



HU WEI-PING & ZHANG ZHENG-SHENG

Tourist Market and Urban Park Development (A Case Study Of Guangzhou)

Hu Wei-ping Zhang Zheng-sheng

Department of Geography,
South China Normal University, Guangzhou 510631)

Abstract: Based on intensive investigation, this paper analysis the tourist market of urban parks in Guangzhou City, South China. Some implications are listed from the analysis, and some suggestions are also brought forward to promote the development of urban parks in Guangzhou.

Key words: Tourist market; Urban park; Guangzhou

Introduction

Guangzhou is one of the most important tourism cities in China. The total receipts of tourism in Guangzhou shares 17.86% of its GDP in the year 1997. In order to make out the basic characteristics of tourist market in Guangzhou, we conducted an investigation into the tourist market of urban parks, which are most concentrated by visitors.

There are more than 70 various featured parks and historical sites in Guangzhou City. Considering their representative and characteristic, we chose 22 of them as our investigation point. The investigation was carried out from 2nd to 5th, July 1998, including two working days and two weekends. The period of time was from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We took questionnaire as our major study method. We also called on the managers of the parks. During the 4-day investigation, 6,548 pieces of valid answer sheet were received.

Investigation Results Analysis

Social Characteristic of Visitors

Five indexes such as sex, age, occupation, educational level and family economic condition were adopted to disclose the social characteristics of visitors. As the investigation reveals, the total sex proportion of visitors of Guangzhou parks was about half and a half. Male tourists were a little more than female tourists. But some particular parks differed greatly. In the parks reflecting revolution history such as the Original Site of Huangpu Military Academy, there were obviously more male visitors than female visitors. This phenomenon may due to the social roles male visitors played. While in the Yuntai Garden, it was

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reversed. Female visitors were obviously more. This showed that females were more interested in the parks with higher artistic quality. Xiaogang Park is a community park, where visitors were most old-aged. Female visitors occupied more may have something to do with the fact that females' life expectancy is longer than the male's (Tab.1).

Tab. 1 The Percentage of Male Visitors to Urban Parks in Guangzhou

Item	Total	Original Site of Huang-pu Military Academy	Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall	Huanghua-gang Park	Dongfang Amusement Park	Museum of the Nanyue King's Mausoleum	Yun-tai Garden	Sculp-ture Park	Xiao-gang Park
Percent	52.84	60.56	60.74	58.37	47.08	46.33	47.39	41.79	45.95

Young visitors were the main body of the tourist market of parks in Guangzhou. 44.31% of the visitors were 15 to 30 years of age. In some parks such as Nanhu Amusement Park and South China Botanical Garden, the proportions were higher than 60%. Only in Xiaogang Park and Martyrs Park of the Guangzhou Uprising, visitors over 60 years old were in the majority. While most visitors to the Original Site of Huangpu Military Academy and Huanghuagang Park were from 30 to 60 (Tab. 2).

Tab. 2 The Percentage of Different Ages of Urban Park Visitors in Guangzhou

Age	Total	Xiaogang Park	Martyrs Park of the Guangzhou Uprising	Huangpu Military Academy	Huanghua-gang Park
>60	13.16	54.50	33.77	9.94	32.13
30-60	30.47	22.07	28.95	49.38	33.48
15-30	44.31	13.96	28.07	33.23	24.43
<15	12.06	9.47	9.21	7.45	9.95

Considering the visitors' occupation, students were the majority. In some parks, more than a half of the visitors were students. For example, 74.31% of visitors to the Museum of the Nanyue King's Mausoleum were students. In addition, student visitors were more than 30% in South China Botanical Garden. Staff of institutions and employee of enterprises came next (Tab. 3). The variation was obvious among the parks. In community parks or parks near habitation, visitors of retiree took the lead. The proportion went as high as 61.26% in Xiaogang Park.

Tab. 3 The Percentage of Different Occupations of Urban Park Visitors in Guangzhou

Occupation	Enterprise employee	Institution stuff	Personal owner				
Students	Retiree	Farmer	Others				
Percentage	21.27	21.88	8.25	25.52	13.67	2.51	6.90

It incarnated the characteristic of high educational background when we focused on the visitors' educational attainment. 32.21% of the visitors were graduates of college level and above, a little less than the visitors of senior school level, which occupied 32.93%. The proportion of visitors of primary school level or below only took 12.49%. In the parks with abundant culture connotation as Zhenhai Tower, visitors of college level and above were more than 40%. Among them, in Lanpu Park, which represented elegant culture, 65.17% of its visitors were above college level. On the contrary, in Dongfang Amusement Park where mechanical sports dominated, visitors of college level or above were only 16.67%.

Family economic conditions of most tourists were "good" or "fairly". Visitors of "bad" and "awfully bad" family economic conditions were less than 3%(Tab.4). It illuminated that good economic foundation was the base of tourism activity. And family economic conditions of visitors to the parks of expensive ticket and high culture level were relatively preferable. The parks such as Grand World Scenic Park were good examples of this.

Tab. 4 The Percentage of Different economic conditions of Urban Park Visitors in Guangzhou

Economic conditions	Very good	Good	Fairly	Bad	Awfully bad
Percentage	10.63	39.18	47.66	2.27	0.26

Characteristic of Visitors' Behavior

Of all the visit fashions, "with colleagues or classmates" occupied most, amounted to 35.77%. The next was "with relative or family members", which weighed 21.84%. Visitors "by oneself" were no more than 10.63%. Visit fashions of each parks differed from one another. For example, as Xiaogang Park is a community park, of which the visitors were most retired people, "by oneself" visit fashion occupied 33.33%, far more than the general level.

The item "address" was used to disclose the distance between visitor's home and destination. Most visitors were from Guangzhou. Visitors from the Pearl River Delta followed. Then were visitors from other province. The

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characteristic of visitors depended on the site and scale of the parks. Visitors from other provinces were obviously more than the general level in Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall. 100% of the visitors to Xiangang Park were residents of Haizhu district of Guangzhou.

Tab. 5: The Percentage of Different Addresses of Urban Park Visitors in Guangzhou

Address	Guangzhou	Other city in the Pearl River Delta (PRD)	Other cities out of the PRD and in Guangdong	Other provinces in the mainland	Hongkong	Macau and Taiwan	Other countries or regions
Percentage	52.35	18.13	8.65	15.02	4.18	1.04	

We found that the major transportation visitors chose to get to the parks was bus, which occupied 45.85%. The next was private cars, occupied 30.94%. 18.37% of the visitors went to the parks on foot and only 4.84% by bicycle. Generally speaking, visitors to community parks were basically on foot. Visitors chose bus or private cars when the park was far away from the center of the city or their residence. And the proportion of visitors who chose bus was relatively higher if public traffic of the parks was convenient, such as Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall.

A survey of "visit times" revealed that 53.36% of the visitors went to the park for the first time, 21.65% of them were for the second or third time, 18.92% of them often went there, 6.07% of them couldn't remember clearly. Visit times contacted tightly with the factors such as the style, location, tourist market and so on. Generally speaking, the later the park had been built, or the more expensive the admission ticket was, or the more devious the position was, or the more visitors from other parts of country visited, the higher proportion "for the first time" visitors occupied. In the Grand World Scenic Park and Space Flight Spectacle, this proportion was over 80%. While in the community parks, there were quite a lot of frequenters. The parks became an indispensable part of their lives.

Characteristic of Visitor's psychology Status

As for the purpose, most visitors were "just for a wander", amounted to 38.35%. This declared that the purposes of the visitors in Guangzhou urban parks weren't strong enough. The second were those "because of its reputation", which occupied 34.08%. And the proportion of those "for collective activity" also attained 27.57%. We can conclude that, the purpose of visitors to the community parks was not strong. But for some famous and well-advertised parks such as Grand World Scenic Park, Lanpu Garden, and Dongfang Amusement Park, many of the visitors were "for its reputation". In Student dominated parks, the visitors "for collective activity" occupied quite a lot.

The investigation of "visit impression" showed that, the evaluations of Guangzhou parks were generally good (Tab. 6). Only 3% of the visitors chose "Bad" or "awfully bad".

Tab. 6 The Percentage of Different impressions of Urban Park Visitors in Guangzhou

Impression	Very good	Good	Fairly	Bad	Awfully bad	
No comment						
Percentage	18.30	45.35	30.87	2.69	0.31	2.48

The investigation of "whether you will be back" revealed that, 47.58% of the visitors answered definitely "yes", 41.39% of them chose "it depends", only 11.03% of them answered "no". In Xianggang Park, the Baiyun Mountain Resort, Dongfang Amusement Park, Martyrs Park of the Guangzhou Uprising, Lanpu Garden, Yuntai garden, Sculpture park and Luhu park, more than 55% of the visitors answered definitely "yes". While in Guangzhou Zoo and Grand World Scenic Park, 37.80% and 32.63% of the visitors chose "no".

We also surveyed "which park is the best in Guangzhou". The status of each park in the visitors' mind varied a lot. 1125 visitors chose Yuexiu Park. Dongfang Amusement Park took the second place, 713 visitors supported. The third was Yuntai Garden, 520 visitors. The fourth was the Baiyun Mountain Resort, 418 visitors supported. In addition, Guangzhou Zoo, South China Botanical Garden and Grand World scenic park each had 200 to 300 supporters. Other parks were lowly identified. Space Craft Spectacle, Lanpu Garden, Sculpture Park, Nanhu Amusement Park, Culture Park, Donghu Park and Liuhuahu Park each had 70 to 90 supporters. The identification rates were far below that of the former 7 parks.

Tourist Market Implications for the Urban Park Development

Through the investigation, we find out some urban park development implications as following:

First, the development of urban parks should take serving the citizens as the major purpose. The investigation revealed that most of the visitors to Guangzhou parks were local residents. Especially in some community parks, local visitors occupied the majority. Therefore, urban parks should be built based on the idea of taking citizens as their major service objects, on the personnel-oriented concept serving the citizens wholeheartedly. Citizens should

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be considered in the location, theme planning, ticket price fixing and open regulations of the park so that they could have a good relaxation in spare time in the "oasis" of urban park.

Second, the development of parks should stand out their individualities. We can see from the investigation that parks rich of characteristics and innovations are usually more welcomed by the visitors. Individuality is the life of urban parks. We can't imitate blindly and manufacture in a rough way in the development of urban parks ignoring the cultural heritage of the city. On the contrary, we should try to dredge up the characteristic of urban culture, try to build a featured park to edify people's sentiment with high culture quality.

Third, we should respect the market regulations. Under the current situation of multi-channel investment, we should control the cost of urban parks to depress the price of their tickets and increase the rate of revisit. This is a problem we should analyse gravely in the development of urban parks. The investigation showed that parks with lower price were more easily to be accepted by the citizens.

Fourth, we should highly regard the ecological benefit. The results of the investigation implicated that the parks in pursuit of outstanding ecological benefit usually get more good opinions of the visitors. The parks with good environment such as the Baiyun Mountain Resort and Yuntai Garden have highly praises. So giving back an "oasis" to the citizens should be the basic aim of urban park developments. We should deal with the relationship among economic benefit, social benefit and ecology benefit properly, build up holistic ecology concept, and let urban parks exert the functions they ought to in the improving of urban environment quality.

Fifth, the development of urban parks should be sustainable. A resort often has its lifecycle distinctively. It must renew its content continuously with the development stage to keep long terms of attraction. We should respect the independent rules of the development of the resort and take the need of sustainable development into consider in the development of urban parks.

Suggestions for the Urban Park Development of Guangzhou

Improve Market Economic System, Accelerate the Development of Urban Parks in Guangzhou

Since the 1990's, the step of urban parks development in Guangzhou was further accelerated. The rapid development of urban parks promoted urban development of Guangzhou greatly. But there are also some problems to be

solved. The change of investment from simply government finance fund to multi-channel investment resulted in the change of the goal of urban park development. Parks run on corporation mechanism sometimes merely care about economic benefit, not the long-term target of serving the citizens. The high price of tickets limited the amount of visitors. It is necessary to establish a mechanism to lower the price of admission ticket to urban parks and let more citizens enjoy the advantage of urban park developments. Some privileged policies may be made by the urban government to let the investors obtain return indirectly from the exterior benefit of urban parks. For example, the investors can be permitted to acquire favorable land development authority around the parks, so that the investors may be encouraged to lower the ticket and serving the citizens initiatively.

Integrate

Urban Planning, Develop Urban Parks Scientifically and Reasonably

The development of urban parks should be carried out according to the urban planning closely. The planning of the urban park imago, size hierarchy and spatial distribution of urban parks in Guangzhou should be strengthened. Guangzhou lacks famous urban parks especially in the whole nation and the world. Yuexiu Park should be extruded as the representation of the city image of Guangzhou, Lingnan Culture and the famous historical city. It should be planned and designed together with the surrounding parks such as the Museum of the Nanyue King's Mausoleum, Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, Lanpu Garden and the site of ancient palace and garden, which is being excavated, to construct a strong atmosphere of high culture quality of the core section of urban parks. The hierarchy structure and spatial distribution of current parks should also be improved. There are no highly attractive parks in Fangchun, Huangpu and Tianhe at the district level. The development of community parks is still to be thought much of. Considering the spatial distribution, the majority parks of the city centralize in the axis from the Baiyun Mountain Resort to Yuexiu Park, while the new districts and industrial zones are far away from the parks. This problem should be solved appropriately by urban planning.

Develop Lingnan Culture, and Display the Famous Historical City

Urban parks were importance windows to display urban culture. We should try to disclose the cultural heritage of the city and display the characteristics of urban culture. Guangzhou has a culture deposition of more than 2000 years. It is a representative city of Lingnan culture. Historic culture sites such as Zhenhai Tower reveal the brilliant culture in the history. While the revolution memorials in modern history such as Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall tell the visitors the

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sagas of the martyrs. Lanpu Garden is a typical represent of Lingnan Gardens. And Dongfang Amusement Park is a revelation of the prosperous prospects of Guangzhou after Chinese Economic Reform and Open Door policy. Holding tight these culture heritages, we can attain the basic aim of urban park development in Guangzhou. That is to build more and better urban parks rich of culture connotations.

Combine the Development of Communities, Promote the Development of Urban Parks

Community is a basic unit of a city, and it's also a district where the residents move about most frequently. The combination of urban park development and community development may promote their reciprocity. Urban parks can provide public space of activity, improve the quantity of community environment. While the community can offer urban parks stable visitors, maintain the park's normal operation. Guangzhou is in a period of rapid development. If we can push this kind of mode, it will have a far-reaching active influence on the benefit of the urban parks and the development of communities.

Improve Urban Infrastructure Facilities, Develop Ecological City

It's very important to improve the urban infrastructure such as the ecological environment and urban transportation for the development of urban tourism. Bus is the major transportation for citizens to go on a journey, so we should make great efforts to develop special bus travel line. We should also set up ecosystem thoughts, try to build Guangzhou a real "Shan-Shui" city. We should combine the development of urban parks with forest parks, nature reserves and ecological reserves to build Guangzhou worthy the name of "Flower City".

Stick to Sustainable Development, Try to Consummate Urban Park Development

The development of urban park is a long-term project. Only by sticking to sustainable development can the park keep long-last attraction. To historic parks, we should deal with the relationship between protection and innovation. It is a basic rule of sustainable development to adopt modern science and technology respecting the history and protecting the antitype, which may help to display the characteristics of the park better. To the participant parks, we should cope with the tourism tide to get rid of the stale and bring forth the fresh. In a word, the development of urban parks should base on its own characteristics and chose the way of sustainable development.

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About the author

Dr. Hu Weiping is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, South China Normal University. He have conducted and consulted with various types of research projects in the fields of tourism, recreation, parks, and services management. His research expertise includes tourism planning, urban planning, geographic information system (GIS) and remote sensing applications, real estate appraising, travel and visitor surveys, demand forecasts, tourism marketing segmentation, planning strategy development, tourist behavior analysis, and investment appraising. In particular, he have been focusing on making regional tourism planning , general urban planing, and parks planning.

Zhang Zheng-sheng

Department of Geography,
South China Normal University, Guangzhou 510631