



A Brief Introduction of a Wet Market in Nanjing, China

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Article History: Submitted 12 May 2018, Accepted 23 July 2018, Published 15 October 2018

DOI: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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Abstract

In the urban regions of China, wet markets have been popular in their food retail because of fresh items sold in the market. Nanjing is one of the ancient cities of China. The urban dwellers of this city consume food from the wet market besides agricultural products. This paper discusses about the sources of food related to meat, fish, vegetables and fruits in a retail market of the Nanjing city. The field survey of 20 shops at Zhu Jiang Street of the Nanjing City provides the basis for the wet market analysis in this paper. This paper examines the wet market items, shopkeepers' work time and market differences of the Zhu Jiang Road. Many people purchase raw fish, meat, fruits and vegetables every day from the wet market of the city. The managed markets of this type also seem ineffective in the matter of meeting specified standards of raw meat and fish safety. The observation of shops and the interview with shopkeepers have designated the necessity of environmental improvements for the market sustainability. Although the shopping styles of consumers and shopkeepers are different between male and female, there seems no difficulties in their communication in Nanjing.

Keywords: Wet market, meat, fish, fruit, vegetable, local production

Introduction

In the modern world, the people consume food mainly from six food groups as grains, fruits, dairy products, meats and their substitutes and fats in order to obtain carbohydrates, protein and fat. Grains, vegetables, fruits, meat and fish can provide such nutrients in different ratios. The diversities of urban residents' dietary are some of the causes of the wet market development in Nanjing. The local productions are sent to the wet market. Strange wild animals, domestic animals are sold in the wet market. For example, sea food items of various types; mutton, chicken, etc. of the domestic animals and the strange wild animals like snakes, porcupines, etc. are the main items of such market. Moreover, some vegetables and fruits are also sold at Zhu Jiang Street of Nanjing (Fig. 1).

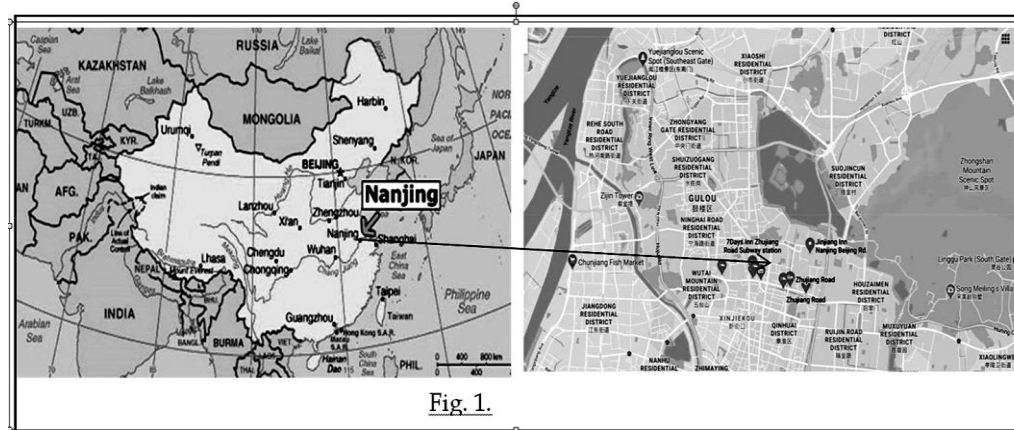


Fig. 1.

Source: Google EarthPro 2017

The food items that are eaten in cities and their outskirts are different. Because dietetic varieties reduce and uncertainty of food rises with distance from the market (Downing and Laraia 2016). But such a distance has not affected the utilization of fruit as well as vegetable in Michigan of the USA (Sadler et al. 2013). The selling price of the market is a significant element in comparison to the cost caused by physical distance. Chinese consumers generally don't like keeping food and vegetables for a long time. Therefore, they want to buy such items freshly and daily (Zhang and Pan 2013).

The government policy of China has a great influence on the consumption of such fresh food items in cities. Such wet markets like China have supplied varieties of food and vegetables in many other regions and countries, such as Hong Kong, Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam (Huang et al. 2015). In comparison with the hypermarkets, wet markets have the benefit of newness, cleanliness and purchasing to people (Zhang and Pan 2013). Nowadays, the chains of supermarket in China have affected wet market because of incompetence in modernity with them (Reardon et al. 2007).

Wet Market at Zhu Jiang Street of Nanjing

Nanjing is an ancient city of East China. It is the capital of Jiangsu province. In 2017, 8.33 million people lived in this city (NMBS 2018). The people living there consume fresh items of vegetables, meat and many sea foods. In many cities, Chinese government has made a lot of effort to change wet markets into supermarkets (Hu et al. 2004, Wang and Shi 2012). But fresh food retailing is still dominant as the wet markets in Nanjing (Zhang and Pan 2013). In the Dalian city of northeast China, about 49 per cent fresh food items are still obtained from the wet markets (Maruyama and Wu 2014). Shanghai is also important in wet markets which provide a lot of fresh meat and vegetables (Goldman 2000). At least one wet market is found within 2.1 km² area in Nanjing (Zhong et al. 2018). In Nanjing, many wet markets have provided modern facilities of buildings and equipment like refrigerators (Zhang and Pan 2013). There is a two-tier management system of wet market in this city. One is Nanjing Municipal government owned and the other is state-owned or private company owned wet markets (Zhong et al. 2018). Twenty privately owned wet markets of Zhu Jiang Street in Nanjing were observed and surveyed basically to discover the shopkeepers' devotion on it, food item differences, shop types, etc. (Table 1).

Table 1: Working duration of shopkeepers

Shop	Work Time		
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	Day	Per cent	Evening	Per cent	Both Time		Total	Per cent
					Time	Per cent		
Meat	2	10	1	5	2	10	5	25
Fish	3	15	1	5	1	5	5	25
Vegetable	1	5	-	0	4	20	5	25
Fruit	1	5	2	10	2	10	5	25
Total	7	35	4	20	9	45	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

The involvement of shopkeepers in Zhu Jiang Street has been taken in three ways. Thirty-five per cent shopkeepers' work devotion is in a day time, 20 per cent shopkeepers' work time is in the evening and 45 per cent shopkeepers' work time is both day and evening. Such a devotion of the working hours is because of the privately owned wet market shops of this street. Among them, the maximum devotion of them is found for vegetable shops as compared to meat, fish and fruit shops (Table 1). Wet markets in the present study area then and now is different. Some years ago there were two meat shops as compared to three at present. But there were three fish shops in the past and two at present. But in the context of vegetable shops, there was a shop some years ago and four at present. Same is the case of the fruit shop. Thus, out of 20 shops, there were seven in the past and 13 are added at present (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of Wet Market Then and Now

Shop	Market difference		Total
	Past market	Market Addition at Present	
Meat	2	3	5
Fish	3	2	5
Vegetable	1	4	5
Fruit	1	4	5
Total	7	13	20

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Some years ago there were two meat shops and three fish shops. But there was a vegetable and a fruit shop along this street. In 2017, the shops addition was three for meat, two for fish and four for vegetable and fruit each. Altogether 13 shops were added (Table 2).

All these twenty shops of Zhu Jiang Street, the shopkeepers sell their specialized item of meat, fish, vegetable and fruit (Table 3).

Table 3: Specialization of Wet Market goods

Shop	Shop Types		Total
	specialized	mixed	
Meat	5	-	5
Fish	5	-	5
Vegetable	5	-	5
Fruit	5	-	5
Total	20	-	20

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

The field survey conducted along the Zhu Jiang Street of Nanjing has revealed that the perception and attitude of costumers on the basis of gender are not found any difference (Table 4).

Table 4: Costumers' Perception by Gender in Shopping

Shop	Gender			Total
	Male	Female	None	
Meat	-	-	5	5
Fish	-	-	5	5
Vegetable	-	-	5	5
Fruit	-	-	5	5
Total			20	20

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Conclusions

Nanjing is an ancient city of China. The wet market, therefore, has been developed long since. The distance of such markets from the residential areas is not important because foods are distributed sufficiently and proportionately in this city. The food environment of the city as a whole is suitable for the citizens at present. The high accessibility to the market for the people is the most important factor for the easiness to the costumers of the wet market. Similarly, the nearness of the wet market with the residential areas is another easy factor not to think of the distance for the residents seriously. Similarly, the income of citizens and the cheap transportation facilities are also equally important for the development of such food items.

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