M&A Goodwill in Chinese A-share listed companies: Findings from Industrial and Regional Perspectives

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Abstract. Based on the data of China's A-share listed companies from 2007 to 2021, this paper conducts a multidimensional statistical analysis on the confirmation and impairment of M&A(M&A) goodwill of listed companies from the perspective of industry and region. The results of statistical analysis show that:(1) On the whole, the changes of goodwill related indicators can be divided into three stages: small M&A in the budding stage; the sharp increase of goodwill and risk of its impariment in the boom stage; the order and standardization in the stable stage.(2) In terms of industry, the number of listed companies in the Manufacturing Industry was the largest, and their goodwill changes were the most representative. Goodwill in Culture, Sport and Entertainment and Health and Social Work was of low quality and high risk. Hotel and Catering Sectors, Mining and Transportation, Storage and Postal Services were the "goodwill-high-quality" industries. Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery, Scientific Research and Technical Services, and Comprehensive Service belonged to the "goodwill-conservative" industries.(3) In terms of region, North China, led by the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei economic circle, was the leader in China's M&A market. In the budding stage, there was little confirmation for goodwill and provision for goodwill impairment in regions outside North China. During the boom stage, goodwill related indicators rose sharply in all regions. In the stable stage, the value of goodwill in each region did not change much, but the average value of provision for goodwill impairment increased, especially in northeast China and central China.

Keywords: Goodwill, Goodwill impartment, Chinese A-share listed companies, Industry, Region, Statistic Analysis.

1. Introduction

After the issuance of *the Accounting Standards for Business Enterprises* in 2006, goodwill was separated from intangible assets and independently recognized as an unidentifiable asset that can only be generated by enterprise M&A activities. After more than ten years of development, China's capital market system and mechanism have gradually matured. In order to improve the efficiency of resource allocation, the wave of M&A of listed companies in China rose from then on, and the goodwill scale of listed companies in the stock market increased rapidly. However, the rapid growth of M&A goodwill was accompanied by risks.

The amount of goodwill usually reflects two economic phenomena. First, many of the benefits associated with future synergies and mergers are typically reflected in the price of the deal. Secondly, the situation of excess goodwill also frequently occurs in M&A (He et al, 2016). Over-optimistic and conceited M&A behaviors lead to huge and over-overestimated goodwill in the process of M&A (Du Xingqiang et al, 2011). Many M&A occur when a huge amount of goodwill is confirmed, and after the performance compensation commitment period, a huge amount of goodwill impairment is accrued. M&A premium, goodwill and goodwill impairment will all aggravate the risk of stock price crash and the level of risk taken by enterprises, and the impact is more significant in the companies with goodwill impairment (Liu Chao et al, 2019; Zhou Zejiang et al, 2019; Xie et al, 2021; Zhang Danni, 2021). The rapid growth of goodwill scale of M&A has attracted extensive attention from all walks of life, and the confirmation and impairment of goodwill of listed companies have become a hot topic.

In 2018, *Accounting Supervision Risk Reminder No. 8 - Goodwill Impairment* was officially issued, which stipulates that enterprises should conduct impairment tests on goodwill at least at the end of

each year, reasonably judge and identify signs of goodwill impairment, and shall not fail to conduct impairment tests on the grounds of performance compensation commitment. The issuance of this regulation effectively has rectified the market chaos of the withdrawal of ultra-high M&A goodwill and the impairment of ultra-high goodwill, and standardized the operation of the M&A market.

This paper selects the data of China's A-share listed companies from 2007 to 2021 in iFinD, conducts multi-dimensional statistical analysis on the confirmation and impairment of M&A goodwill of these companies by year, industry and region, and further studies the goodwill and impairment characteristics of various industries and regions, in order to better reveal the current situation of the capital market. Thus, it provides a reference basis for the CSRC (China Securities Regulatory Commission) and other regulatory authorities and accounting standard setting institutions. It also helps enterprises to treat high goodwill cautiously and pay attention to goodwill risks.

Compared with existing research, the possible characteristic innovation and marginal contribution of this paper lie in the following two aspects: (1) Division of goodwill development stages. Based on the policy background and data statistical results, this paper divides the changes of goodwill related indicators into three stages, which helps to sort out the overall context of goodwill changes; (2) multi-dimensional statistical analysis. The data analysis in this paper integrates the time dimension, industry dimension and regional dimension, and deeply excavates the goodwill characteristics under each dimension, which reveals the current situation of the capital market more comprehensively and is conducive to providing the basis for future policy concerns.

2. Data Sources

The data for this paper comes from iFinD. Since the Accounting Standards for Business Enterprises was formally implemented in 2007, this paper selects A-share listed companies from 2007 to 2021. In terms of data preprocessing, we eliminate ST and *ST companies, as well as financial companies, because of the particularity of the accounting system and asset structure of financial companies. The geographical region classification comes from the geographical division of A-share data browser in iFinD, and the industry classification standard is based on the Guidelines on Industry Classification of Listed Companies (revised in 2012) issued by CSRC [Announcement No. 31]. All the sample data are authentic, processed in Stata and visualized through Excel and Tableau. The statistical analysis of this paper mainly involves the following indicators:

Companies with Goodwill: The ratio of the number of observations in which goodwill is confirmed to the total number of observations during the year or period (%).

Average Goodwill: Average of year-end goodwill balances of observations for which goodwill is confirmed during the year or period (100 million yuan).

Companies with Goodwill Impairment: The ratio of the number of observations for which impairment of goodwill is accrued to the number of observations for which goodwill is confirmed during the year or period (%).

Average Goodwill Impairment: The average value of goodwill impairment of observations for which goodwill impairment is accrued during the year or period (100 million yuan).

Degree of Goodwill Impairment: Sum of goodwill impairment of observations during the year or period / (sum of goodwill impairment of observations + sum of goodwill balance at the end of each year of observations) (%).

3. Analysis on the Overall Status Quo of M&A Goodwill

In this part, this paper firstly makes a statistical analysis on the goodwill confirmation and impairment of A-share listed companies from 2007 to 2021. Table 1 shows the changes of the confirmation for goodwill, the provision for goodwill impairment，the proportion of companies confirming goodwill and making provision for goodwill impairment and the proportion of goodwill impairment in the 15 years. Most of these indicators showed a trend of first increasing and then

decreasing or stabilizing. Then, according to the statistical results, this paper divides the development of M&A goodwill into three-time stages.

Table 1. Goodwill and Goodwill Impairment of Listed Companies from 2007 to 2021

Year	Companies with Goodwill	Average Goodwill	Companies with Goodwill Impairment	Average Goodwill Impairment	Degree of Goodwill Impairment
2007	29.0%	0.817	-	-	-
2008	31.7%	1.196	-	-	-
2009	33.1%	1.351	-	-	-
2010	33.1%	1.298	3.0%	0.229	1.6%
2011	35.6%	1.352	4.7%	0.128	1.2%
2012	38.8%	1.402	6.3%	0.074	0.9%
2013	42.8%	1.578	7.2%	0.162	1.7%
2014	47.3%	2.270	7.0%	0.201	1.3%
2015	50.9%	3.935	9.8%	0.373	1.8%
2016	53.9%	5.698	13.3%	0.387	1.7%
2017	52.8%	6.376	14.6%	0.662	2.9%
2018	55.9%	6.058	23.9%	1.678	11.0%
2019	55.7%	5.708	22.4%	1.551	10.1%
2020	52.5%	5.137	18.3%	1.445	9.1%
2021	50.0%	4.885	16.8%	0.869	5.7%

The fluctuation of the average value of goodwill and goodwill impairment in the 15 years can be obtained from Figure 1: the average value of goodwill began to surge in 2014, reached the peak in 2017 (more than 630 million *yuan*), and then gradually decreased to 480 million *yuan* in 2021. The average value of goodwill impairment increased to nearly 170 million *yuan* in 2018 and remained high for the next three years, until it plunged to about 90 million *yuan* in 2021. The degree of goodwill impairment fluctuated at a low level until 2018, when it soared to 11% and then declined steadily. Therefore, we conclude that with the M&A boom in China in 2014, the growth rate of goodwill has also increased significantly since that year. The average values of goodwill and goodwill impairment showed a trend of first increasing and then decreasing, both reaching a peak around 2018. The degree of goodwill impairment suddenly became serious in 2018, and then weakened year by year with the standardization of the M&A market by *Accounting Supervision Risk Reminder No. 8 - Goodwill Impairment*.

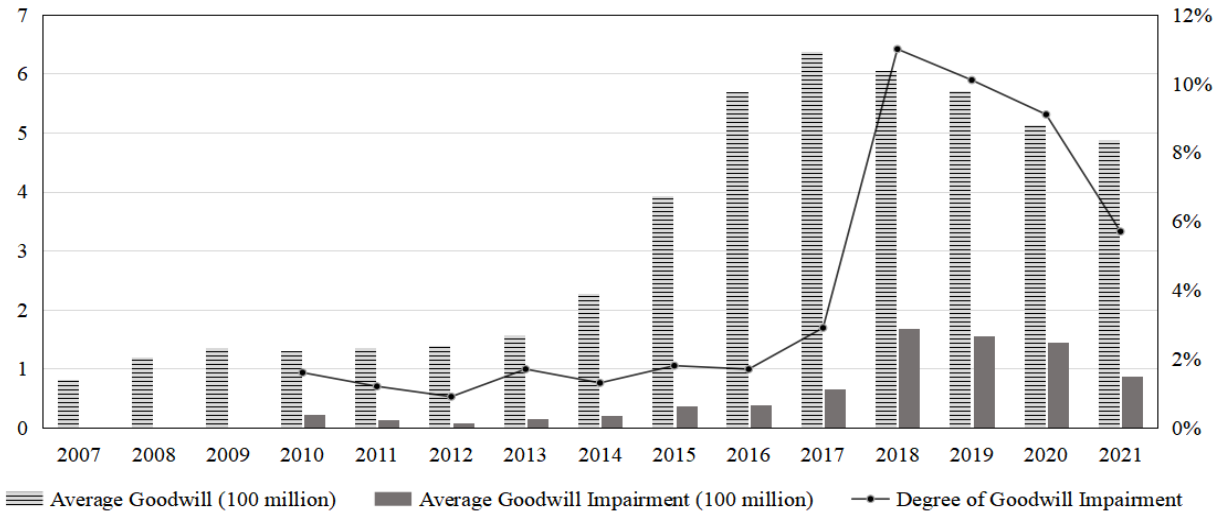


Figure 1. The variation trend of Goodwill and Goodwill Impairment from 2007 to 2021

Figure 2 shows the provision of goodwill and goodwill impairment of China's listed companies in the past 15 years. The proportion of listed companies that confirmed goodwill increased sharply from 2007 to 2019, nearly doubling from 29.0% in 2007 to 55.6% in 2019. The ratio fell somewhat over the next two years, but remained at half. The proportion of companies making provision for goodwill impairment peaked in 2018 (11.9%) and has gradually decreased since then. It can be seen that since the issuance and implementation of *the Accounting Standards for Business Enterprises (2006)*, the phenomenon of goodwill provision and goodwill impairment has become more and more common on the whole. In 2021, nearly half of the listed companies were involved in the confirmation of M&A goodwill, and about one-sixth of the companies which confirmed goodwill were involved in the provision of goodwill impairment.

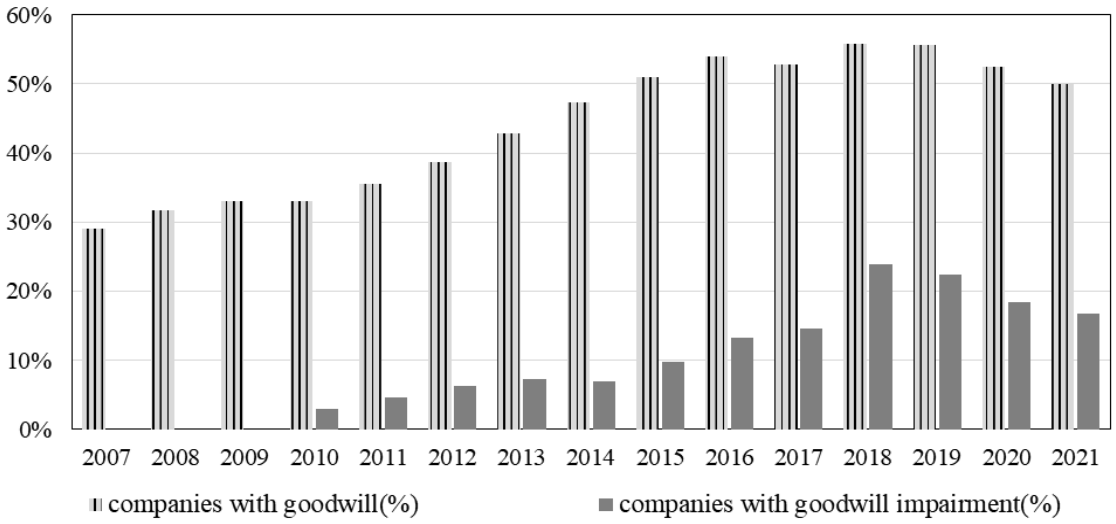


Figure 2. The variation trend of Companies with Goodwill and Goodwill Impairment from 2007 to 2021

Through the observation of the change trend of goodwill indicators in the past 15 years (Figure 1 and Figure 2), this paper divides the change of goodwill related indicators into three stages: budding stage, boom stage and stable stage. The specific division and phased statistics are shown in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2. Goodwill and Goodwill Impairment Status in Three Stages

	2007-2013	2014-2018	2019-2021
Companies with Goodwill	35.75%	52.47%	52.47%
Average Goodwill	1.34	5.11	5.24
	2010-2013	2014-2018	2019-2021
Companies with Goodwill Impairment	5.45%	14.37%	18.94%
Average Goodwill Impairment	0.14	0.96	1.32
Degree of goodwill impairment	1.35%	4.90%	8.34%

The first stage is from 2007 to 2013 (impairment related indicators are from 2010 to 2013), which is the budding stage of China's M&A market. At this stage, there were fewer M&A events, and the proportion and amount of goodwill confirmation and impairment provision were also small. The second stage is from 2014 to 2018, which is the boom stage of China's M&A wave. At this stage, a large number of M&A events occurred, and the proportion and amount of goodwill confirmation and impairment provision increased significantly, bringing high risks. The third stage is from 2018 to 2021, which is the stable stage of China's M&A market. Since the issuance of *Accounting Supervision Risk Reminder No. 8 - Goodwill Impairment* in 2018, the M&A market has developed to an orderly and standardized manner. The degree of goodwill impairment has gradually decreased. The amount of goodwill confirmation and impairment provision and the proportion of companies confirmed goodwill and companies made provision for goodwill impairment have also gradually fallen from a extremely high level to a relatively normal level though the average indicators concerning goodwill in the third stage is higher than those in the second stage.

4. Analysis on the industrial status quo of M&A goodwill

In this section, we present the top three industries and the bottom three industries of the five indicators in each stage in a comprehensive and detailed manner (Table 3). Based on the statistical results in Table 3, we select some typical industries in the overall goodwill change of listed companies for more detailed statistical analysis (Table 4).

Table 3. Goodwill and Goodwill Impairment Status from industrial perspective

		2007-2013		2014-2018		2019-2021	
		Industry	Value	Industry	Value	Industry	Value
Companies with Goodwill	Top Three	Health and Social Work	93.3%	Health and Social Work	93.3%	Health and Social Work	88.0%
		Leasing and Business Service	56.2%	Culture, Sports and Entertainment	70.9%	Education	81.3%
		Information Transmission, Software and Information Technology Services	56.0%	Information Transmission, Software and Information Technology Services	69.4%	Leasing and Business Service	70.1%
	Bottom Three	Realty Business	32.5%	Realty Business	43.0%	Comprehensive Service	43.9%
		Comprehensive Service	29.0%	Education	40.0%	Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery	42.3%
		Transportation, Storage and Postal Services	26.3%	Comprehensive Service	36.6%	Hotel and Catering Sectors	36.0%
Average Goodwill	Top Three	Mining Industry	11.33	Hotel and Catering Sectors	24.01	Hotel and Catering Sectors	53.44
		Electricity, Heat,	4.73	Mining Industry	18.91	Health and Social	13.50

		Gas and Water Production and Supply Industries				Work	
		Transportation, Storage and Postal Services	3.53	Culture, Sports and Entertainment	11.82	Mining Industry	12.81
	Bottom Three	Scientific Research and Technical Services	0.29	Water Conservancy, Environment and Public Facilities Management Industry	2.10	Scientific Research and Technical Services	3.04
		Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery	0.17	Comprehensive Service	1.76	Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery	2.12
		Residential Services, Repairs and Other Services	0.11	Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery	1.71	Comprehensive Service	1.02
		2010-2013		2014-2018		2019-2021	
		Industry	Value	Industry	Value	Industry	Value
Companies with Goodwill Impairment	Top Three	Health and Social Work	18.2%	Health and Social Work	43.3%	Health and Social Work	46.9%
		Hotel and Catering Sectors	13.2%	Hotel and Catering Sectors	31.8%	Education	40.0%
		Culture, Sports and Entertainment	8.8%	Culture, Sports and Entertainment	26.2%	Culture, Sports and Entertainment	33.9%
	Bottom Three	Transportation, Storage and Postal Services	3.0%	Mining Industry	11.4%	Hotel and Catering Sectors	16.0%
		Mining Industry	2.4%	Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery	11.1%	Mining Industry	13.9%
		Residential Services, Repairs and Other Services	0.0%	Transportation, Storage and Postal Services	7.0%	Transportation, Storage and Postal Services	11.0%
Average Goodwill Impairment	Top Three	Electricity, Heat, Gas and Water Production and Supply Industries	1.10	Leasing and Business Service	2.87	Culture, Sports and Entertainment	3.63
		Water Conservancy, Environment and Public Facilities Management Industry	0.63	Mining Industry	2.76	Health and Social Work	3.44
		Leasing and Business Service	0.56	Culture, Sports and Entertainment	2.30	Education	2.52
	Bottom Three	Health and Social Work	0.05	Transportation, Storage and Postal Services	0.27	Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery	0.27
		Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and	0.01	Hotel and Catering Sectors	0.26	Comprehensive Service	0.17

		Fishery					
		Scientific Research and Technical Services	0.01	Education	0.16	Hotel and Catering Sectors	0.16
Degree of Goodwill Impairment	Top Three	Water Conservancy, Environment and Public Facilities Management Industry	17.4%	Comprehensive Service	14.1%	Culture, Sports and Entertainment	25.1%
		Hotel and Catering Sectors	6.4%	Scientific Research and Technical Services	12.4%	Education	19.4%
		Mining Industry	5.2%	Information Transmission, Software and Information Technology Services	9.0%	Health and Social Work	12.8%
	Bottom Three	Scientific Research and Technical Services	0.3%	Education	1.0%	Electricity, Heat, Gas and Water Production and Supply Industries	2.8%
		Mining Industry	0.1%	Transportation, Storage and Postal Services	0.8%	Mining Industry	2.8%
		Residential Services, Repairs and Other Services	0.0%	Hotel and Catering Sectors	0.7%	Hotel and Catering Sectors	0.1%

Due to the particularity of the financial reporting structure of the Financial Industry (industry code J), its data has been eliminated. In addition, since the total number of companies in the Residential Service, Repair and Other Services (industry code O) from 2014 to 2021 and the number of companies in the Education Industry (industry code P) from 2007 to 2013 were too small, making the statistical data not universal, these data have been excluded. Apart of that, according to the iFind database, all companies only started to make provision for goodwill impairment losses in 2010. Therefore, when it comes to the data processing related to goodwill impairment, this paper narrows the sample time range to 2010 to 2021. Moreover, 2010-2013 is used to replace 2007-2013 as the "first stage" time in the analysis results related to goodwill impairment.

The results of the analysis of goodwill by industry show that in each stage, the confirmation of goodwill and the provision of goodwill impairment in each industry were quite different, and had their own characteristics. As the industry with the largest proportion of the number of listed companies (the ten-year average is 65.09%), the change of goodwill of Manufacturing Industry (industry code C) had a wide impact on the change of the overall goodwill of listed companies. In the three stages, the trend of changes in the goodwill of the Manufacturing Industry and all companies was very consistent, and the five goodwill related indicators of the Manufacturing Industry were almost lower than the overall data to a small extent. It can be seen that compared with all industries, the proportion of companies in the Manufacturing Industry that confirmed goodwill and made provision for goodwill impairment as well as the amount of goodwill and goodwill impairment were lower, indicating that the operation for goodwill in this industry was relatively conservative.

Table 4. Goodwill and Goodwill Impairment Status of Manufacturing Industry

		2007-2013	2014-2018	2019-2021
Companies with Goodwill	Manufacturing	32.60%	50.66%	49.38%
	Total	35.75%	52.47%	52.47%
Average Goodwill	Manufacturing	0.72	4.26	4.50
	Total	1.34	5.11	5.24
		2010-2013	2014-2018	2019-2021
Companies with Goodwill Impairment	Manufacturing	5.41%	13.81%	17.02%
	Total	5.45%	14.37%	18.94%
Average Goodwill Impairment	Manufacturing	0.08	0.77	1.14
	Total	0.14	0.96	1.32
Degree of Goodwill Impairment	Manufacturing	1.52%	4.69%	8.05%
	Total	1.35%	4.90%	8.34%

Health and Social Work (industry code Q) ranked first in all industries in terms of the proportion of companies that confirmed goodwill and the proportion of companies that made provision for goodwill impairment in each stage, and its Average Goodwill, Average Goodwill Impairment and Degree of Goodwill Impairment were relatively high in all industries in the third stage, which belonged to the "goodwill-radical" industry. Although companies in this industry had generated a high amount of goodwill through M&A, the quality of goodwill was low and there was a large risk of impairment. The goodwill characteristics of Culture, Sports and Entertainment (industry code R) were similar to those of Health and Social Work.

The proportion of the number of companies confirming goodwill in the Hotel and Catering Sectors (industry code H) was the same as the overall trend of all industries. Although the Average Goodwill was at a high level, the Average Goodwill Impairment and the Degree of Goodwill Impairment were at the bottom of the whole industry, indicating that the goodwill generated in this industry had a high quality, instead of "bubble goodwill." Mining Industry (industry code B) and Transportation, Storage and Postal Services (industry code G) were similar to the Hotel and Catering Sectors, with slightly worse goodwill quality than it. But compared with all industries, they are still "goodwill-high-quality" industries with relatively high average goodwill and relatively low average goodwill impairment.

The average goodwill confirmed by Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery (industry code A), Scientific Research and Technical Services (industry code M) and Comprehensive Service (industry code S) was extremely low, almost at the bottom of the industry in all stages. Because the confirmation of goodwill in these three industries was very conservative and the risk of goodwill impairment was low, they were almost at the bottom of the average goodwill impairment ranking, belonging to the industries more "goodwill-conservative" than Manufacturing Industry.

5. Analysis on the regional status quo of M&A goodwill

Following the analysis of the current situation of goodwill from the perspective of industry in the previous section, this part analyzes the geographical distribution of goodwill of listed companies from the spatial perspective, so as to explore the relationship between the development of M&A market and the region.

In order to understand the goodwill confirmation and impairment status of listed companies in different geographical regions in China, this paper makes statistics and presents the relevant data by region, The seven geographical regions are: Northeast, East, Central, North, South, northwest and Southwest. The basic basis of the seven geographical divisions is to carry out the division work on the basis of science, integrating various dimensions such as history and nationality, and following relevant division principles.



Figure 3. division of seven geographical regions in China

Table 5. Goodwill and Goodwill Impairment Status from geographical perspective

		Northeast	East	Central	North	South	Northwest	Southwest
Stage 1 2007-2013	Companies with Goodwill	10.0%	10.1%	11.9%	14.7%	11.0%	11.9%	11.1%
	Average Goodwill	0.697	0.883	0.681	3.831	0.768	0.385	0.660
	Companies with Goodwill Impairment	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%	1.3%	1.5%	1.0%	1.0%
	Average Goodwill Impairment	0.120	0.097	0.098	0.324	0.105	0.112	0.097
Stage 2 2014-2018	Companies with Goodwill	15.0%	18.7%	19.7%	21.3%	21.7%	15.7%	16.2%
	Average Goodwill	6.925	4.623	3.546	8.705	4.638	3.610	3.048
	Companies with Goodwill Impairment	4.8%	5.0%	4.9%	5.8%	6.6%	5.2%	3.3%
	Average Goodwill Impairment	0.882	0.815	0.706	1.218	1.108	1.090	1.117
Stage 3 2019-2021	Companies with Goodwill	11.6%	15.7%	13.7%	16.9%	18.1%	11.7%	13.8%
	Average Goodwill	6.168	4.727	6.115	7.677	4.786	4.406	3.290
	Companies with Goodwill Impairment	4.5%	5.5%	4.7%	6.6%	7.2%	3.6%	3.9%
	Average Goodwill Impairment	2.172	1.274	1.466	1.686	1.086	1.399	0.732

It can be seen from Table 5 that in the first stage (2007-2013), the goodwill confirmation and goodwill impairment provision in North China significantly exceeded those in other regions, and this difference was reflected in both the proportion of companies and the amount. In the second stage (2014-2018), the confirmation and impairment of goodwill in various regions were fully upgraded, which was reflected in the significant increase of the four indicators in the table. In the third stage (2019-2021), the proportion of companies confirming goodwill decreased in all regions, but the average goodwill impairment increased, especially in northeast China and central China (both more than doubled the previous stage).

It's worth noting that in the three stages, while the average goodwill of each region increased as a whole, it also showed regional characteristics. The charts below show the change in the geographic distribution of average goodwill (by seven geographic regions).



(a) stage1: 2007-2013 (b) stage2: 2014-2018 (c) stage3: 2019-2021

Figure 4. changes in the distribution of average goodwill in the seven geographical regions of China

According to Figure (a), at this stage, except for North China, goodwill was rarely confirmed in other regions. In Figure (b), with the rise of M&A wave, the national goodwill confirmation amount increased significantly, and the highest average goodwill was still in North China, followed by Northeast China. In Figure (c), the overall distribution of average goodwill did not change much, with a slight decrease in average goodwill in North China and a substantial increase in average goodwill in central China. As a whole, in Figure 4, North China, led by the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei economic circle, had already experienced high M&A goodwill at an early stage and may be the leader in China's M&A market.

6. Conclusion

Based on the multi-dimensional perspective of industry, region and time, this paper analyzes the development and current situation of China's A-share listed companies' goodwill from 2007 to 2021 from the average amount of goodwill confirmation and goodwill impairment provision and the proportion of listed companies.

In general, goodwill changes can be divided into three stages: budding stage, boom stage and stable stage. In the first stage, there were few M&A events, which rarely involved goodwill processing; In the second stage, the number of M&A events increased greatly, the amount of goodwill confirmation and goodwill impairment and the proportion of companies increased significantly to the peak, and the goodwill risk soared; In the third stage, the number of M&A events, the amount of goodwill confirmation and impairment, and the proportion of companies decreased from an extremely high level to a relatively normal level after passing the policy regulation.

From the perspective of industry, there were great differences in the treatment of goodwill in various industries. Among all listed companies, the Manufacturing Industry accounted for the largest number, and its goodwill changes had a wide range of influence, but the operation for goodwill was conservative. Culture, Sport and Entertainment and Health and Social Work belonged to the "goodwill-redical" industries with serious "goodwill bubble" and the risk of impairment was large. Goodwill generated by Hotel and Catering Sectors, Mining and Transportation, Storage and Postal Services was of high quality. Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery, Scientific Research and Technical Services, and Comprehensive Service belonged to the "goodwill-conservative" industries.

From the perspective of region, in the budding stage, except North China, which was a "high goodwill and high risk" region, little goodwill and goodwill impairment were accrued in other regions. During the boom stage, goodwill related indicators rose sharply in all regions, with North China still leading the way. In the stable stage, the average value of goodwill in each region had little change, but the average value of goodwill impairment increased compared with the previous stage, especially in northeast China and central China. From the distribution of the average value of goodwill, North China, led by the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei economic circle, was the leader in China's M&A market.

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