



On Scene Construction of Comprehensive Leisure Streets under the Perspective of the Theory of Scenes ——Taking Shenyang Zhongjie as an Example

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Abstract. Scenes are becoming increasingly important tourist attractions in modern tourism. The Theory of Scenes is a cutting-edge theory for the study of urban culture, and the five elements it proposes, which include city places, amenities, subjects, activities and values, are also of great significance in the study of tourism. This paper takes Zhongjie, a comprehensive leisure street in Shenyang, which is a newly promoted internet celebrity, as an example, and adopts the Content Analysis method to analyze its scenes elements by organizing and summarizing the comment texts from the website, so as to summarize the successes of Zhongjie in terms of the scene content, characteristics, atmosphere, subject and internet celebrity elements. In practice, it provides a reference for the development of comprehensive leisure streets; In theory, it enriches the application of the Theory of Scenes in tourism research by exploring the scenes elements of leisure streets and their construction.

Keywords: the Theory of Scenes; Shenyang; Zhongjie; leisure street; gourmet

1 Introduction

Since the gradual recovery of cultural and tourism consumption in 2023, Shenyang's cultural and tourism industry has developed rapidly. Especially during the National Day in 2024 Shenyang city became one of the top ten fastest-growing tourist destinations in the country, with its tourist reception and consumption scale ranked first in the Northeast China^[1], and has become the newest internet celebrity in the Northeast. Although the success of Shenyang's cultural tourism cannot be separated from its rich cultural resources, cultural and tourism scenes and activities in line with the new trend of consumption, such as gourmet, night tour, fashion shopping, performances and events, have played an important role in creating an internet celebrity city.

"Scene, is the overall cultural style or aesthetic character of a place," and it is redefining the urban economy and the lives of its inhabitants ^{[2] [cover]}. The Neo-Chicago School defines it in terms of the "amenity" in economics, emphasizing that the scene is not a single amenity, but rather an organic collection of different amenities and

activities, and their embedded symbolic meanings^[3]. The Theory of Scenes they promoted focuses on the inspection of urban space from the perspective of the consumer, and is a cutting-edge theory for the study of urban culture. The theory believes that the places and amenities form the scene, and the scenes generate symbolic meanings, forming a collection of cultural values with specificity. The research framework of the Theory of Scenes consists of two main parts: subjective perception and objective construction; the objective construction mainly refers to amenities and facilities, while the subjective perception focuses on cultural values^{[2] 15}. More specifically, Silver and Clark (2015) believe that the constituent elements and key premises of scenes should include the following: firstly, city spaces that capture local differences within and across larger units; secondly, physical structures such as dance clubs or shopping malls; thirdly, persons with different genders, races, social classes, education, age and the like; and fourthly, particular activities that can articulate the distinctive combinations of the above elements; and fifthly, symbolic meanings that define what is important about the experiences on offer in a place^[4].

The Theory of Scenes initially focused on the study of urban space for locals, while tourism scene studies further expanded the scope of it by taking the tourism space shared by hosts and guests as the object of study. The combination of the Theory of Scenes and tourism research has also developed in China. As early as in 2006, an article in *Tourism Tribune* (the premier journal of tourism research in China) proposed "from landscape design to scene design"^[5], and the round-table forum of the China Tourism Research Annual Conference 2024 discussed tourism scenization and consumption upgrading in the light of new tourism practices^[6], which shows the influence of the Theory of Scenes on the theory and practice of tourism in China. There are also scholars who discuss tourism scenes in depth by combining Marxist theory, cultural and sociological theories^[7,8]. More scholars have explored the construction of tourism scenes in combination with cultural and tourism practices, especially in the integration of culture and tourism^[9], rural tourism^[10], non-heritage tourism^[11], and recreational streets^[12].

It should be noted that in the Chinese context, in addition to the "scene" in the Theory of Scenes, there is also "scape" derived from *servicescape* in practical application, which is more directed to the specific design and creation. There are scholars who carry out related theoretical discussions, putting forward the "tourscape"^[13]. Although the two words emphasize different directions manifest in different dimensions and elements, their meanings are not in conflict at the application level.

In general, compared with the development of cultural tourism practice, the academic research of the cultural tourism scenes is still scarce. This study takes Zhongjie, one of the most popular photo spots in the newly trending city of Shenyang, as a research case, and explores the construction of cultural tourism scene in a comprehensive leisure street through the analysis of review texts based on the Theory of Scenes.

2 Method and Procedure

2.1 Objects of Study and Research Methodology

Shenyang Zhongjie is a concentrated manifestation of Shenyang's diversified cultural and tourism scene. Formerly known as Siping Street, Shenyang Zhongjie was built in 1625 during the Ming Dynasty, and was the first commerce pedestrian street in China, known as "the first street in Northeast China". Zhongjie has become a must-visit place for tourists in Shenyang Nowadays, and it is also a major shopping and leisure area for locals. It is an immersive street integrating shopping, tourism, culture, and catering, with fashion brand stores, large shopping malls, famous restaurants and old hutongs, as well as a large number of internet celebrity food stalls, trendy museums, non-heritage cultural and creative stores, and script killing stores.

This study adopts content analysis methods to extract meaningful information and patterns through analysis of the comment data to form an in-depth understanding of the research object.

2.2 Data Collection and Organization

According to the number of reviews related to Middle Street on various travel and consumption platforms, and the principle of availability this study chooses Dianping.com as the data source. It is the earliest independent third-party consumer review website established in the world, which can provide relevant information and interactive evaluations in the fields of dining, shopping, leisure, entertainment, and life services. Search Shenyang Zhongjie on Dianping.com, and then crawl the comment text of Zhongjie using the Octopus data collector. Download all the user's comments from January 1st, 2023 to February 1st, 2025 totaling 2,426 comments, and about 387,000 words. After that, the collected web text was converted to txt form and initially organized, including deleting English, spaces and punctuation, etc.; then using grouped user-defined vocabulary lists, filter words that are irrelevant to the research topic or with unclear indications, such as "then", "is", etc., and replace and organize similar words. After that we use ROST CM6 software to get the text of the first 300 words sorted by word frequency, and get the first ranking 120 high-frequency words after merging and organizing again. The high-frequency words are summarized in Table 1.

According to the high-frequency word list obtained from the software, visitors' main concerns and feelings about Shenyang Zhongjie can be seen. The higher the word frequency, the higher degree of customer attention and perception. The highest word frequency of the words "Zhongjie" and "Shenyang" indicates that visitors have a higher degree of recognition of the brand name of Zhongjie; The second word is "Pedestrian Street", which shows visitors' understanding of the basic functions and nature of Middle Street; followed by "snacks", "gourmet", "bustling" and "shopping malls", which shows that food and shopping are the most important consumption content of Middle Street, as well as the visitors' perception of the bustling atmosphere of the street; The word "tick off" ranked 8th, indicating the influence of the media trends;

"the Imperial Palace" "hutong" "history" and "architecture" all ranked in the top 20, suggesting that culture and history are also main attractions of the street. The top 20 high-frequency words have clearly presented the diverse scenes of gourmet, modern business and culture and history in Zhongjie.

Table 1. High-frequency feature vocabulary of the top 120

number	word	frequency	number	word	frequency	number	word	frequency
1	Zhongjie	3175	41	Toutiao Hutong	137	81	Eat and drink	65
2	Shenyang	2489	42	shop	127	82	landmark	65
3	pedestrian street	1067	43	Ice refreshments	124	83	Shanghai	65
4	snacks	773	44	complete variety	124	84	dine	61
5	gourmet	615	45	line up	124	85	Fangcheng	60
6	bustling	591	46	timing	121	86	Lantern Festival	60
7	shopping center	549	47	friend	121	87	leisure	59
8	tick off	454	48	Henglung Plaza	121	88	Nanjing St.,	59
9	Imperial Palace	423	49	eat drink be merry	118	89	circumstance	58
10	delicious	400	50	Laobian Jiaozi	118	90	cordial	58
11	evening	388	51	Liu Laogen Grand Stage	114	91	National Day	57
12	distinctiveness	363	52	Beijing	110	92	food and beverage	57
13	trade	354	53	place of interest	109	93	night scenery	56
14	shopping streets	350	54	taste	106	94	visit and have fun	55
15	northwest	326	55	ambiance	106	95	kid	55
16	hutong	324	56	experience	106	96	Shenhe district,	54
17	prosperous	315	57	Wangfujing street	103	97	subway station	52
18	history	304	58	style	102	98	Malatang	52
19	roam around	284	59	Internet celebrity	92	99	walking	51
20	architecture	264	60	transportation	90	100	night market	50
21	crowded	256	61	surrounding	88	101	fashion	50
22	well-known	251	62	modern	82	102	hustle and bustle	49
23	convenient	250	63	weekend	82	103	small store	49
24	beautiful	242	64	other places	81	104	local people	49
25	shopping	222	65	the Shengjing	81	105	century-old	49
26	ice lolly	218	66	local	80	106	atmosphere	49
27	holiday	199	67	old established brand	79	107	plentiful	48
28	Dayuecheng	186	68	location	79	108	ancient	47
29	travelers	185	69	daytime	78	109	taste	47
30	tour	182	70	apparel	76	110	high-rise	46
31	chicken rack	172	71	tradition	74	111	play	46
32	store	171	72	recreation	73	112	lighting	46
33	metro	170	73	hotel	72	113	of one's childhood	45
34	culture	168	74	clean	72	114	a model example	45
35	flavor	165	75	unique	71	115	May Day	45
36	take pictures	158	76	long history	70	116	cheep	45
37	deserve	155	77	popularity	69	117	change	45
38	funny	154	78	satisfied	68	118	lovely	44
39	street	146	79	New Year	68	119	take a taxi	44
40	feeling	139	80	youngster	68	120	performance	44

3 **Scenes Analysis of Zhongjie**

According to the elements of scenes, namely city places, amenities, subjects, activities and values, a two-level category of the high-frequency words was formed (Table 2). City places mainly correspond to the names of attractions and regions, including "Zhongjie", "Shenyang", "Hutong", "Northeast", etc., indicating that visitors' perception of the concept of region and space is the basis for the composition of the street scene. The text on the amenities of Zhongjie includes three types of scenarios and conditions of the amenities. The three types of scenarios include modern commerce scenarios, gourmet scenarios, and culture and history scenarios. The subjects of the scenes mainly include the vendors, service workers and visitors in the street. Among them, the visitors include people from other places and many locals as well. The activity-related texts can be mainly categorized into two types: leisure and checking in pop spots, and time-related texts are also included in this study. Regarding the values part, this study divides it into three. Virtually all texts are reflections of consumer experiences and perceptions, but the more direct overall perceptions and values are reflected in this paper's data by "atmosphere perception," "overall assessment," and "overall experience".

In terms of the word frequency share, aside from the highest proportion of attraction space, gourmet come next, accounting for 14.12%, significantly higher than modern commerce and culture and history, indicating that gourmet constitutes the main object of visitors' experience. It reflects the importance of gourmet in the current tourist demand. When three meals of everyday enter the travel context, "Travel has become a way of life", is further validated. The proportion of modern commerce and leisure is also higher, both exceeding 9%, surpassing culture and history. On the whole, people's behavior here shows obvious leisure characteristics.

Table 2. Classification of high-frequency words

main category	subcategory	frequency of words	frequency ratio	high frequency words
city places (space)	attraction Space	6445	27.47%	Zhongjie, Shenyang, hutong, street, Toutiao hutong, place of interest, landmark
	regional location	805	3.43%	northeast, Beijing, Wangfujing, Shanghai, Nanjing st., Shenhe district, surrounding,
Physical structures (amenities)	modern commerce	2169	9.24%	shopping center, trade, shopping street, shopping, shop, Dayuecheng, complete variety, Henglung Plaza, apparel, Fangcheng
	gourmet	3314	14.12%	snack, gourmet, delicious, ice lolly, chicken rack, store, flavor, ice refreshments, Laobian Jiaozi, taste(v.), clean, eat and drink, dine, food and beverage, Malatang, hustle and bustle, small store, taste
	culture and history	1605	6.84%	the Imperial Palace, history, architecture, culture, the Shengjing, old established brand, tradition, long history, century-old, ancient, high-rise
	facility condition	808	3.44%	convenient, metro, transportation, location, hotel, subway station, walking, take a taxi
People (subjects)	consumer	639	2.72%	travelers, friend, other places, local people, local, youngster, kid
activities	leisure	2208	9.41%	pedestrian street, roam around, tour, eat drink be merry, Liu Laogen

				Grand Stage, recreation, lantern festival, leisure, night scenery, visit and have fun, night market, play, performance
	kick off	704	3.00%	kick off, take pictures, internet celebrity
	timing	1038	4.42%	evening, holiday, timing, weekend, daytime, New Year, National Day, May Day
symbolic meanings (values)	atmosphere perception	1288	5.49%	bustling, crowded, line up, ambience, cordial, circumstance, atmosphere, lighting
	overall assessment	1772	7.55%	distinctiveness, prosperous, well-known, beautiful, style, modern, unique, popularity, fashion, plentiful, a model example, cheap, change, lovely
	overall experience	667	2.84%	feeling, deserve, experience, funny, satisfied, of one's childhood

4 Discussions

Through the in-depth analysis and research on the review text of Shenyang Zhongjie, this paper combs the elements of the scenes of Zhongjie, and concludes that the comprehensive scenes of modern commerce, gourmet and culture and history constructed are successful, which strongly attracts both foreign and local visitors, and this is one of the main reasons why it has become a trending spot. The following key points are summarized for reference.

4.1 Rich Content and Experience

First of all, the scenes of Zhongjie are comprehensive scenes of modern commerce, gourmet, and culture and history, which satisfy visitors' needs for high emotional values such as shopping, food and entertainment, and also allow people to enjoy the long history of the Shengjing. There are also a number of popular designs suitable for kicking-off, taking photos and sharing on WeChat Moments. This makes visitors' leisure experience very abundant and meets the differentiated needs of different visitors. Secondly, the construction of the scenes is not only in terms of amenities, but also rich and colorful activities. The Theory of Scenes holds that activities link elements such as amenities, subjects and space to form interactions. Activities make scenes vivid and further enhance the attractiveness of the scenes. In addition to the leisure activities carried out by visitors, the Cultural and Tourism Bureau and proprietors of the street have also organized many activities, such as the New Year's Eve Carnival, Blessing Cultural Lantern Festival, VR Immersion Exploration Exhibition, Hanfu Parade, Symphonic Music Flash Mob, Non-Heritage Drama Performance, Subculture Night Party and so on. Together with the beautiful festival decorations, a multi-sensory feast is formed, offering pleasant and luxuriant experiences.

4.2 Scenes Featured with Distinctive Respective Images

Although Zhongjie is synthesis of many scenes, each scene has distinctive characteristics and is mostly distributed centrally, which forms separate system to attract visitors. Zhongjie's modern commerce is composed of fashion stores and large shopping

centers, mainly distributed on both sides of the arterial street; Gourmet amenities consist of street stalls and old established food stores, mostly distributed in hutongs and on both sides of the streets, with special snacks, traditional food and trending ice refreshments as their products; The main historical sites are the Imperial Palace and Zhang Xueliang's former residence located in the vicinity of the street in addition to the old hutongs and stores. Different scenes each present distinctive features, but complement each other as organic integration. Visitors can be immersed in the history while strolling, shopping and carding.

4.3 Strong Flavor of Life

Shenyang is a city of hustling and bustling, which are in the cooking fume rising from the roadside food stalls, the brilliant lights of the streets at night, the continuous flow of people in the hutongs, and the bursts of laughter up and down the stage. The content of the scenes in Zhongjie is close to people's daily lives and is a presentation of the city's humanistic features. It is bustling, ordinary and cozy, also full of vitality, is a real and simple reproduction of lives here. The new generation of travelers may not be in love with famous mountains, rivers and monuments, but more concerned about their inner feelings and emotions, the more ordinary and real, the more touching of the heart. The life atmosphere of Zhongjie runs through its food, shopping, entertainment programs and activities, presenting warm and strong flavor of life. "Above the landscape is life" is clearly reflected there.

4.4 Harmonized Host-Guest Relationships

First of all, Zhongjie is both one of the main tourist attractions in Shenyang as perceived by outsiders and a place of leisure and relaxation for locals. The comments haven't show obvious contradictions of the two kinds of visitors. Occasionally criticized as "crowded", there is no obvious negative tendency, on the contrary, it seems to be lively. Local people's comments show more hospitality, as well as affirmation and pride in Shenyang's development, and there is no resentment towards foreign tourists. Foreign tourists' comments on locals are also mostly warm, humorous and straightforward. On the other hand, the host-guest relationship between visitors and business owners or service workers is also harmonious, with cordial vendors and fair prices. Overall, the scenes of Zhongjie is a wonderful blend of beautiful scenery and simple emotions in a harmonious atmosphere between hosts and customers.

4.5 Prominent Trending Elements Easy to Share

In addition to the brand stores, trending goods and well-known hutongs and attractions, many highly visually striking photo spots have been specially built, ancient, modern or romantic. They attract people to take photos and share on WeChat Moments, especially popular among young people. The street presents a typical trending character of very high popularity on the network platform, with many videos, photos, and discussions. This is directly related to the careful creation of the beautiful scenes.

However, these deliberate constructions do not lack the foundation of humanities and material entities, but is organically integrated with the city's historical development and modern humanism, and close to daily life. It is beautification and enhancement of daily life, which hits the leisure needs of modern people, especially young people. These trending elements have enhanced the dissemination and influence of the street, and make the city of Shenyang, as well as its loveliness, well known.

5 Conclusion

In summary, the scenes construction of Shenyang Zhongjie provides a model for the development of comprehensive leisure streets. The scenes construction of tourist streets based on the perspective of scene elements emphasizes the synergistic development of material space, culture and activities. By optimizing each scene element, it creates leisure street with unique charms that meets the diversified needs of tourists and improves its quality, which is the key to the long-term development of celebrity spot. The iteration of trending is inevitable, and leisure needs are bound to keep changing. What really captures the hearts of people is the humanistic spirit of an area, which come from the scene subject's love of life and its unique local qualities. Only built on it can comprehensive scenes evolve with the times and become eternal in people's hearts.

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