercial streets, as it is mature and well developed.

### B. Investigation Methods

This research obtains information on the current status of the thematic commercial streets through literatures, questionnaires, interviews, field observations and many other methods.

- 1) There are four kinds of public questionnaires which are aimed at citizens, consumers, merchants and residents nearby respectively. Then the data on these questionnaires are classified, collected and analyzed according to the need (Table III).

TABLE III  
DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Interviewees	Citizens	Merchants	Customers	Residents nearby
Numbers of distributed questionnaires	200	300	400	200
Numbers of returned questionnaires	186	297	394	198

- 2) The interviewees include the administrative staffs, consumers, merchants and residents nearby.
- 3) Some data are collected through measurement and field observation, and the relevant data, such as the flow of people and traffic, are collected in different period of time.
- 4) Some data are collected through official documents, including the Statistical Yearbook, City records, census data, government work report, news and so on.

## III. THE ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION OF THESE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS IN HARBIN

### A. Features of the Development of Those Streets

We summed up the features of the evolution of these eight thematic commercial streets, according to the development process and the current situation.

### 1. Most of Them Were Formed Spontaneously at First

Apart from the Children's Street and the Indian Street which were planned and built by government in 2004, the other six streets formed spontaneously at first and then were re-constructed by the government (Table II). These six spontaneously formed thematic commercial streets developed gradually, and they were more in line with the demands and the law of development of the market.

### 2. The Layout of These Streets Altered from Threadiness to Gridding

Most of the thematic commercial streets were linear, and some were herringbone and latticed. This was because the main streets sprawled to the surroundings as they developed, so the linear streets were developed into herringbone and then into gridding (Fig. 3).

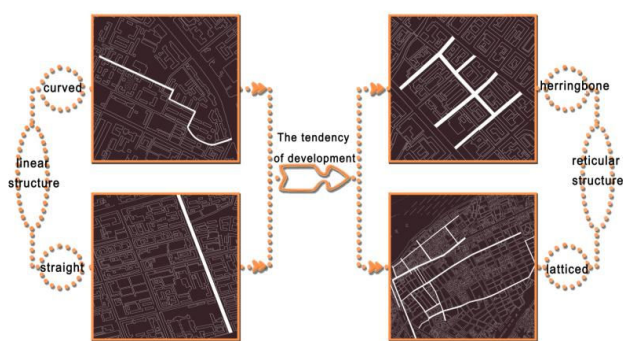


Fig. 3 Morphological evolution of the thematic commercial streets

### B. Features of the Business State

The features of the business state were dynamic as they developed, and streets in different periods showed different features.

#### 1. The High Degree of Aggregation of Similar Shops and Commodities

In order to realize the "aggregation effect", shops specialize in the same goods gathered to attract more customers and increase the sales [2]. Also, 83.1% of the interviewed consumers preferred to choose where there are more similar shops because it can offer more choices, and 54.3% of the interviewed merchants also preferred that there were more shops which specialized in the same goods or complementary goods.

According to the research, the shops, in line with the theme of the streets, accounted for more than 50% on the streets which were more prosperous. (Table IV) This was because they had enjoyed the "aggregation effect" if many same or complementary shops gathered.

The types of goods, specifications, grade and brand also reflect the degree of shops' aggregation of streets. Taking the Hotel Supplies Street as an example, it almost included all the types of hotel supplies (Table V), and each type of commodity had a variety of specifications and grades to meet the different needs of consumers (Fig. 4).

TABLEIV  
STATISTICS OF THE NUMBER OF THEME RELATED STORES ON THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS

Districts	Thematic commercial streets	Numbers of stores	Numbers of theme related stores	Proportions of theme related stores (%)
Gogol area	Flowers' Street	84	43	51.2
	Children's Street	84	17	20.2
	Indian Street	35	0	0
	Ladies' Street	134	87	64.9
	Electronic Street	92	82	89.3
Taigu area	Ceramic Street	240	234	97.5
	Hardware's Street	190	185	97.4
	Hotel Supplies' Street	165	149	90.3

TABLEV  
COMMODITIES SOLD ON THE HOTEL SUPPLIES' STREET

Kitchen fittings (12stores)	Kitchen ware :Steamer, steamer, induction cooker, deep fryer, barbecue electric furnace, heater, baking rack, electric kettle, etc.
	Gas stoves: Diesel stoves, gas stoves, gas cylinders, etc.
	Auxiliary means: Display cabinets, storage cabinets, disinfecting cabinet, cabinets, rice steaming cart, etc.
Catering Supplies (54 stores)	Food machinery: Water boiler, meat grinder, brake dish machine, dough maker, noodle pressing machine, eggbeater, ice machines, ice chopper, ice crusher, ice machines, refrigerators, beverage dispenser, buffet equipment, etc.
	Ceramic tableware, gold and silver, stainless steel products, wine set, tea set, wine cart, glassware, turntable, seasoning box, chopsticks, fruit plates, etc.
	Cleaners, air purification, bins, hand sanitizer, broom, dustpan, mop, toilet brush, bucket, washboard, pots, etc.
Bathroom items (5 stores)	Facial tissue, paper holder, soap dispenser, towel racks, hooks, ornaments, glass shelf, non-slip mats, towels, bath gel, toothbrush, slippers, combs, etc.
Decorations (3 stores)	Vases, flower pots, small sculptures, crystal curtain, etc.
Other Items (7 stores)	Nameplates, badges, ordering cards, umbrella stands, garbage bin, menu, tissue boxes, keys hand, hotel uniforms, table cloth, chair covers, blankets, carpets, matchstick, etc.



Fig. 4 (a) Food steamers of various sizes





Fig. 4 (b) Gas kitchens of various sizes

We conducted a questionnaire survey of consumers about the quality and price of the merchandises. And according to the result, we find that the quality of goods was evaluated significantly higher by consumers and the price of goods was also comparatively lower on the more prosperous streets (Fig. 5).

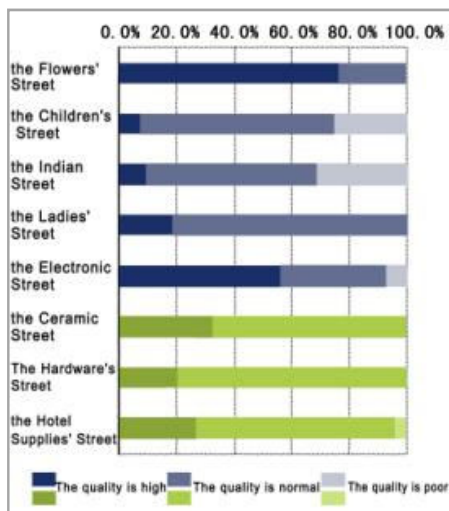


Fig. 5 (a) Statistics of goods' qualities

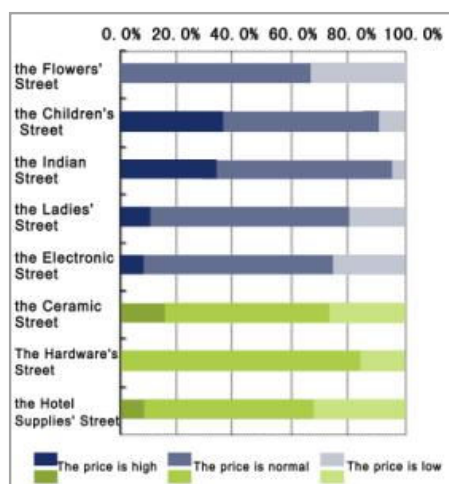


Fig. 5 (b) Statistics of goods' prices

## 2. Wholesale Was the Main Business Model

Apart from the Children's Street and the Indian Street, the other six streets are all high specialized in goods related the theme and have various kinds of products, so they tended to attract more wholesale clients. These six streets had formed a strong market effect and their own commercial characteristics.

Among which, the wholesale sales in the Ladies' Street and the Hotel Supplies' Street even accounted for 83.19% and 87.90% of the whole business volumes respectively (Fig. 6). Because wholesale clients had a stronger capacity of consumption and thus bring more interests, so these six streets were more prosperous than the Children's Street and the Indian Street, as they could attract more wholesale clients.

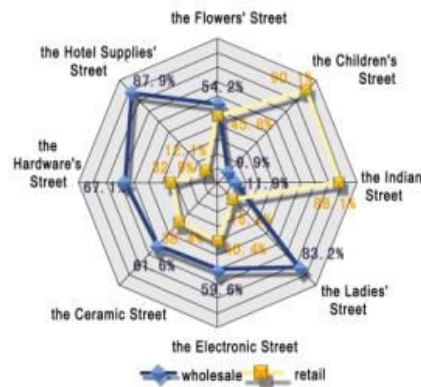


Fig. 6 Statistics of business models

## 3. The Low Degree of Branding Goods

The degree of branding goods in these streets are still low, for example, the brand stores on the Electronic Street only occupied 7%, and the proportion of that on the Ceramic Street was comparatively higher, with 27%. There were many exclusive shops which sold some well-known brands on the Ceramic Street, including sanitary ware brands such as Toto, Apollo, Kohler and many ceramic tile brands such as the Nobel, Marco Polo, Tung-pang (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7 (a) The various levels of Commodities and stores on the Electronic Street



Fig. 7 (b) The trend of branding on the Ceramic Street

To owe a certain number of branded exclusive shops was the development goal of commercial streets, because these shops were the core of the streets, which could affect the overall level of commodities and the impression that the streets had on the customers.

### C. Features of Merchants and Consumers

Overall, many of the merchants on these thematic commercial streets came from other place, which brought some advantages for the development of the streets. And the customers on these streets shared some common features and also showed differences.

#### 1. Many Merchants Were Outcomers

According to the research, 10.7% of the merchants on the streets in the Gogol Area come from other provinces. By comparison, there were more exotic merchants on the thematic commercial streets in the Taigu Area. For instance, most of the merchants on the Ceramic Street and the Hotel Supplies' Street were from the southern regions in China, such as Jiangsu and Zhejiang province (Fig. 8).

The merchants had some cost advantages as their hometowns were the places of origin and they could replenish their stock at a comparatively low price. For example, some merchants on the Ceramic Street came from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, which was famous for the porcelain, so they could get some porcelains of high quality at low prices readily. The merchants from different places had enriched the market sources and enhanced the competitiveness.



Fig. 8 (a) Merchants on the Ceramic Street and Hotel Supplies came from other provinces came from

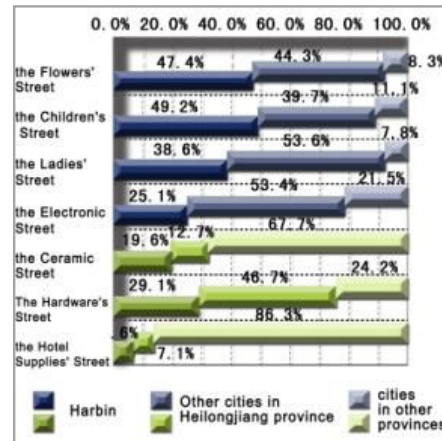


Fig. 8 (b) Statistics of the places where the merchants came from

#### 2. The Relatively Fixed Consumer Groups

Most of the consumers on these thematic commercial streets were occupied in the thematic related industry. For instance, most of the flowers on the Flowers' street were sold to restaurants, hotels, wedding companies, florist's shop, etc. Most of the goods on the Ceramic Street were sold to decoration companies, ceramics dealer, engineering designers and workers (Fig. 9).

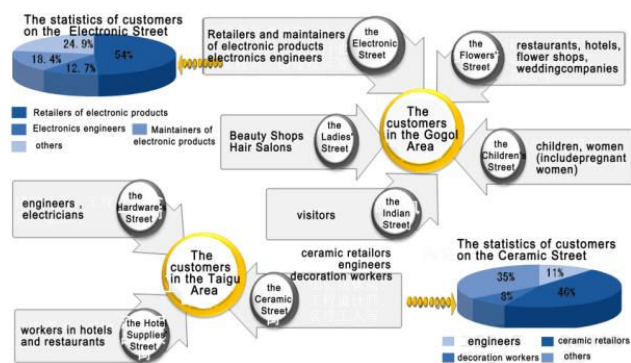


Fig. 9 The consumer groups on these

More than 40% of the customers in different stores on these streets were stable except that on the Indian Street which attracted mainly the visitors and seldom had regular customers. This indicates that these merchants ran pretty well in terms of the integrity, service and management.

### D. Differences between These Two Areas

There are some significant differences in the degrees of prosperity, the correlation of commerce and the radiation ranges of customers.

#### 1. The Significant Difference in the Degrees of Prosperity

The degrees of prosperity of the streets are measured by four indicators, including the vacancy rates of stores on the streets, the average one-off consumption of customers, the average daily customer flow volumes and the average annual net profit.

- 1) The significant difference in the vacancy rates of stores in these two areas.

The vacancy rate of stores refers to the proportion of closed shops. As can be seen from Table VI, the rate of the Gogol Area was much higher than that of the Taigu Area.

- 2) The significant difference in the average daily customer volumes in these two areas.

The customer volume is an important indicator of sales potential and it reflects the degree of prosperity. We selected two thematic commercial streets from each area, and then selected 30 theme related shops randomly to collect the customer volumes on both workdays and holidays. According to the statistics, the customer volume in Taigu Area was much higher than that in the Gogol Area (Fig. 10).

TABLE VI  
STATISTICS OF THE VACANCY RATES ON THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS

Districts	Thematic commercial streets	Numbers of stores	Numbers of vacant stores	Vacancy rates(%)
Gogol area	Flowers' Street	84	2	2.0
	Children's Street	84	5	6.0
	Indian Street	35	5	14.3
	Ladies' Street	134	11	4.8
Taigu area	Electronic Street	92	4	5.7
	Ceramic Street	240	0	0
	Hardware's Street	190	0	0
	Hotel Supplies' Street	165	0	0

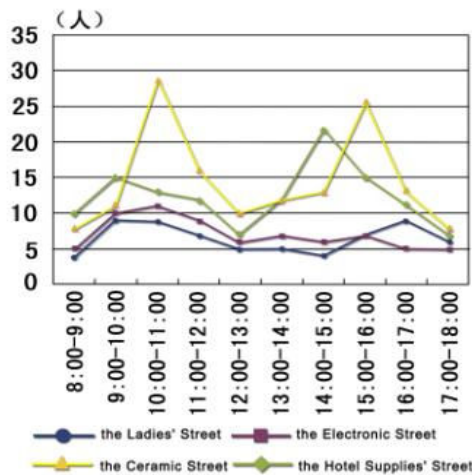


Fig. 10 (a) Statistics of the daily customer volumes of the thematic commercial streets on workdays

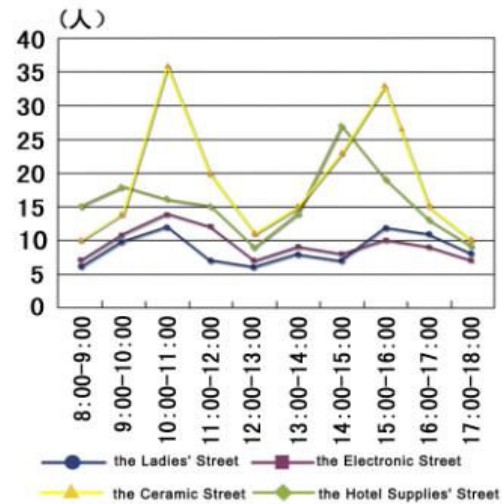


Fig. 10 (b) Statistics of the daily customer volumes of the thematic commercial streets on holidays

- 3) The significant difference in the average annual net profit in these two areas.

Due mainly to the different cost and profit of different kinds of goods and the different shops of different sizes, there is a significant difference in the average annual net profit in these two areas.

The average annual net profit of the shops on the thematic commercial streets in the Gogol Area varied dramatically. Most of the shops on the Flowers' Street and the Electronic Street could earn 50000-200000 yuan a year, while most of shops on the Children's Street and the Ladies' Street could only earn less than 50000 a year. However, the profit in the Taigu Area was much higher and more than 45% of the shops could earn 50000-200000. (Fig. 11)

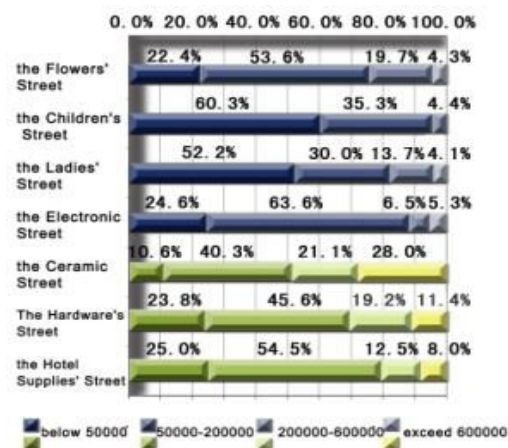


Fig. 11 Statistics of the average annual net profits of the stores on the thematic commercial streets

It can be concluded that the overall level of prosperity in the Taigu Area was much higher than that of the Gogol Area.



## 2. The Significant Difference in the Correlation of Commerce

The thematic commercial streets in the Gogol Area were specialized in flowers, pregnancy and infant supplies, souvenirs, beauty salon products, electronic components, etc. These goods were in poor correlation with each other, so these streets cannot share the customers, which was not conducive to the development of the overall business of the area.

However, the thematic commercial streets in the Taigu Area were engaged in building materials, hardware, ceramics, hotel supplies, etc. There was a strong correlation between these commodities, and these areas could meet the customers' need of one-stop shopping and save time and energy for the customers (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12 The complementary relations of commerce on the thematic commercial streets in the Taigu area

The gather of complementary shops could increase the efficiency of shopping for the customers and the sales, thereby making these streets mutually beneficial to each other [2].

## 3. The Significant Difference in the Radiation Ranges of Customers

Most of the customers in the Gogol Area were the residents in the Nangang District, accounting for 66.4 % of the total consumers. And the customers of the Flowers' Street were limited in the local area due to the limited length for preservation of flowers. The nearby residents accounted for 53.33% of the total customers on the Children's Street and the customers in other district occupied 33.33%. About 50% of the customers on the Indian Street were exotic visitors, as it mainly sold souvenirs.

However, the consumers in the Taigu Area came from the city-wide scope, and there were also a certain proportion of customers who came from the surrounding suburbs and other provinces (Fig. 13). About 60% of the turnover came from customers from other provinces.

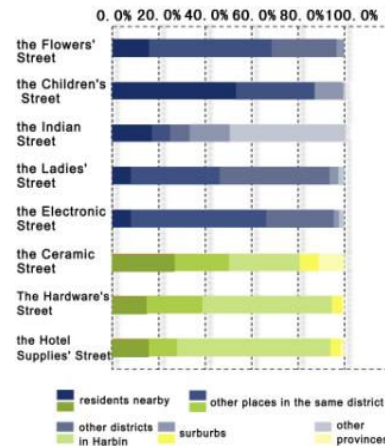


Fig. 13 Statistics of the radiation ranges of customers

## IV. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS OF THE THEMATIC STREETS

### A. Unrational Plan and Construction

The construction of these five thematic commercial streets in 2004 was intended to provide a window to show the economic development of Harbin. And the construction work, conducted by the government, mainly focused on the improvement of image, including unifying the appearance of the shops, changing the underlying residential windows into doors, setting up some special signs and many other street furniture. However, some other facilities were ignored in this project, such as warehouses, parking lots and public restrooms. After the intervention of the government and the reconstruction of the street, the rents rose rapidly at that time while the business conditions were not improved significantly. And now the business on the Children's Street are stagnant and the Indian Street had completely turned to "A Street for Russian Goods."

The Children's Street and the Indian Street ignored the original business, the historical and cultural factors, the business conditions in surrounding district when positioning their themes. The Indian Street used to be a commercial street which provided restaurants and shops to the nearby residents, whereas it was then planned as a street which showed the Indian customs and served for tourists. The unrational plan and construction resulted in the failures of many shops in 20 days.

### B. Traffic Problems

#### 1. Some of the Traffic Regulations Affect the Business of the Streets

There were many one-way streets in the Gogol Area, which made it inconvenient to drive cars in these places, thus reducing the customers in these streets. Besides, some intersections of roads were congested seriously during peak hours (Fig. 14).

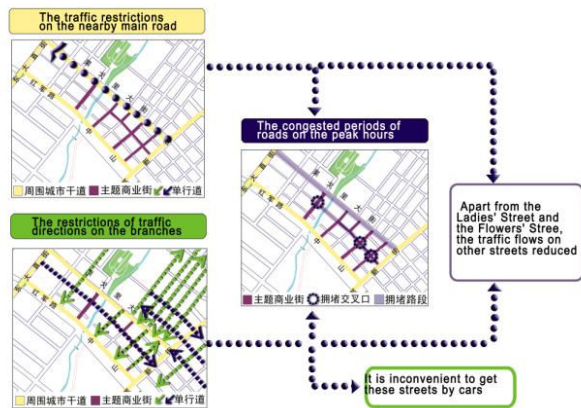


Fig. 14 Traffic regulations and problems in the Gogol Area

## 2. The Inadequate Parking Space

The parking space near the thematic commercial streets was inadequate. The layout of residential buildings on both sides of the streets was compact and there was no dedicated parking place for vehicles in the Gogol Area. There were only two parking lots in the Taigu Area, which were affiliated to two stores, and each contained five parking spaces. Besides, there was a underground parking garage and the size was  $80\text{m} \times 60\text{m}$ . It could contain 160 vehicles and its service radius was about 300m, but the utilization rate was only 33%.

As a result, there were many cars parking on the streets, making the streets congested and blocking the entrances of stores. This had also caused the serious dissatisfaction of the merchants and road congestion during peak hours, and made the streets inconvenient for pedestrians (Fig. 15).

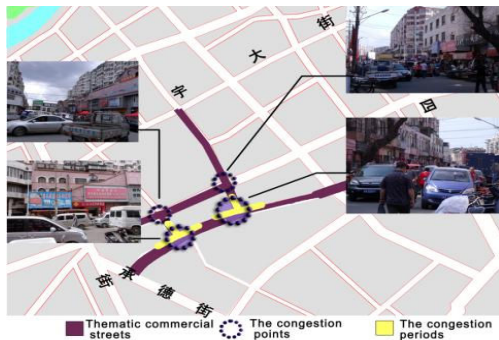


Fig. 15 Congestion points and periods in the Taigu Area

## C. Poor Environmental Condition of the Streets

### 1. The Obsolete and Lack of Street Furniture

This current street furniture on these eight streets were all scarce, outdated and damaged (Table VII), and features logos were not noticeable (Fig. 16). All of these could reduce, to a certain extent, the attractiveness to the investors and consumers and the limiting the taste of these streets.

TABLE VII

STATISTICS OF THE STREET FURNITURE ON THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS

Districts	Thematic commercial streets	chairs	Dustbins	Public toilets	Street lamps	Avenue trees
Gogol area	Flowers' Street	0	6	0	20	8
	Children's Street	8	4	0	37	24
	Indian Street	0	2	0	16	0
	Ladies' Street	17	6	0	99	34
Taigu area	Electronic Street	0	2	0	28	41
	Ceramic Street	0	4	0	45	3
	Hardware's Street	0	2	1	11	3
	Hotel Supplies' Street	0	0	0	25	0



Fig. 16 (a) Damaged pavement on the Ceramic Street logos on the Ladies' Street



Fig. 16 (b) Unnoticeable features logos on the Ladies' Street

### 2. Poor Street Sanitation Conditions

Environmental sanitation could affect the image of the street. A good sanitation situation could help to create a pleasant shopping environment, and enhance the attractiveness to consumers and investors. However, the sanitation conditions on these thematic streets were generally poor. The streets in the Taigu Area were seriously dusty and there were even much impounded surface water; There were rubbishes threw and piled anywhere on the streets in the Gogol Area (Fig. 17).





Fig. 17 (a) Impounded surface water in the Taigu Area



Fig. 17 (b) Rubbishes piled on the streets

#### D. Negative Impacts these Streets Have on the Surrounding Residents

The residents always complain that these thematic commercial streets had made their living environment worse, including the rubbishes, noise, poor public security, air quality degradation, congestion of transportation, the lack of recreation facilities and so on. This problem is most severe in the Taigu Area (Fig. 18).

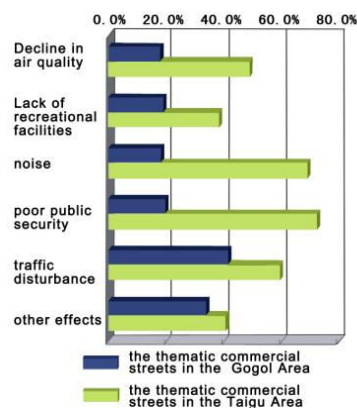


Fig. 18 Negative impacts these streets have on the surrounding residents

The streets in the Taigu area were lack of shops due to the commercial prosperity, so many shops invaded into the inside of residential areas, turned the public activity spaces into vehicle parking spaces and the parking garages into warehouses, which had a bad impact on public environmental

quality of this area (Fig. 19).

Overall, there were many conflicts between the development of the thematic streets and the lives of residents.

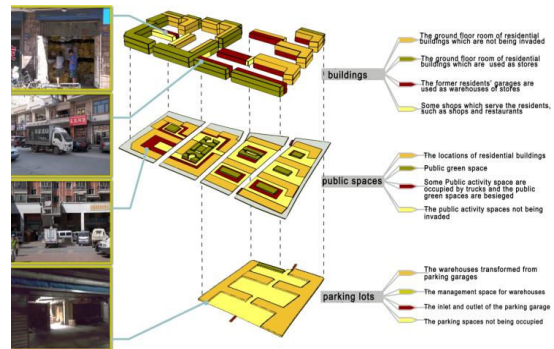


Fig. 19 Residential buildings are occupied by the stores and warehouses in the Taigu Area

#### E. Lack of Standardized Management

Several regulatory agencies were in charge of these thematic commercial streets and they administrated different aspects, including the industrial and commercial bureau, the police station, street offices and so on. Due to the lack of a specialized unified management agency, it was hard to plan and manage these streets scientifically, and to develop a targeted management system. Also, it was impossible to regulate the management, including the investments, publicity, types of goods, after-sales services, street environment, security and so on.

Among these streets, the Ceramic Street and the Central Avenue, which was a comprehensive pedestrian street in Harbin, were very successful in this aspect.

### V. THE ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCE FACTORS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS

According to the differences of the degrees of prosperity in the two areas, analyze the affecting factors deeply and sort out the most significant ones and the minor ones, in order to provide a reference for the planning and construction of the thematic commercial streets.

#### A. The In-Depth Analysis of Differences of the Degrees of Prosperity between the Two Areas

##### 1. The Competitions between the Similar Business and the Complementary Business in the Nearby Business Area

There was the Qiulin Business District which contains large-scale comprehensive shopping malls, cinemas, restaurants and many other shops, which was the biggest competitor for the thematic commercial streets in the Gogol Area. Taking the Children's Street as an example, it had many powerful competitors, including the Renhe Underground Commercial Street in the Qiulin Business District, which was the largest wholesale market for children products in Harbin (Table VIII), and the Loose Ray Mall, which also sold some slap-up children's products (Fig. 20).

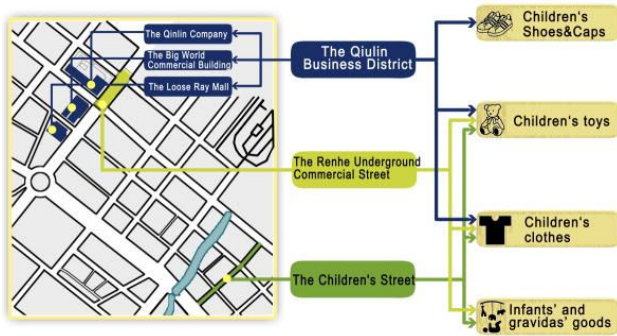


Fig. 20 Competition for guests with the nearby business

TABLE VIII  
COMPARISON OF BUSINESS BETWEEN THE RENHE UNDERGROUND  
COMMERCIAL STREET AND THE CHILDREN'S STREET IN THE GOGOL AREA

	Renhe Underground Commercial Street	Children's Street in the Gogol Area
Business scope	Children's clothing and shoes, baby products	Children's clothing, shoes and toys, baby products
Service objects	From babies to junior middle school students,	From babies to pupils
Numbers of stores	600	17
Structures area	7800m <sup>2</sup>	1200m <sup>2</sup>
Business area	4000m <sup>2</sup>	850m <sup>2</sup>
Existing time	10years	6years

In contrast, the business on the Electronic Street was complementary to the others nearby. This was because the Electronic Street mainly sold electronic components, while the Jiaohua Square mainly engaged in digital electronic products and the Black Swan Mall mainly sold upscale home appliances. The commodities in these three places were complementary to each other (Fig. 21).

Therefore, the gather of too much similar business in a same area will cause fierce competitions and disperse customers, while the complementary business model can be mutually beneficial.

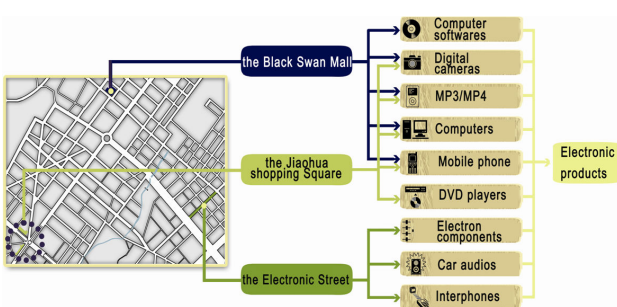


Fig. 21 Business on the Electronic Street is complementary to the others nearby

## 2. The Rent Affects the Formation of the Business

The rent on the thematic commercial streets in the Gogol Area was much higher as they were near to the center of the city, and the rent rose sharply after the rebuilt by the

government in 2004. The rising operating cost resulted in the loss in the theme related shops and their relocation, which affected the attracting of investors and the formation of the business seriously. For example, the rent on the Electronic Street was twice of that on the Ceramic Street before 2004, and this rental gap narrowed gradually with the rapid development of the commerce on the Ceramic Street, but the rent on the Electronic Street is still higher than that on the Ceramic Street (Fig. 22).

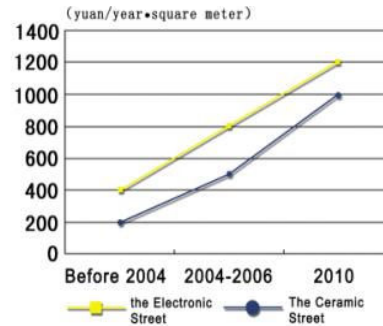


Fig. 22 The comparison of rents of stores on the Electronic Street and the Ceramic Street

Therefore, the rent was an important part of the operating costs, and the initial rent in the early stage of the streets could affect the survival of the shops directly.

(3) The scales of the thematic commercial streets affect their development

It is said that the length of commercial streets, in the normal circumstances, should be 500 to 700 meters, and the upper limit should be 1000 to 1500 meters. And the most appropriate scale should be 20000 to 100000 square meters [6]. The most of the sizes of the thematic commercial streets in the Gogol Area was less than 10, 000 square meters, while all of the sizes of the thematic commercial streets in the Taigu Area were more than 15000 square meters, and the scale of the Ceramic Street even reached 46, 000 square meters (Table IX).

The prosperity of the thematic commercial streets was subject to the scales, and if the scale was too small, there would be fewer shops and thus the quantity, types, grades would be affected.

TABLE IX  
STATISTICS OF THE SCALES OF THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS

Districts	Thematic commercial streets	Length of the streets	Scale of the business
Gogol area	Flowers' Street	240	5040
	Children's Street	220	5760
	Indian Street	100	3600
	Ladies' Street	380	12420
	Electronic Street	380	4800
Taigu area	Ceramic Street	600	45900
	Hardware's Street	320	16320
	Hotel Supplies' Street	320	19580

(4) The structures and layouts of shops affect the for commercial development potential

The stores in the Gogol Area were reconstructed and transformed from the residential buildings, which had brick-concrete structures and the bearing walls cannot be tore down or reconstructed. Therefore, it was hard to divide and arrange the spaces of the stores again and the arrangement of the space was inflexible [3]. However, the stores in the Taigu Area had frame structures, so the arrangement of the space was flexible.

Most of the widths of the stores in the Gogol Area were 3 to 4 meters, and the depths were about 10 meters, so the space of these stores was kind of closed and it was inconvenient to demonstrate merchandise. Whereas the widths of the stores in the Taigu Area were mainly 6 meters, and the depths were 17 meters, so the spaces were quite open and it was convenient to show merchandise (Fig. 23).

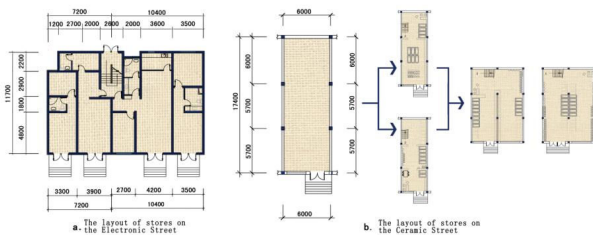


Fig. 23 Typical plans and layouts of the stores on the thematic commercial streets

Therefore, the structures and layouts of the shops can affect the size of the stores, the flexibility of the use of the spaces, the display of merchandise and the shopping environment.

The general scales of the stores in the Gogol Area was comparatively small and could not meet the needs of some large enterprises, so this area could only attract some small commercial tenant. For example, most of the shops on the Electronic Street are kind of small, with only 20-30 meters. While the scales of shops in the Taigu Area were generally larger, for instance, most of the shops on the Ceramic Street had a scale of 80-120 square meters or even more (Fig. 24).

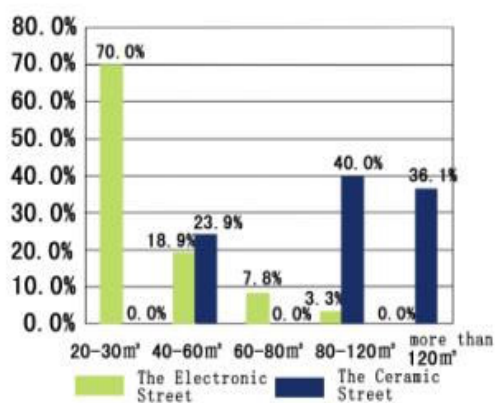


Fig. 24 The statistics of the stores' areas on the thematic commercial streets

### B. Influencing Factors of the Development of Thematic Commercial Streets

The thematic commercial streets include the traditional historical street, the cultural and leisure street, the specialized commercial street, the tourism and leisure street, the restaurant row and many other types. According to the above analysis and results of the research, the influence factors of the development of the thematic commercial streets are concluded in Table X.

TABLE X  
STATISTICS OF INFLUENCE FACTORS OF THE THEMATIC COMMERCIAL STREETS' DEVELOPMENT

Influence factors	Elements of Commerce			
	Formation	Business state		
Details	Business basis	Agglomeration degrees of goods	Correlation of goods	Quality and price
Influence degree	●	●	●	○
Elements of Commerce				
Business districts nearby		Business pattern		
competitions and complementarity	Markets nearby	Initial rent	Cost advantage	
●	●	○	●	
Planning and design				
Theme positioning	Transport			Scale
Respect the market rule	Traffic limitation	parking space t	Accessibility by buses	Length shape
●	●	○	○	●
Planning and design				
Environmental facility			Structure of buildings	
spatial scale of the streets	Street furniture	Landscape, air, noise	Structural form	Width, depth
○	○	○	○	○
Management and Policy				
Organization		Management system		
Unified management institutions		Investment attraction , Environmental sanitation, etc.		
●		●		

※ : ● Factors with more influence , ○ Factors with less influence

## VI. SUGGESTIONS

### A. Plan the Thematic Commercial Streets Rationally and Scientifically

At first, the construction and development of the thematic commercial streets must be rational and conform to the situation of the country and the city which it is located in. Secondly, we should consider the urban spatial layout and the overall situation of the commercial resource when choosing the location of the streets, in order to optimize the distribution of business resources and avoid the repetition and heterogeneity



of the layout of the commercial resources. Also, we should consider the shopping needs of local residents, as well as the radiation effect the streets will have on the surroundings and the influence brought by nearby business [4]. Besides, the historical context and the original forms of business should be taken into consideration when positioning the theme, and the consumption habits of customers and the flow direction of the targeted guests should be taken into account. In addition, the plan of the commercial streets should in accordance with the urban master planning, and the allocation of ancillary facilities of the commercial streets should be considered in the urban master planning, in order to ensure the transportation and many other infrastructures. The internal and external transportation should be organized rationally to avoid the conflicts of cargo flow, car flow and pedestrian. And the layout and construction of the parking lots should be paid attention to. At last, the street environment, architectural structure and layout of the roadside stores should be designed rationally to promote the flexibility in use of the stores.

*B. Governments and Enterprises Should Cooperate Together and Run the Streets in Line with the Law of the Market*

Given the significant impact the commercial streets have on the urban economy, the government should pay more attention to the renovation and construction of the commercial streets, giving appropriate financial support and supervising the behaviors of investors and merchants. Meanwhile, the government should avoid some negative effects brought by excessive intervention [5]. The constructions and developments of commercial streets should be in line with the law of the market. Only in this way, can the constructions of thematic commercial streets achieve the desired economic goals and improve the taste of the city at the same time.

*C. Lay Emphasis on the Later Nurture, Guidance, Management of the Thematic Commercial Streets*

The concerned organizations and the operating agency should work together to ensure the development of the streets and improve the shopping environment. Also, a unified management organization should be established to reinforce the guidance and management of the development of the streets, including the investment promotion, the publicity of the streets, the handle of conflicts between the development of streets and the lives of nearby residents, the maintenance of facilities, water and electricity, the lighting, the public security and sanitation, fire safety and traffic management, etc.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Harbin Industry and Information Technology Committee. The construction of the commodity market system (commercial network) in Harbin[Z]. 20012-10 -28.
- [2] China Center for Economic Research. Learn from Japanese Commercial Streets[J]. Economic Reference, 2011 (10).
- [3] Liao Zuyi. The general layout of industrial buildings [M]. Beijing: China Building Industry Press, 1984.
- [4] Xia Zuhua, Hua Weikang. Urban Flux[M]. Shanghai: Southeast University Press, 2002.
- [5] <http://www.sydcyx.cn/dichan/article/011919485.html>
- [6] Zou Yu. Researches on the Design of Urban Commercial Pedestrian Street [D]. Chongqing University, 2010.

**Wang Zhenzhen** was born in China, 1988. She is a graduate in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, China, who majors in urban planning. She is the chief planner in Sustainable design research center, HUST, Wuhan, China now, and she participated many practical projects.

**Wang Xu** was born in China, 1988. He is a graduate in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, China, who majors in urban planning. He is the chief planner in Sustainable design research center, HUST, Wuhan, China now, and he has participated many practical projects, such as Master Plan of Huangshao town, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, Low Carbon New Town Planning of North Baoding, Hebei province, urban design of the Hebei university science park, new town planning of east Hohhot, Inner Mongolia and so on.

**Hong Liangping** was born in China, 1965. He is a professor, a PhD supervisor and the associate dean of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning in Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, China, and his research interest is the sustainable urban planning and design.