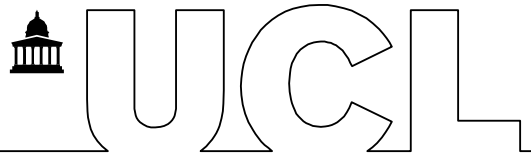


# Nanjing's Night Markets: Employment, Economy, Challenges and Sustainable Development

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## **Abstract**

This study takes Nanjing's night markets as the research object. Through observation, interviews and focus groups, and combined with data provided by relevant departments, this study analyses the role of Nanjing's night markets in employment, individual income and the city's overall economy; and discusses the existing challenges and how to promote their sustainable development. This study finds that Nanjing's night markets have brought a large number of job opportunities to different social groups in Nanjing such as providing low-threshold jobs for low-educated groups, and have indirectly created many jobs such as night market cleaning and security, promoting Nanjing's overall employment. In addition, Nanjing's night markets have also brought relatively stable income that can meet the daily needs of vendors and promoted the development of the city's overall economy. However, the rapid development of Nanjing's night markets has also brought many challenges, such as high stall fees, insufficient supporting facilities, and difficulty in multi-department coordination. In response to these challenges, this study proposes solutions including reasonable stall fees, improved infrastructure, the establishment of an efficient multi-department coordination mechanism, etc. It is also advocated that based on solving existing challenges; to promote the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets, attention should be paid to some existing issues that have not yet posed major challenges now in Nanjing's night markets and environmental protection efforts should be increased. Related recommendations include improving the tax policy and implementation of night market vendors, promoting the use of energy-saving equipment, etc.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Night markets, as the name suggests, are markets that open at night (Hung & Wu, 2020). They combine leisure, entertainment, shopping and sightseeing. Night markets can be located in buildings, but traditional night markets are generally outdoor markets, a type of street markets that operate from early evening until midnight (Kang et al., 2022). Night markets, with their lively atmosphere, diverse cuisine and inexpensive goods, have developed a unique charm and gradually become an indispensable part of the city's nightlife culture. In many cities, night markets are local icons, and some of them even have a history of hundreds of years, attracting countless locals and tourists.

The earliest night markets originated in China during the Tang Dynasty in the 9th century AD, and gradually became the core of Asian nightlife culture and aroused around the world (Walters, 2024). Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the development of night markets in Chinese cities has experienced significant ups and downs. Between 1949 and 1977, street markets and vendors were regarded as the cancer of capitalism and the relics of the old society. In order to make them conform to the requirements of the socialist economy, they were once forced to be incorporated into cooperatives (Huang et al., 2013; Song, 2020). During that planned economy period, the "state-owned night markets" effectively met the consumption needs of the people after a day's work (Wang et al., 2019). In 1978, China's night markets emerged after the beginning of 'China's reforms and opening up' and then around 2000, the development of night markets reached its peak (Wang et al., 2019). But the good times did not last long because the prosperity of these night markets also brought about a lot of urban problems (e.g. traffic congestion and poor sanitary conditions). In 2003, the Chinese government issued the "National Civilized City Evaluation System (Trial)" to select cities with outstanding comprehensive performance in politics, economy, environment, culture, etc. (Jiang et al., 2024). It is the highest honorary title in the comprehensive evaluation of Chinese cities, and in order to be successfully selected, many cities have launched massive targeted actions in all aspects (Jiang et al., 2024). Night markets are regarded as a negative factor affecting the city's image during the National Civilized City Evaluation Campaigns (Xue & Huang, 2015). Therefore, in the next decade, many night markets therefore ushered in a wave of large-scale closures, and even some famous night markets were not immune (Wang et al., 2019).

Nanjing has many different night markets distributed in various areas of Nanjing. The most famous night markets include Confucius Temple Night Market, Sanjiang College Night Market, Mingwalang Night Market, Nanhu Night Market, etc. These night markets are large in scale, with many vendors and a wide variety of goods, attracting a large number of residents and tourists, and showing a lively and bustling scene. However, there are also some once-bustling night markets that have disappeared in the rapid development of Nanjing, such as the Matai

Street Night Market and the Sanpailou Night Market, which were closed down by the municipal government, and the Hunan Road Night Market, which gradually declined and eventually disappeared due to constant closures for construction.

However, the slowdown in China's economic growth has brought about a turnaround in the development of night markets. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2017 emphasized the need to expand domestic demand and stimulate consumption in the next stage (Xinhua, 2017). Many cities have once again turned their attention to night markets. Nanjing also issued the "Implementation Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Night-time Economy" in 2018 to provide policy support for the further development of Nanjing's night markets (Nanjing.Gov, 2018). Some long-dormant night markets are bustling again. However, the subsequent COVID-19 pandemic and China's strict lockdown policy dealt a heavy blow to the night markets once again. It was not until COVID-19 gradually subsided that night markets in Chinese cities gradually recovered (Xinhua, 2022). In addition, the rising unemployment rate in China after the COVID-19 pandemic has also led the Chinese government to loosen regulations on street vendors, as well as to actively encourage more cities to open night markets and more people to become street vendors (Cao et al., 2021; Xinhua, 2023; Yang & Shen, 2023). More people are noticing the great potential of night markets in promoting China's economic recovery and easing employment pressure after the COVID-19 pandemic, and researchers are also turning their attention to this field.

This research aims to explore Nanjing's night markets deeply and comprehensively, analyse their role in creating employment opportunities, evaluate their impact on individual income and the local economy, identify what challenges they currently face, and find ways to achieve their sustainable development. Based on these aims, the three research questions of this research are as follows:

RQ1: What role do night markets play in creating employment opportunities for different social groups in Nanjing?

RQ2: How do Nanjing's night markets contribute to the individual income of vendors and the overall local economy?

RQ3: What are the challenges that Nanjing's night markets currently face and how can their sustainable development be promoted?

This dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on street markets and night markets in Nanjing and some other Chinese cities. Chapter 3 illustrates the research methodology of this study, including the research methods used, research design, actual data collection, research limitations, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 elaborates on the data analysis process and presents the key findings. Chapter 5 provides a

comprehensive discussion based on the findings from the previous chapter, clarifying how these findings answer the three research questions. Chapter 6 concludes the research results, reflects on the limitations and deficiencies, and provides recommendations for future research in this field.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

Most of the existing literature focuses on street markets in China. But night markets are a type of street markets, which can be understood as street markets that only operate at night. Therefore, my literature review includes both research on night markets and research on street markets. The subtitle below refers to market as a collective term for night markets and street markets.

### **2.1 Markets and employment**

In the late 1970s, street markets once helped ease employment pressure in many Chinese cities. During China's "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement" (UMDC) from 1967 to 1979, more than 16 million young urban people were sent to rural areas to engage in agricultural production activities (Wu & Fan, 2017). As the movement gradually came to an end in the late 1970s, a large number of educated people returned to the cities, but because there were not enough jobs, many of them could only make a living by becoming street vendors (Song, 2020). Li et al. (2021) and Flock & Breitung (2015) believe that night markets and street markets could provide low entry barriers and flexible employment opportunities for many laid-off, unemployed or low-income people, ensuring that these people can obtain an income that meets their basic living needs. Street markets also offer flexible working hours, which enables many people who already have a job to supplement their family income by running a stall part-time at night markets (Lee & Pearce, 2019). Chin (2015) argues that under high unemployment conditions, night markets may be a good choice for young graduates or low-income groups to start their own businesses as they can gain valuable business experience at a lower cost. In China, the existence of night markets has relieved employment pressure in recent years and provided an open and inclusive entrepreneurial environment (Li et al., 2021). Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China, created 100,000 jobs overnight by setting up more than 36,000 street stalls and was praised by Prime Minister Li Keqiang (Song, 2020).

Most of the existing literature fully affirms the positive role of street markets and night markets in employment, but some scholars have also expressed their concerns. Zhang Yifan, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, believes that night markets or street stall markets are only a temporary solution to China's unemployment problem and cannot be



relied on for a long time (Yang & Shen, 2023). A report by the International Labour Office also pointed out that although street markets have created a large number of job opportunities, these jobs are lacking in dignity; specifically, the working conditions of street vendors are often very poor, their income is unstable and they lack adequate social security (ILO, 2013). In addition, Huang et al. (2017) focus on people's motivations for becoming street vendors, and they believe that in addition to unemployment, there are multiple motivations for people to participate in street vending such as low wages, rigid systems, flexibility and autonomy, etc.

## **2.2 Markets and economy**

The informal economy generally refers to economic activities that are beyond the scope of official supervision due to evasion of supervision, lack of supervision, poor supervision, etc., but informal economic activities are not illegal goods or services such as drug trade (Brown & McGranahan, 2016). Street markets and vendors are an important part of the informal economy in China and other developing countries (Jiang & Wang, 2021). Many researchers have mentioned the positive impact of street markets and night markets on the economy. Li et al. (2021) argue that night markets are an important part of the urban economy, and their research data show that the night market economy accounts for a high proportion during the Chinese National Day Holiday in 2020. This view is also supported by Lin et al. (2022), who find that urban Chinese tourists have an increasing propensity to spend at night, and that their night-time spending can account for up to 30% of their all-day spending. Cao et al. (2021) also mention in their study that street markets, as a representative of the informal economy, are conducive to promoting economic growth. Lin et al. (2022) believe that the night-time economy can increase consumer demand and strongly promote urban economic recovery. Zhou & Sun (2024) investigate the development of Chengdu's night markets and believe that the increasing night market economy can promote the development of service industries, thus promoting the transformation and the development of the economic structure. Song (2020) finds that the street market economy has become active again in recent years, restarting China's economy hit hard by COVID-19.

## **2.3 Challenges faced by markets and vendors**

Street markets and vendors have always faced many challenges and difficulties, and the most discussed in the existing literature is the challenges caused by their legitimacy. Song (2020) believes that street vendors face legal and regulatory challenges because the street market economy is not fully regarded as a legal economic activity in some provinces in China, and street vendors have been on the fringes of the law for a long time. Legal uncertainty regarding street vendors may result in one law defining street vendors as illegal, while another law requires street vendors to pay taxes (ILO, 2013). Until 2009, the Standing Committee of the Nanjing Municipal People's Congress passed the revised "Nanjing City Appearance

Management Regulations", which legalised street vendors for the first time, thus making Nanjing the first city in China to grant legal status to street vendors in the form of local regulations (Ding, 2009). As the number of unlicensed vendors surges, the government has also stepped up penalties (Bell & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014). In China, the law enforcement agencies in charge of regulating street vendors are also known as "ChengGuan"; and the penalties imposed on street vendors by them include but are not limited to, fines and expulsions (Cross, 2000; Bell & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014). Many cities have also adopted contradictory regulatory measures for street vendors (Xue & Huang, 2015). Some policies in Chinese cities appear to be open and permissive to street vendors, but in practice, they prohibit them from accessing the main commercial areas of the city and drive them to remote areas (Dai et al.; 2019). Additionally, although the use of force is not legally authorised, "ChengGuan" officers often use force measures in the actual law enforcement process (Caron, 2013). Chinese media also often report conflicts between "ChengGuan" and street vendors, which often end in violence and tragedy. For example, in 2014, a street vendor in Nanjing was beaten up by many "ChengGuan" officers, but the "ChengGuan" officers explained that the vendor had stabbed them first, and in 2020, three Nanjing "ChengGuan" officers beat up a street vendor in the street in Nanjing and were later dismissed and detained (Chinanews, 2013; Guancha, 2020). In addition, the strictness of regulation of street vendors also varies significantly across time and location (Xue & Huang, 2015). Caron (2013) finds that "ChengGuan" takes strict measures against street vendors in key areas and clears out all street vendors on important dates or during inspections. Strict road management regulations also restrict where night markets or street markets can be opened. When street vendors cannot choose high-quality stall locations such as transportation hubs, the street stall economy cannot fully exert its vitality; and some vendors take great risks for a better location, even violating road management regulations and ignoring traffic safety. (Reid et al., 2010; Song, 2020; Sun et al., 2020).

Wei et al. (2022) find that tourists attach great importance to food safety when buying street food at night markets. However, because many street vendors have low educational levels and lack sufficient understanding and attention to food safety, it is difficult for the food they sell to meet China's food safety standards, and their inappropriate food storage and preparation practices are likely to cause foodborne illness (Liu et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2015). Many night markets also face competition from large shopping malls and shopping centres, as these large shopping malls and shopping centres have gradually developed into integrated catering, entertainment and consumption complexes, and their opening hours are constantly being postponed (Lee & Pearce, 2019). Additionally, the environmental damage (such as water pollution mentioned in the next section) caused by street markets, the lack of cultural attraction of some night markets and noise disturbance caused by street vendors' activities are also considered by some scholars as current challenges (Song, 2020; Li et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022). Nanjing's night markets and vendors may also have encountered some of these

challenges. But in addition to these common challenges, this study will also explore whether there are some unique challenges in Nanjing's night markets.

## **2.4 Markets and sustainable development**

Sustainable development indicates a positive development model consisting of three pillars: economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability (Mensah, 2019). Economic sustainability emphasizes meeting current consumption needs without compromising future demand and has the potential to continue to grow (Lobo et al., 2015). Social sustainability encompasses the concepts of equity, empowerment, participation, and institutional stability, aiming to provide everyone with favourable conditions to realize their needs (Daly, 1992; Kolk, 2016). Environmental sustainability means that human activities cannot exceed the carrying capacity of the environment and destroy the ecosystem, for example, the rate of waste discharge cannot exceed the rate of environmental absorption (Evers, 2018). Many researchers have affirmed the economic sustainability and social sustainability of street markets and night markets. Chen (2006) and Greenspan (2017) believe that street markets create a safety net for marginalised and vulnerable urban groups, providing affordable food and goods and creating inclusive spaces. Iqbal et al. (2017) argue that night markets can meet people's current consumption needs, help low-income people out of poverty, and promote urban sustainable development. Li et al. (2022) emphasize the positive impact of street market vendors on urban social and economic development in terms of reducing living costs, increasing income, facilitating daily life, and enhancing street vitality. Zhou & Sun (2024) believe that China's huge population, millions of tourists, and continued growth in per capita consumer spending will ensure that China's night markets have broad market prospects and huge economic potential.

However, there are great concerns about the environmental sustainability of street markets and night markets. Some street market vendors did not take responsibility for protecting the environment and public health in pursuit of economic benefits (Hussain, 2019). For example, some cities in China (e.g. Shanghai) are implementing a pilot program for mandatory waste sorting. However, for street vendors, waste sorting will undoubtedly increase time and money costs, which leads to many street vendors throwing away waste at will, causing environmental damage (Song, 2020). Kang et al. (2022) pay attention to the problem of sewage from night markets. Their research found that if sewage from night markets is not properly treated, it will cause blockage of nearby drains and pollution of rivers, leading to serious sanitation and health problems. Environmental concerns make some cities reluctant to relaunch the street stall economy (Song, 2020). The existing literature does not consider how to promote the sustainable development of night markets. This study will offer some recommendations for the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets.

## 2.5 Suggestions for markets stakeholders

In response to the challenges faced by street markets and night markets, existing literature also provides some targeted suggestions. Regarding the legality and related regulatory challenges of street markets, Liang et al. (2024) believe that laws and regulations on street vendors should be clarified and detailed to establish a more comprehensive and effective regulatory framework. Song (2020) draws on the concept of smart regulation proposed by Van et al. (2010), emphasizing that the authorities should involve street vendors in the policy-making process and encourage vendors to assume regulatory responsibilities in order to improve the flexibility and acceptability of regulation. In terms of balancing the challenges of siting street vendors with road management regulations, Huang et al. (2019) argue that the authorities can place street vendors in designated locations according to the needs of the vendors and provide them with infrastructure support; and this would also help mitigate the disturbance of street markets and night markets on residents' normal lives. In addition, some researchers suggest providing street vendors with necessary knowledge training, especially knowledge on food hygiene and safety. Ma et al. (2019) suggest that street vendors should receive regular food safety training to improve their existing food handling methods to reduce the probability of foodborne diseases. Song (2020) believes that knowledge sharing among street vendors should be promoted so that vendors can learn from each other. Li et al. (2021) believe that a night market online information-sharing platform should be constructed to provide relevant knowledge training and promote communication among vendors; and this platform can also provide night market-related information (such as business hours, stall settings), expand the scope of night market publicity and attract more potential operators. As the night market faces fierce competition from other shopping malls, Lee & Pearce (2019) suggest that night market vendors should fully understand the interests and needs of tourists in order to increase the attractiveness of their food and products. Kuo et al. (2012) argue that night market managers should create a good shopping environment for consumers, build more rest areas and toilets, and keep the place clean and tidy at all times to leave a pleasant impression on tourists. Li et al. (2021) take Taishan Night Market as an example and suggest enriching the cultural connotation of Taishan Night Market by adding products with Taishan culture and local characteristics (such as "Taishan Stone Carvings"). They believe that other cities with rich cultural backgrounds should also integrate cultural activities and products into the construction of local night markets to enrich the connotation of night markets and improve their cultural appeal.

These suggestions could provide many new ideas for market stakeholders to solve current challenges. However, the situation of night markets varies from place to place, and these suggestions may not be fully applicable to Nanjing's night markets. Therefore, this study will provide stakeholders with more comprehensive and suitable suggestions based on the actual situation of Nanjing's night markets.

## **2.6 Nanjing's markets and vendors**

There is a lack of literature on Nanjing's street markets and vendors. Dai et al. (2019) focus on the governance of street food vendors in Nanjing, and they find that the Nanjing Municipal Government adopted a governance method they called "compensatory governance" to correct the shortcomings of existing regulatory policies by providing compensation to street vendors, but "compensatory governance" ignores the diversity of street vendors. Feng (2009) examines Nanjing's street market governance policies and finds that although the Nanjing Municipal Government regarded street markets as a short-term solution to employment, it does not give street vendors any rights to ensure that the government could close the market at any time due to urban development. In addition, Feng (2009) also pays attention to the relationship between Nanjing's night market vendors and migrant populations, and finds that the proportion of migrant populations among Nanjing's night market vendors was higher than that of local residents because they had difficulty obtaining formal employment opportunities in Nanjing due to household registration restrictions. However, in 2015, the Nanjing Municipal Government issued the "Nanjing Floating Population Residence Management Measures (Trial)", which gave migrant populations the same employment opportunities as local residents (Nanjing.Gov, 2015). My study is important because the two existing literature focus on the governance of street markets in Nanjing. Although one of them also mentions the relationship between Nanjing's night markets and the employment of migrant populations, Feng's study was conducted a long time ago and the policy has changed since then. My study can fill the research gap on Nanjing's night markets in terms of employment opportunities, economic impacts, existing challenges, and sustainable development; and provide the latest findings.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter aims to introduce the selected research methods, research design, actual data collection, research limitations, and ethical considerations for this study.

### **3.1 Research method**

This dissertation will use a mixed methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. The mixed methods approach can make up for the limitations of each method, give full play to their respective advantages, and improve the depth and breadth of research (McKim, 2017). The main qualitative research methods for this dissertation will include interviews and focus groups with stakeholders of Nanjing's night markets. Because these two methods can help researchers obtain comprehensive and in-depth information from participants and resolve seemingly conflicting information (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Observations will be used in this study as a supplement to the qualitative method, as they are particularly useful in helping researchers understand specific

environments and actual behaviours (Busetto et al., 2020). The quantitative research method will analyze quantitative data such as the number of jobs provided by Nanjing's night markets, the GDP created, and the tax revenue contributed. Multiple methods constitute triangulation, which helps improve the accuracy of research results (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012).

### **3.2 Research design**

Firstly, I will visit four main Nanjing's night markets (Confucius Temple Night Market, Sanjiang College Night Market, Mingwalang Night Market and Nanhu Night Market). These night markets are representative Nanjing's night markets, with a long history and are located in different areas of Nanjing. I will observe the night markets in general to know the scope of venues for each night market, the goods sold, etc. I will also do some small talk with the vendors and managers in the night markets. After having a full understanding of the basic conditions of these night markets, I will begin to recruit participants.

Participants will include night market vendors, customers, market managers and policy makers. In addition to policy makers, the other three types of participants will be randomly selected from four main Nanjing's night markets. Although the selection is random, I will consider the gender and age composition of the participants, and try to ensure that the number of male and female participants is roughly the same, and that all age groups are covered. These participants will be asked to share their experiences, insights, and suggestions about Nanjing's night markets in the interviews. Policy makers come from Nanjing's night markets' competent authority, the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Urban Management. They will be asked about the regulations or policies related to night markets, as well as the future development plans for Nanjing's night markets. There will also be focus groups consisting of night market vendors, customers, market managers and policy makers. They will discuss topics such as the current challenges and future development of Nanjing's night markets. The interview outlines and focus group agenda (including topics) are carefully designed according to the aims and objectives of this research, and may be appropriately adjusted according to the situation. The interview questions and focus group agenda are provided in the Appendix.

The quantitative data will come from information published by relevant departments of the Nanjing Municipal Government to ensure the accuracy of the data. If the required data cannot be found on the official website of the relevant department, I will contact the relevant departments by phone or email to obtain the corresponding quantitative data.

### **3.3 Data collection**

This section illustrates the collection of primary and secondary data. However, due to the influence of various external factors, there is a small deviation between the actual collected data and what was envisaged in the research design.

### 3.3.1 Primary data

Primary data collected through interviews and focus groups will be used in the qualitative analysis of this research. A total of twenty participants were interviewed, including nine night market vendors, six customers, three market managers and two policy makers. In addition to face-to-face interviews, some interviews were also conducted via video calls and voice calls, but one of the participants dropped out of the interview due to personal reasons. I also conducted a focus group with six participants selected from all the participants, which included two night market vendors, two customers, one market manager and one policy maker. This focus group was conducted via online video conference and lasted approximately one hour. Details of the interviewees are shown in Table 1, where those marked with an asterisk also participated in the focus group.

Table 1: Interviewee details

| Interview Date | Role                             | Gender | Place                         | Code |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|------|
| 08/07/2024     | Night market vendor<br>(Food)    | Male   | Confucius Temple Night Market | A    |
| 08/07/2024     | Night market vendor<br>(Clothes) | Female | Confucius Temple Night Market | B    |
| 09/07/2024     | Night market vendor<br>(Food)    | Male   | Sanjiang College Night Market | C    |
| 09/07/2024     | Night market vendor<br>(Food)    | Male   | Sanjiang College Night Market | D*   |
| 10/07/2024     | Night market vendor<br>(Food)    | Male   | Mingwalang Night Market       | E    |
| 10/07/2024     | Night market vendor              | Female | Mingwalang Night Market       | F*   |

|            |  |        |  |    |
|------------|--|--------|--|----|
|            | (Food)                                     |        |  |    |
| 11/07/2024 | Night market vendor<br>(Daily necessities) | Male   | Nanhu Night Market                           | G  |
| 11/07/2024 | Night market vendor<br>(Food)              | Female | Nanhu Night Market                           | H  |
| 11/07/2024 | Night market vendor<br>(Daily necessities) | Female | Nanhu Night Market                           | I  |
| 09/07/2024 | Customer                                   | Male   | Local residents                              | J* |
| 11/07/2024 | Customer                                   | Female | Local residents                              | K  |
| 08/07/2024 | Customer                                   | Male   | Tourists                                     | L  |
| 08/07/2024 | Customer                                   | Female | Tourists                                     | M  |
| 10/07/2024 | Customer                                   | Female | Tourists                                     | N* |
| 10/07/2024 | Customer                                   | Male   | Tourists                                     | O  |
| 08/07/2024 | Market manager                             | Male   | Confucius Temple Night Market                | P* |
| 09/07/2024 | Market manager                             | Male   | Sanjiang College Night Market                | Q  |
| 10/07/2024 | Market manager                             | Female | Mingwalang Night Market                      | R  |
| 12/07/2024 | Policy maker                               | Male   | Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Urban Management | S* |
| 12/07/2024 | Policy maker                               | Female | Nanjing Municipal Bureau of                  | T  |



|  |  |  |                     |  |
|--|--|--|---------------------|--|
|  |  |  | Urban<br>Management |  |
|--|--|--|---------------------|--|

*(Please see Appendix B for an interview sample)*

Primary data also includes my notes on the basic conditions of these four main Nanjing’s night markets through observations, such as the scope of the venue of each night market, the layout of the stalls, the types of goods sold, rough gender ratio and age structure of vendors and the supporting facilities (e.g. car parks, toilets). During the entire research process, the researcher also encountered some scattered and smaller night markets in Nanjing, and also observed and recorded them. In addition, I visited a night market located in Beijing (Shenghuatun Night Market), which had some special features that attracted my attention. However, since the focus of this study is on Nanjing’s night markets, I only made a brief observation of it as a reference and auxiliary data for researching Nanjing’s night markets.

### **3.3.2 Secondary data**

Several difficulties were encountered in collecting secondary data for the quantitative analysis of this study. Firstly, I visited the official websites of the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Labour, Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, and Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Taxation respectively, and searched their databases for quantitative data such as the number of jobs created by Nanjing’s night markets, the GDP created, and tax revenue contribution. However, no relevant quantitative data could be found. I then explained the relevant situation and applied to obtain the required data on the Nanjing Municipal Affairs Service Platform, and also applied for the disclosure of relevant data in accordance with the law on the official websites of the three departments. The Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Labour and the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Taxation respond by phone, and the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics responds by email. Other secondary data includes publicly released information about night markets from various departments of the Nanjing municipal government.

### **3.4 Research limitations**

Firstly, this study is limited by time and scale and could not conduct in-depth research on all the night markets in Nanjing. Moreover, the sample of this study is small and cannot fully reflect the ideas and opinions of Nanjing’s night market stakeholders. Secondly, this study lacks some incentives, resulting in low cooperation among some participants, especially vendors who are busy with their businesses. Thirdly, this study lacks certain quantitative data to more visually illustrate the impact of Nanjing's night market on employment and the local economy. In addition, because I have lived in Nanjing for a long time, my exposure to Nanjing’s night markets since childhood may have given me some stereotypes about

Nanjing's night markets. These biases from me as a researcher may also affect the results of this study.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

The entire study followed strict ethical principles and was reviewed and approved by the Institute for Global Prosperity Ethics Committee. Primary data from interviews and focus groups were collected with consent from the participants. Participants have the right to refuse to answer questions they do not want to answer or to withdraw at any time during the research process. The privacy of all participants is well protected and all data is properly stored. In addition, the primary data observed in my capacity as a researcher do not violate any laws and regulations or infringe the rights of any individual or organization. Secondary data obtained from government departments are used only for this study and permission for disclosure was obtained.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

This chapter aims to analyse the primary and secondary data collected and to summarize and present the key findings based on the analysis results.

### **4.1 Observations on the status of Nanjing's night markets**

#### **4.1.1 Confucius Temple Night Market**

Confucius Temple is a famous historical site and tourist attraction in Nanjing, attracting a large number of tourists every year. During the National Day holiday in 2023, the number of tourists visiting Confucius Temple is the second in China and the first in Jiangsu province. (Nanjing.Gov, 2023). The Confucius Temple Night Market is located in the Confucius Temple scenic area, including the Confucius Temple Commercial Street and the Laomendong Night Market. The night market stalls on Confucius Temple Commercial Street are all indoor shops and they are located on both sides of the pedestrian street. The decoration style of these shops is relatively unified, with Chinese classical characteristics, and they are cleverly integrated with a series of ancient buildings in the scenic area of the Confucius Temple. Almost every stall has a stereo set up, blaring out pop songs or advertisements at very high volumes. Most of the stalls in Laomendong Night Market are open-air stalls, some of which have simple small sheds and are located on both sides of the road or in the alleys. The night market vendors on Confucius Temple Commercial Street sell a wide variety of goods, including food (mainly Nanjing speciality food), clothing, accessories, souvenirs, and other cultural and creative products related to Confucius Temple. The Laomendong Night Market is basically vendors selling food. The entire Confucius Temple Night Market has a huge flow of people. Some stalls are

Nanjing's Internet celebrity stalls, and there are long queues in front of their stalls. The gender ratio of vendors at Confucius Temple Night Market is relatively balanced, and the age structure is mainly young and middle-aged (around 20-50 years old).

The basic supporting facilities of the Confucius Temple Night Market are very complete. There are many public toilets in the night market area, and the locations are clearly marked. The garbage cans in the night market area are also densely distributed, and there are cleaning staff to patrol and clean up the garbage on the ground to ensure a clean environment. The night market also has some benches for people to rest. People who drive can use the parking lot of the Confucius Temple scenic area. In addition, the management of the night market also appears to be very orderly. Security personnel and market managers wearing red armbands can be seen patrolling from time to time. However, I also found some problems during the observation. Firstly, there are fewer street lights in the Laomendong Night Market, which is relatively dim. In addition. There are many people queuing in front of some stalls, which blocks the road.

Picture 1: A food stall at Confucius Temple Night Market (Source: me)



*(The characters in the picture have been mosaiced, the same below)*

#### **4.1.2 Sanjiang College Night Market**

Sanjiang College Night Market is near the Sanjiang College. When visiting it, I found that the night market originally located at the No. 4 gate of Sanjiang College no longer existed, with only a few stalls converted from electric tricycles. The new night market moved to Nanjing Sanjiang Night Market Square, about 400 meters away from the original site and closer to the metro entrance. This new night market is located underground and was converted from a big parking lot. The entrance steps are painted in colours, and the walls next to the steps are covered with large and small Nanjing dialects. The entire interior space is divided into small stalls, each separated by simple partitions, and the stall layout is very compact. The entire night market is almost entirely food stalls, selling food from all over the country, but there are few Nanjing speciality foods. There are not many customers at Sanjiang College Night Market, and some vendors are trying hard to attract business with loudspeakers. There are slightly more male vendors than female vendors at Sanjiang College Night Market, and most of them are young people (around 20-35 years old).

The new Sanjiang College Night Market is clean and tidy, equipped with toilets and parking lots, and dining tables and chairs are set up for people to sit down and enjoy food. There are cleaning staff at the night market, and security guards at the entrance. However, it is difficult to find a garbage can. There are also few toilets, and the signs are not clear. In addition, because it is in an underground space, the smoke dissipates slowly and the air is a bit choking. It is worth mentioning that I had visited the old Sanjiang College Night Market many times before 2020. At that time, the night market was very crowded. In addition to food stalls, there were stalls selling daily necessities, repairing electronic products and other various goods, but it was difficult to find a garbage can and there was no toilet.

[Picture 2: Stalls at Sanjiang College Night Market \(Source: me\)](#)



#### 4.1.3 Mingwalang Night Market

Xinjiekou is a famous business district and the main commercial centre of Nanjing. The Mingwalang Night Market is located in the central area of Xinjiekou, concentrated on the

main street of Mingwalang and several alleys around it, with a large number of local residents and tourists at night. The ground floor of residential buildings along both sides of the street and alleys are night market stalls, and the rest are residents' houses. Some stalls are simple to-shed structures temporarily built with wooden boards or iron frames and decorated with cloth curtains and coloured lights. The Mingwalang Night Market is also dominated by food stalls with Nanjing speciality food. Almost no stalls use stereos and few vendors yell loudly to promote their foods. There are slightly more male vendors than female vendors at Mingwalang Night Market, and the age structure is mainly young and middle-aged (around 20-50 years old).

Mingwalang Night Market itself has no toilets or parking lots, but there are several large shopping malls and shopping centres around it, all with toilets and parking lots to meet the needs of local residents and tourists. However, the garbage cans in the night market are far apart, and there are no seats or tables, so people have to stand to enjoy their food. The Mingwalang Night Market does not have a dedicated cleaning team and ground cleaning mainly relies on Nanjing's sanitation workers. Some food or drinks spilled on the ground have not been cleaned up in time. In addition, the roads at Mingwalang Night Market are narrow, and there are long queues in front of many shops. Moreover, these roads do not prohibit the passage of motor vehicles and non-motor vehicles, so the congestion is very serious.

Picture 3: People queuing at Mingwalang Night Market (Source: me)



#### 4.1.4 Nanhu Night Market

Nanhu Night Market is distributed along Nanhu East Road and several surrounding roads. This area is almost entirely residential. Different from the previous three night markets, Nanhu

Night Market has both fixed vendors and a small number of mobile vendors. The styles of stalls in the Nanhu Night Market are also varied, including street shops on the ground floor of residential buildings, food trucks, street stalls with goods laid out on the ground and converted electric tricycles. Some vendors even use their cars as stalls, and some are even expensive luxury cars, which are particularly conspicuous. They park their cars on the roadside and sell the goods on the roof or bonnet of the car. The Nanhu Night Market also sells a wide variety of goods, including food, clothing, daily necessities, etc. There are also some stalls operating entertainment activities, mainly ring tossing and sandbag smashing; and prizes are awarded based on the items lassoed by the ring and the number of cans knocked over. Although the flow of people is not as large as Confucius Temple Night Market and Mingwalang Night Market, Nanhu Night Market is also crowded. And most of the people gather in front of the food stalls and entertainment stalls. The gender ratio of vendors at Nanhu Night Market is relatively balanced, but the age distribution is quite wide. Although the majority are young and middle-aged (around 20-50 years old), there are also some vendors with grey hair who look obviously older.

There are two public toilets at Nanhu Night Market, and the garbage cans are reasonably arranged, but there is no parking lot, and most vehicles are parked on the roadside. The Nanhu Night Market does not have a dedicated cleaning team and ground cleaning mainly relies on Nanjing's sanitation workers too. There are food scraps or spilled drinks on the ground in front of some food stalls. In addition, the phenomenon of night market vendors occupying the road is very serious, causing traffic congestion. Some vendors even spread their goods directly on the sidewalk, leaving pedestrians only able to pass through the motor vehicle lane, posing a great safety hazard.

Picture 4: An entertainment stall at Nanhu Night Market (Source: me)





#### 4.1.5 Some other Nanjing's nights markets

In Nanjing, there are not only the well-known Confucius Temple Night Market, Mingwalang Night Market and other large night markets, but also some small-scale night markets dominated by mobile vendors. These night markets are usually located near the exits of Metro stations, such as Exit 3 of Maigaoqiao Metro Station and Exit 2 of Hongshan Zoo Metro Station. Most of these night market vendors use modified electric tricycles as their mobile stalls, while some vendors use simple carts. They mostly sell fast food and snacks, such as boxed lunches, fried foods, etc.; and there are also some stalls selling freshly cut fruits. In addition, they do not have a fixed location and usually occupy the nearest motor vehicle lane to the roadside to set up their stalls. A good location (such as near the metro exit) is first come first served. The number of vendors each night is also not fixed, sometimes more and sometimes less. They are mainly young and middle-aged (around 20-50 years old). and the number of males is slightly higher than that of females. Whenever a group of passengers come out of the metro station, the vendors will shout loudly. Customers leave in a hurry after buying the food they need, and few of them stay for a long time.

However, vehicles pass by these vendors quickly, which looks very dangerous. In addition, the food safety of these vendors is worrying. The raw materials of the food are placed randomly, and it is summer, so there are many flies biting the food, but these vendors only symbolically drive away the flies. Whenever these vendors leave, a lot of garbage will be left on the ground,

which may not be cleaned up until the sanitation workers go to work the next day. These night markets consisting of mobile vendors do not have any supporting facilities. There are no toilets in Nanjing's metro stations, and in some places without street lights, even the lighting equipment needs to be prepared by the vendors themselves.

Picture 5: Mobile vendors near Maigaoqiao Metro Station (Source: me)



## 4.2 Nanjing's night markets and employment

Firstly, in response to the application for quantitative data disclosure on the number of jobs created by Nanjing's night markets, the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Labour says that no department of the Nanjing Municipal Government has conducted statistics on the number of jobs provided by Nanjing's night markets or the number of night market vendors in Nanjing; and the number of flexible employment in Nanjing is generally not announced to the public. However, after repeated communication, they provided the number of flexible employment in Nanjing in 2023, which is about **480,000**. Flexible employment in China refers to an informal form of employment that is time-free and has no fixed labour affiliation; which is mainly represented by street market or night market vendors, food delivery workers, online car-hailing drivers, etc (Wang et al., 2024). The latest statistics show that the total number of

employed people in Nanjing is **4,850,600** (Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2022). It can be calculated that the number of people in flexible employment in Nanjing accounts for about 10% of the total number of employed people. It can be seen that flexible employment has become an indispensable part of Nanjing's employment structure. Night market vendors, as one of the representatives of flexible employment, can provide **48,000** employment opportunities for Nanjing, assuming that they only account for 10% of the flexible employment population. In addition, according to the observation of different Nanjing's night markets in Section 4.1, there is very little difference in the male-to-female ratio of vendors in these Nanjing's night markets, and the age structure is dominated by young and middle-aged people (20-50 years old). To a certain extent, this indicates that Nanjing's night markets can provide jobs for most age groups and maintain gender equality in employment.

Interviews with night market vendors and managers also provided some useful information for understanding the role of Nanjing's night markets in employment. When asked why they chose to become night market vendors and their experiences as night market vendors, five vendors mentioned that because they had little education and could not find any formal jobs, they had no choice but to become vendors. One of them answered as follows:

*I didn't even graduate from primary school. I used to do manual labour in a factory, but then the factory closed down and I lost my job. When I tried to find a job again, I found that I needed a junior high school education to work in a factory. I saw that the night market stalls selling snacks nearby were doing very well. There is no threshold for becoming a night market vendor, and do not require academic qualifications, as long as you go to do it, you can have an income.*

For those who have low education and find it difficult to meet the education requirements for formal jobs, or have difficulty finding jobs after being unemployed, Nanjing's night markets provide flexible and low-threshold employment opportunities. These jobs have almost no education requirements and can start at any time, effectively alleviating the employment pressure of such people and helping them integrate into society normally instead of being unemployed at home.

Two vendors said that they have stable formal jobs during the day, and being a night market vendor is just their part-time job. But the reasons why they chose to become night market vendors are not exactly the same. One is because he has a low income from his formal job, he became a part-time night market vendor to supplement his family, and the flexible working hours of the night market could be staggered with his daytime job. The other one is mainly because of interest. She likes baking, so she uses her off-work time to set up a food stall at the night market, which also increases her income. However, because her daytime job is very stable, she would not consider being a night market vendor as a full-time job before retirement. In addition, one vendor said that his family is very rich, and being a night market

vendor is just to pass the time and let others know that he is working. He saw some people using luxury cars as stalls at the night market on the news, so he imitated them. He enjoyed the attention brought by this sense of contrast. His answer, to some extent, explains why there are luxury car vendors in some night markets in Nanjing. These answers show that Nanjing's night markets also provide part-time jobs for those who have stable jobs to increase income or fulfil their interests. However, there are also a small number of people from wealthy families who just use being a night market vendor as a job to pass the time or to gain attention.

There was also a young night market vendor who was very active in the interview and seemed to have a lot to say. His answers were also very different from those of the previous interviewees. His answer is as follows:

*I graduated from a well-known university in Nanjing, but after graduation, I could not find a job. For the first year, I stayed at home to prepare for the civil service exam but ultimately did not get in. In the end, seeing that my peers around me were working, coupled with the urging and chastising of my family, I had to ask my parents for some money to rent a stall at Sanjiang College Night Market to sell freshly squeezed fruit juice.*

When asked if he had anything else to add about Nanjing's night markets, he said:

*I never thought I would become a night market vendor. I thought I could easily find a suitable job after graduating from a prestigious university, but the reality hit me hard. Actually, I looked down on night market vendors and felt that all my years of study were in vain. Later, I found that some college graduates had come to set up stalls at Sanjiang College Night Market, and I gradually felt relieved. But I still try to find a job and prepare for the civil service exam during the day, and I will not be a night market vendor when I find one. Anyway, I am also very grateful to the night market, at least it temporarily relieved my pressure.*

Highly educated people may also fail to find suitable jobs when facing the fiercely competitive employment market in Nanjing. Nanjing's night markets provide an important employment or entrepreneurship platform for these highly educated people who find it difficult to find a suitable job, alleviating their multiple pressures of economy, employment and family. However, some night market vendors with high education still look down on night markets, believing that only those with low education and little ability will be night market vendors. Therefore, they only regard night market vendors as transitional jobs, and the flexible working hours of night markets allow them to continue to look for formal jobs, and when they find one, they will not continue to work as night market vendors.

In addition, a market manager mentioned that he is very grateful for the existence of the night market, which gives him the opportunity to become a night market manager. This suggests that besides focusing on the jobs (vendors) directly provided by Nanjing's night markets, we should also see that they indirectly enable many people to work in night markets, such as cleaning, security, and management.

### **4.3 Nanjing's night markets and economy**

#### **4.3.1 Individual income of Nanjing's night market vendors**

Interviews with night market vendors provide insights into the changes in their individual income since they became night market vendors. However, most people in China are reluctant to disclose their specific income, and most of the interviewed vendors also keep their specific income confidential. Six interviewees said that the night market is their only source of income; the income is enough to meet normal living expenses and even save some money, but the night market was closed during most of the COVID-19 pandemic and they almost lost their income. The answer from one of them is as follows:

*The stall at the night market is run by my husband and me, so it is not only my personal income, but also the source of income for the whole family. At first, we were worried every day and felt that being a night market vendor was not stable. But over the years, our income has been relatively stable, and we have no problem supporting the family of three. We have even saved some money. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, our business has been greatly affected, and we can only rely on our past savings to survive, and we almost couldn't make it. Fortunately, we survived, and now our business is better than before, and our income is much higher than before.*

The remaining three interviewees said that Nanjing's night markets brought them extra income, which they used to supplement their family expenses, save, or just keep as pocket money. Although they lost the extra income during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were able to live a normal life because they had other sources of income (e.g. salary and living expenses from their parents).

From these interviews, it can be seen that Nanjing's night markets have played an important role in helping vendors of different backgrounds get and increase individual income. For full-time vendors, Nanjing's night markets are their only source of income. Under normal circumstances, this income can meet their daily needs or support the whole family, and even have a surplus. However, it should also be noted that in special circumstances (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), their risk resistance is low, and their lives are greatly affected after losing the income from the night market. For part-time vendors, Nanjing's night markets

provide them with additional income, which can be used to improve the family's economic situation or any way they want to use it. In special circumstances, even if they lose their income from the night market, they can still live a normal life.

In addition, the interviews also find that the location of the night market and the types of goods sold also affect the income of the vendors. A vendor selling food at Confucius Temple Night Market said proudly:

*My stall is doing very well and I am even too busy on weekends and holidays. In 2023 alone, I made hundreds of thousands of yuan. Even so, my stall is not the best in business. There are at least dozens of food stalls at Confucius Temple Night Market that do better than mine*

But a vendor selling clothes at Confucius Temple Night Market said:

*There are a lot of people coming in to look at and try on clothes, but few of them buy. The income is barely enough to make a living. Several clothing vendors I know here are in the same situation as me, so I plan to switch to selling other things, such as souvenirs.*

Two vendors selling food at the Sanjiang College Night Market both mentioned that not many people come to Sanjiang College Night Market, and their income is just enough to make a living. My observation of the Sanjiang College Night Market in Section 4.1.2 also mentions that business at the entire Sanjiang College Night Market seems not very good.

The income of night market vendors in Nanjing is significantly affected by the location of the night market and the types of products sold. The income of the same product in different night markets may vary greatly, especially in night markets with large customer traffic, which can bring higher income to vendors. In addition, in the same night market, food vendors often earn more than clothing or other non-food vendors. This income inequality may prompt vendors to flock to night markets with large customer traffic and choose to sell similar products. The high concentration of night market vendors and the high similarity of the products sold may cause the night market to lose diversity and cause vicious competition.

### **4.3.2 Contribution of Nanjing's night markets to the overall economy**

Firstly, the most intuitive data about the contribution of night markets to Nanjing's overall economy is the GDP they create. In response to the application for quantitative data disclosure on the GDP created by Nanjing's night markets, the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics says that according to the current GDP accounting system, it is impossible to measure the contribution of night markets to Nanjing's GDP, and there is no relevant data. However, the statistical information released by the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics

shows that Nanjing was ranked among the top ten cities in China's Night Economy City Development Index in 2023, and was selected as one of the ten emerging cities of the night economy in 2023 (Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2023). In addition, The Nanjing Municipal Government also mentioned that the night economy represented by night markets is an important part of Nanjing's economy, and set a goal that the average annual growth rate of Nanjing's night economy should be higher than 18%, and the proportion of social retail sales should reach about 9% (Nanjing.Gov, 2018). The above information shows that promoting the development of Nanjing's night economy represented by night markets can boost Nanjing's overall economy.

In addition, tax revenue contribution can also reflect the contribution of Nanjing's night markets to Nanjing's economy, especially government fiscal revenue. In response to the application for disclosure of quantitative data on the tax revenue contribution of Nanjing's night markets, the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Taxation says that night market vendors in principle are required to pay individual income tax and VAT. However, considering the difficulty in accurately defining the income of night market vendors, the high starting point of VAT (monthly sales of 100,000 yuan) and the high cost of tax collection, night market vendors are almost exempted from tax in the actual implementation process. Although night market vendors do not pay personal income tax and VAT directly, when vendors purchase products from wholesale markets and food processing companies in Nanjing, these upstream companies pay the corresponding taxes (e.g. corporate income tax), which indirectly contribute taxes to Nanjing's local fiscal revenue. In addition, night market managers also mentioned that they also paid corresponding taxes when collecting stall fees.

Customers' consumption in Nanjing's night markets also directly promotes the growth of Nanjing's total consumption, helps further expand Nanjing's consumer market, and thus enhances Nanjing's overall economy. A local night market customer in Nanjing said in the interview that he often goes to the night market near his home to eat supper, but he sometimes also buys some cheap daily necessities and decorations. Several night market customers who come to Nanjing for tourism also said that since it is rare to travel here, they will try to taste as many delicacies as possible in Nanjing's night markets, and will not hesitate to buy any beautiful souvenirs or cultural and creative products. The above interviews also show that local customers continue to help the economic development of Nanjing's night markets through stable daily consumption. Tourists bring significant economic income to Nanjing's night markets with their high spending power and diversified demands. Therefore, the consumption by local customers and tourists in Nanjing's night markets has both played an important role in promoting Nanjing's overall economy.

#### 4.4 Nanjing's night markets and challenges

In the rapid development of Nanjing's night markets, all stakeholders, including vendors, customers, market managers and policy makers, are also facing their unique challenges. Through interviews and focus groups, we can hear the voices of different participants in Nanjing's night markets and present the main challenges faced by each night market stakeholder group.

Firstly, in the interviews with night market vendors, most of the interviewees regarded the stall fees as their biggest challenge. They complained that the current stall fees are high and have been increasing year by year. In particular, some stalls with better locations are almost unaffordable. One of them said as follows:

*The stall fees have increased so fast in the past two years, especially in 2023, the price has increased every six months, from 3,000 yuan a month to the current 4,500 yuan. Most of the money I earn is used to pay for the stall fees.*

Another vendor also said that his stall fee has risen to 20,000 yuan per month now. Although the stall business is good, he can't afford the stall fees that continue to increase.

More than half of the vendors interviewed also mentioned the fierce competition in the night markets. They said that the competition between vendors is particularly fierce, especially for homogeneous products. They have to fight price wars to attract consumers, and their profits are severely compressed. One vendor even said that the current employment situation is not good, more people come to work as night market vendors, and his business is more difficult. In addition, some vendors mentioned the challenges of insufficient supporting facilities in the night market. They believed that unstable water and electricity supply would affect their normal business. A few vendors mentioned that they cannot shout or use speakers to attract customers for fear of being complained about; and the increase in environmental protection requirements such as restricting their use of plastic, which increased their operating costs and complexity.

Secondly, the challenges that customers face at night markets mainly come from the problems they encountered when consuming in Nanjing's night markets, poor experiences or areas that they think need to be improved, as mentioned in the interviews. All the customers interviewed mentioned the quality issues of night market goods, which can be broken down into food safety, the quality of goods other than food, and after-sales issues. One customer said as follows:

*I am very worried about the food safety issues at night markets, especially since I am going with my child. Some food stalls do not look very hygienic, such as flies*



*flying around, accumulation of kitchen waste, handling food without wearing gloves, etc. In addition, after tasting some stalls, I can feel that the ingredients are not fresh. Although I have no problem, but my child has mild diarrhoea after eating them.*

Another interviewee complained that the souvenirs he bought at the Confucius Temple Night Market were broken when he returned home. When he went to the corresponding stall for after-sales service the next day, the vendor refused. He originally wanted to complain to the relevant departments, but thought that his travel time would be wasted on defending his rights, so he had to give up.

Most customers also mentioned challenges of supporting facilities in Nanjing's night markets, such as the lack of parking lots or insufficient parking spaces, too few garbage cans so they have to carry garbage by hand, insufficient toilets leading to long queues, and poor lighting in some areas. Some customers said that the environment of some night markets is relatively poor, especially the ground cannot be cleaned in time, and no one cleans the toilets. One customer felt uncomfortable with the loud noise of the horns and speakers of the night market vendors, and another customer mentioned that the crowds and congestion greatly affected the consumption experience and might also cause stampedes. Combined with the observations of some Nanjing's night markets in Section 4.1, the challenges mentioned in this paragraph have different severity levels in various Nanjing's night markets, but they reflect that there are large differences in the levels of supporting facilities, environmental management, noise control and order maintenance in different Nanjing's night markets.

Thirdly, market managers generally mentioned in interviews that the difficulty in managing vendors is the main challenge they face. Specifically, there are many vendors in the night market, and they need to invest a lot of time and energy to check each stall. However, even so, they cannot ensure that every vendor abides by the rules. Some vendors start to violate market regulations after they have checked. And because they are not government departments, they do not have law enforcement power, so their management measures are limited. The common practice is to deduct deposits or remove vendors who have repeatedly violated the rules from the night market. In addition, two market managers also said that they are under great pressure in terms of food safety and environmental protection. One of them said as follows:

*Some vendors lack food safety knowledge. There was a food safety incident here before, and many leaders were punished. Many vendors have weak environmental awareness and cannot properly handle their garbage and sewage, which affects the overall environment of the night market. We also want to popularize relevant knowledge to them, but we don't really understand this knowledge, so we can only say some empty words such as paying attention to food safety and protecting the environment.*

One night market manager also mentioned fierce competition, but their competition comes from some shopping centres and shopping malls. He admitted that the customer flow of the night market he manages is relatively poor, which has led to the loss of many vendors. However, the management cost will not be reduced much, so the only option is to increase the stall fees for existing vendors, which has created a vicious cycle.

Fourthly, the main challenge for policymakers is the cooperation and coordination of multiple departments. One policy maker said as follows:

*Although we are the competent department of the night market, the actual operation of the night market involves multiple departments. For example, goods pricing is managed by the Bureau of Price, and food safety issues are managed by the Bureau of Food Safety and Hygiene. Every time there is any problem related to the night market, we are always contacted first. In many cases, we cannot handle it directly and need to transfer it to other departments. Therefore, sometimes people go to the Nanjing Municipal Government to complain that we do not handle the problem in time.*

Another policy maker said that the night market-related policies they formulated encountered great resistance in actual implementation, especially for the management of night market vendors. Due to concerns about negative social opinion, they tried to avoid using coercive measures and promoted humane law enforcement, such as just criticizing and educating, but this also made the vendors more unscrupulous because the cost of violation is very low. This also explains why the small-scale mobile night markets around Nanjing metro stations mentioned in Section 4.1.5 continue to exist despite various illegal and irregular activities.

Focus group discussions of vendors, customers, market managers and policy makers find that while stall fees are a major challenge for vendors, they also have negative impacts on other night market stakeholders. Part of the focus group discussion on stall fees is as follows:

**Vendor representative:** *The stall fee is rising every year. We small vendors already have very little profit. We can't afford it if it rises further.*

**Customer representative:** *I feel that the goods in the night market are more expensive than before. It turns out that you have passed the cost of the stall fee on to us consumers.*

**Market manager representative:** *We also have difficulties. The cost of night market management, operation and maintenance is increasing every year, and many vendors are in arrears of stall fees.*

**Policy maker representative:** *I'm sorry that the formulation of stall fees is not within the jurisdiction of our department, but the stall fee issue has caused some vendors*

*to choose to set up stalls outside the designated locations, which has increased our management difficulty.*

In addition, the focus group also finds that the challenges faced by some night market stakeholders are beneficial to other night market stakeholders. For example, vendors and market managers mentioned fierce competition, while customers said that this would allow them to have more choices and buy cheaper goods.

#### **4.5 Nanjing's night markets and sustainable development**

Based on some research on sustainable development in Section 2.6 (Mensah, 2019; Lobo et al., 2015; Daly, 1992; Kolk, 2016; Evers, 2018); I believe that the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets needs to be considered comprehensively from the three dimensions of economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability; Specifically, economic sustainability means that Nanjing's night markets should bring sustained and stable income to individuals and make continuous contributions to the growth of Nanjing's overall economy; social sustainability requires that the operation of Nanjing's night markets should maintain social equity, bring positive social impacts (such as promoting employment) and should not disrupt social order; environmental sustainability emphasizes that the operation of Nanjing's night markets must minimize the negative impact on the environment, and ensure the harmonious coexistence of the night markets and the surrounding ecological environment.

To achieve sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets, it is necessary to first address the challenges faced by night market stakeholders, as these challenges directly affect the normal operation and future development of Nanjing's night market from economic, social and environmental. Therefore, I propose some comprehensive solution suggestions as follows:

**Formulate a reasonable stall fee pricing and subsidy mechanism:** Big data can be used to analyse night market passenger flow, stall location, stall operating conditions, costs, etc. to dynamically adjust stall fees to ensure that stall fees are always in a reasonable state and will not impose excessive burdens on vendors (Steinberg, 2019). In addition, the government should also set an upper limit on stall fees to limit excessive increases in stall fees; for vendors in difficulty, the government can help them alleviate operating pressure through financial subsidies.

**Improve supporting facilities in night markets:** The government and market managers should increase investment in night market supporting facilities, such as ensuring stable water and electricity supply for vendors, adding garbage cans and toilets, establishing temporary parking lots, and improving lighting facilities. In addition, Beijing's Shenghuatun Night Market also provides a new idea, which is to move the night market into the urban green park, making full

use of urban public space as well as its complete supporting facilities; and saving construction costs. Moreover, the distribution density of garbage cans in Shenghuatun Night Market is also worth learning from. There are several consecutive garbage cans almost every 10 meters, which is very convenient.

**Adopt a diversified management approach:** Market managers can introduce some high-tech tools to help them supervise, such as using smart monitoring equipment to monitor the operation of stalls in real-time, using AI to identify violations, and using smart cleaning robots to assist cleaning staff in keeping the night market environment tidy. In addition, a vendor autonomous committee can also be established to allow vendors to assist in management (Gunningham & Sinclair, 2017), and a reward and punishment mechanism can be introduced to encourage vendors to supervise each other and promptly report violations.

**Establish an efficient multi-departmental coordination mechanism:** The management of Nanjing's night markets involves multiple government departments, and an efficient multi-department coordination mechanism must be established. By establishing a special cross-department coordination committee, the communication and handling process of night markets can be simplified. It is also possible to learn from the "big urban management" model of Dezhou, Shandong and Huai'an, Jiangsu, that is, to establish a comprehensive urban management committee with full responsibility for handling all issues of street markets and night markets (Sohu, 2013).

**Encourage diversified business operations and product innovation:** Policy makers and market managers can guide vendors to diversify their operations and provide more abundant goods and service options to attract different consumer groups and avoid vicious competition caused by commodity homogeneity. At the same time, guide vendors to innovate their products and improve product quality, combining Nanjing's local characteristics, traditional culture and modern trends, which can not only increase the attractiveness of night markets, but also shape a unique night market cultural core and enhance the overall competitiveness of Nanjing's night markets (Li et al., 2021).

**Enhance relevant knowledge training:** This not only includes training for vendors to improve their knowledge of food safety, environmental protection, honest business, etc. (Ma, 2019), but also extends to market managers and customers. Market managers can master food safety, environmental protection, legal and other related knowledge through training, while improving their ability to respond to emergencies. Customers can raise their awareness of the importance of night market food safety and environmental protection through some publicity activities, and enhance their awareness of self-protection.

**Conduct regular night market stakeholder communication meetings:** Regular communication meetings provide a platform for direct dialogue between night market vendors, customers, market managers and policy makers, allowing all parties to express their demands and jointly discuss issues in night market operation and development. In this way, policy makers can better understand the needs and challenges of all parties and formulate

more targeted and operational policies. At the same time, communication and cooperation among stakeholders can also enhance mutual understanding and trust and reduce resistance in policy implementation.

In addition to addressing existing challenges, I believe that to achieve the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets, it is also necessary to notice some other economic, social and environmental issues that exist in Nanjing's night markets. Although they may not currently constitute major challenges, they also need to be taken seriously. For example, I mentioned the disdain for this profession among highly educated vendors in Section 4.2, the income gap among night market vendors mentioned and the poor ability of full-time night market vendors to cope with special circumstances (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic) in Section 4.3. In addition, studies by Song (2019), Kang et al. (2019) and Hussain (2022) also reflect that street markets and night markets perform poorly in terms of environmental sustainability. Nanjing's night markets should also consider more environmental protection measures to minimize negative impacts on the environment. Therefore, I also make some recommendations as follows:

**In terms of economic sustainability,** I mentioned in Section 4.3 that the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Taxation stated that in actual implementation, night market vendors are almost exempt from tax. However, I believe that the tax policy for night market vendors should be improved because taxation has a positive impact on economic growth. Relevant departments can improve the transparency and execution of tax management, ensure that vendors pay taxes in accordance with regulations, and optimize differentiated tax policies based on the vendor's income level and business scale. For vendors with higher income, the tax rate can be appropriately increased, while vendors with lower income can be given tax incentives or exemptions to ensure fair tax burdens

**In terms of social sustainability,** I think the government should create a positive professional image for night market vendors, publicize their important role in urban economic and social development, enhance vendors' professional identity, and eliminate occupational discrimination. In addition, market managers can promote cooperation among night market vendors, such as joint procurement, joint marketing, etc., to reduce costs and increase profits; and by establishing a resource-sharing platform, help some vendors with lower income obtain more business opportunities and resource support, ultimately narrowing the income gap. The government should also further improve the social security and welfare of night market vendors, and set up a night market emergency fund to improve their ability to resist risks in special circumstances.

**In terms of environmental sustainability,** I think more environmental protection measures should be taken to reduce the negative impact of night markets on the surrounding environment, such as promoting the use of energy-saving equipment and environmentally friendly materials (Nguyen & Peña-García, 2019). However, it is worth noting that the

government should implement some incentives and subsidies when taking these environmental protection measures to avoid placing additional burdens on night market vendors.

#### **4.6 Summary of key findings**

From the data analysis results in the previous sections, I summarized four key findings as follows:

Firstly, Nanjing's night markets can provide a large number of employment opportunities. As representatives of flexible employment, they provide low-threshold, flexible jobs for many low-educated and unemployed groups who have difficulty finding jobs, and solving their employment difficulties. In addition, some people with formal jobs will also choose night markets as part-time jobs. However, some highly educated people only regard night market vendors as transitional jobs and they look down on this profession. In addition to directly providing street vendor jobs, Nanjing's night markets also indirectly create jobs such as cleaning, security and management, promoting overall employment in Nanjing.

Secondly, Nanjing's night markets have made important contributions to individual income and the city's overall economy. First of all, night markets bring relatively stable income that can meet daily needs or additional income to night market vendors, but income inequality exists and when special circumstances (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic) occur, income from night markets is unstable or even non-existent. In addition, Nanjing's night markets are an important part of Nanjing's night economy, significantly promoting the development of Nanjing's overall economy. Although most of Nanjing's night market vendors are exempt from paying personal income tax and VAT, they indirectly contribute a lot of tax revenue through purchasing, paying stall fees, etc. A large amount of local and tourist consumption in Nanjing's night markets has also further expanded Nanjing's consumer market.

Thirdly, during the development of Nanjing's night markets, night market stakeholders face many challenges. Night market vendors are mainly faced with challenges such as high and rising stall fees, fierce competition, and insufficient supporting facilities. Customers are concerned about the quality of goods, food safety, night market environment, and supporting facilities. Market managers are unable to monitor and manage every vendor in real-time, have limited management measures, and are under great pressure in terms of food safety and environmental protection. Managers of unpopular night markets also face the challenges of lack of competitiveness and loss of vendors. Policy makers consider that coordinating multiple departments to deal with night market-related issues is a big challenge, and policy implementation encounters great resistance.

Fourthly, the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets should be made from three aspects: economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability. To achieve the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets, we first need to address the existing challenges. Therefore, I suggest formulating a reasonable stall fee pricing and subsidy mechanism, improving supporting facilities in night markets, adopting a diversified management approach (including introducing high-tech management tools and promoting vendor autonomy), establishing an efficient multi-department coordination mechanism, encouraging diversified operations and product innovation, strengthening relevant knowledge training for vendors and market managers, and conducting regular night market stakeholder communication meetings. I think that the environmental protection measures in Nanjing's night markets are not perfect enough and it is also necessary to pay attention to some issues that exist in Nanjing's night markets, although they do not constitute major challenges now. Therefore, I further recommend that relevant departments should improve the tax policy and implementation for night market vendors, establish a positive professional image of night market vendors, narrow the income gap among vendors, strengthen the social security and welfare of vendors, and adopt more environmental protection measures with corresponding rewards and subsidies to promote more comprehensive and sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This study deeply explores Nanjing's night markets from four dimensions: employment, economy, challenges and sustainable development. Three main research questions were proposed to guide the study, and they are "What role do night markets play in creating employment opportunities for different social groups in Nanjing?", "How do Nanjing's night markets contribute to the individual income of vendors and the overall local economy?" and "What are the challenges that Nanjing's night markets currently face and how can their sustainable development be promoted?" This chapter aims to discuss how the analysis results and key findings in the previous chapter answer the three main research questions of this study, as well as the relationship with the existing literature.

### **What role do night markets play in creating employment opportunities for different social groups in Nanjing?**

My study shows that Nanjing's night markets can provide a large number of employment opportunities for different social groups in Nanjing. Firstly, Nanjing's night markets provide low-threshold and flexible job opportunities for many people with low education and difficulty in re-employment after unemployment, solving their employment difficulties. This is similar to the views of Li et al. (2021) and Flock & Breitung (2015) that street markets or

night markets are important employment channels for marginalized people in the city (e.g., unemployed, low-income). Secondly, Nanjing's night markets can also provide flexible part-time jobs for some people who already have formal jobs. Thirdly, my study shows that Nanjing's night markets have also become an employment option for some highly educated people, which also verifies the views of Chin (2015), but my study further emphasizes that highly educated people only regard night market vendors as transitional jobs and they look down on this profession. Finally, I find that in addition to directly providing employment for street vendors, Nanjing's night markets also indirectly created job opportunities such as cleaning, security, and management, which promoted Nanjing's overall employment.

### **How do Nanjing's night markets contribute to the individual income of vendors and the overall local economy?**

Firstly, my study effectively fills the research gap on the individual income of night market vendors. It shows that Nanjing's night markets can bring relatively stable individual income to vendors, meeting their daily needs, and also bring additional income to part-time night market vendors. However, there is a certain gap in income among vendors, and when special circumstances (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) occur, it is difficult for vendors to obtain stable income from night markets, or even no income. Secondly, my study shows that Nanjing's night markets are an important part of Nanjing's night economy and have greatly promoted the development of Nanjing's overall economy, which is consistent with Li et al. (2021) and Cao et al. (2021) on the role of street markets and night markets in promoting the economy. In addition, my study finds that although most of Nanjing's night market vendors do not need to pay personal income tax and VAT, they indirectly contribute a lot of tax revenue through purchasing and paying stall fees. My study also shows that a large number of local and tourist consumption in Nanjing's night markets has further expanded Nanjing's consumer market, which is similar to Lin et al.'s (2022) view that the night economy can increase consumer demand.

### **What are the challenges that Nanjing's night markets currently face and how can their sustainable development be promoted?**

My study identifies the challenges faced by different Nanjing's night market stakeholders. Night market vendors consider high and rising stall fees, fierce competition and insufficient supporting facilities are the main challenges they face. Customers are concerned about the quality of goods, food safety, night market environment and supporting facilities. Market managers are unable to monitor and manage every vendor in real time, have limited management measures, and are under great pressure in terms of food safety and environmental protection. Managers of some unpopular night markets also face the challenges of lack of competitiveness and loss of vendors. Policy makers consider that coordinating multiple departments to deal with night market-related issues is a big challenge,



and policy implementation encounters great resistance. However, the legitimacy challenges mentioned in some research are not reflected in Nanjing's night markets (Song, 2020; ILO, 2013). My study also proposes corresponding solutions to these challenges, including formulating a reasonable stall fee pricing and subsidy mechanism, improving supporting facilities in night markets, adopting a diversified management approach (including introducing high-tech management tools and promoting vendor autonomy), establishing an efficient multi-department coordination mechanism, encouraging diversified operations and product innovation, strengthening relevant knowledge training for vendors and market managers, and conducting regular night market stakeholder communication meetings.

In addition, my study fills the research gap on how to promote the sustainable development of night markets. Before answering how to promote the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets, my study first explains what is the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets based on existing literature on sustainable development (Mensah, 2019; Lobo et al., 2015; Daly, 1992; Kolk, 2016; Evers, 2018); that is, at the economic level, Nanjing's night markets should bring sustained and stable income to individuals and make continuous contributions to the growth of Nanjing's overall economy; at the social level, the operation of Nanjing's night markets should maintain social equity, bring positive social impacts (such as promoting employment) and should not disrupt social order; at the environmental level, the operation of Nanjing's night markets must minimize the negative impact on the environment and coexist harmoniously with the surrounding ecological environment. My study emphasises that achieving the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets requires joint efforts from economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability. Based on solving existing challenges, it is also necessary to focus on issues in Nanjing's night markets that have not yet become major challenges and take actions and take more environmental protection measures. I suggest that relevant departments in Nanjing should improve the tax policy and implementation for night market vendors, establish a positive professional image of night market vendors, narrow the income gap among vendors, strengthen the social security and welfare of vendors, and adopt more environmental protection measures with corresponding rewards and subsidies.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Limitations**

In conclusion, this study conducts an in-depth investigation of the impact of Nanjing's night markets on the local society and economy by visiting and observing several main Nanjing's night markets, using interviews and focus groups to listen to the voices of main Nanjing's night markets stakeholders (night market vendors, customers, market managers and policy makers), and analyzing data provided by relevant government departments in Nanjing. It presented the current status of major Nanjing's night markets, analyzed the role of Nanjing's night markets in creating employment opportunities, evaluated the impact of Nanjing's night

markets on the individual income of vendors and the overall economy of the city, identified the main challenges currently faced by different stakeholder groups in Nanjing's night markets, and explored ways to promote the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets. The results show that, firstly, Nanjing's night markets have played a positive role in Nanjing's employment market, providing a large number of job opportunities for different social groups in Nanjing, such as low-threshold and flexible jobs for low-educated and unemployed groups and transitional jobs for highly educated people. In addition, Nanjing's night markets have made great contributions to individual income and the overall economy of the city. Nanjing's night markets provide vendors with relatively stable individual income to meet their living needs, but there is income inequality and income instability under special circumstances. In the process of rapid development of Nanjing's night markets, this study also identifies the challenges faced by different stakeholders of the night market, such as the operating pressure brought by high rents and fierce competition for vendors, and the multi-party coordination challenges of policymakers. According to the different challenges faced by different stakeholders, this study also gives targeted solutions, such as formulating a reasonable stall fee pricing and subsidy mechanism, and establishing an efficient multi-departmental collaboration mechanism. On the basis of solving the existing challenges, this study further proposes that the sustainability of Nanjing's night markets should also focus on some night market issues that have not yet posed major challenges and increase environmental protection measures. It is also recommended to promote the comprehensive sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets from the three aspects of economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability through methods such as improving the tax policy and implementation for night market vendors, strengthening the social security benefits of vendors, and promoting the use of night market energy-saving equipment.

This study enriches the literature on night markets in Chinese cities, provides practical suggestions for solving the challenges of Nanjing's night markets and promoting their sustainable development, and also has certain reference value for night markets in other Chinese cities with similar situations. However, some limitations of the findings of this study must be acknowledged. The research object of this study is several main Nanjing's night markets. Night markets in other countries may have significant differences with those in China in terms of culture, economy, environment, regulations, management model, etc., which limits the applicability of the conclusions of this study. In addition, this study estimates the number of jobs provided by Nanjing's night markets based on flexible employment data, and the results may not be precise; and the contribution of Nanjing's night markets to Nanjing's overall economy lacks the support of intuitive quantitative data such as the GDP created by Nanjing's night markets, and therefore more quantitative research in this area is needed in the future. Finally, this study does not pay enough attention to small-scale and mobile night

markets in Nanjing. Their situation may be different from that of some major Nanjing's night markets. Future research can also focus on these small-scale and mobile night markets.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A

#### List of questions for interviews

#### Night Market Vendors:



1. Can you tell us about your experience as a night market vendor in Nanjing?
2. Why did you choose to become a night market vendor?
3. What challenges do you face as a night market vendor?
4. What impact does becoming a night market vendor have on your livelihood and income?
5. How is your interaction with the night market managers?
6. What changes do you think can be made to improve customers' experience at night markets?
7. What do you think needs to be improved in terms of the night market's environment or regulations?
8. Do you have anything else to add about Nanjing's night markets?

**Night Market Customers:**

1. Can you describe your experience as a customer at Nanjing's night markets?
2. What attracts you to visit Nanjing's night markets?
3. What do you think of the atmosphere and culture of Nanjing's night markets?
4. Have you observed any changes in Nanjing's night markets over time? If so, what are they?
5. What improvements or additions would you like to see in Nanjing's night markets offerings?
6. Do you have any suggestions for enhancing the overall night market experience?
7. What contribution do you think the night market makes to the local community and economy (e.g. GDP, tax)?
8. Do you have anything else to add about Nanjing's night markets?

**Night Market Managers:**

1. Can you outline your responsibilities as a night market manager?
2. What are the main challenges while managing the night market?
3. How do you work with vendors and local authorities to ensure the smooth operation of night markets?
4. What do you think needs to be improved in the current night market management?
5. What strategies do you use to promote the night market and attract customers?
6. What contribution do you think the night market makes to the local community and economy (e.g. GDP, tax)?
7. Do you have anything else to add about Nanjing's night markets?

**Policy Makers:**

1. Can you introduce the current policy framework of Nanjing's night markets?
2. What are the main goals of policies related to Nanjing's night markets?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of existing policies in achieving these goals?
4. What challenges are faced in the formulation and implementation of Nanjing's night market-related policies?
5. How do you fully engage with all night market stakeholders during the policy-making process?

6. What do you think of the future of Nanjing's night markets?
7. What measures are you taking to support the sustainable development of Nanjing's night markets?
8. Do you have anything else to add about Nanjing's night markets?

### **Focus group agenda**

1. Introduction and icebreaker activity
2. Share personal experiences and anecdotes related to Nanjing's night markets
3. Discuss the challenges they face and think about solutions
4. Discuss what aspects Nanjing's night markets needs to improve
5. Seek feedback on future policy changes or development plans for Nanjing's night markets
6. Free discussion on Nanjing's night markets
7. Q&A session
8. Concluding remarks and thanks to participants

## **Appendix B**

### **An interview sample**

This interviewee was a food vendor at Sanjiang College Night Market. The interview took place at Sanjiang College Night Market. The language used was Chinese.

我：能否介绍一下您在南京做夜市摊贩的经历？(Can you tell us about your experience as a night market vendor in Nanjing?)

他：我毕业于南京的一所知名大学，但毕业后却找不到工作。第一年，我呆在家里准备公务员考试，但最终没有考上。看到身边的同龄人都在工作，加上家人的催促和责备，我就只好向父母要了一些钱，在三江学院夜市租了一个摊位卖鲜榨果汁。(I graduated from a well-known university in Nanjing, but after graduation, I could not find a job. For the first year, I stayed at home to prepare for the civil service exam but ultimately did not get in. In the end, seeing that my peers around me were working, coupled with the urging and chastising of my family, I had to ask my parents for some money to rent a stall at the Sanjiang College Night Market to sell freshly squeezed fruit juice.)

我：为什么选择做夜市摊贩？(Why did you choose to become a night market vendor?)

他：实际上，我一开始并不想做夜市摊贩，但又找不到其他理想的工作，一直呆在家里也不是办法，所以就来了啊。这边还有好几个也是大学毕业生过来摆摊的，不过有

几个人干了没多久就走了，应该是找到工作了。(Actually, I didn't want to be a night market vendor at first, but I couldn't find any other ideal job. Staying at home all the time was not an option, so I came here. There are also several college graduates who come here to set up stalls, but some of them left after working for a short time, probably because they found a job.)

我：做夜市摊贩面临哪些挑战？(What challenges do you face as a night market vendor?)

他：挺多的吧。首先是摊位费挺高的，而且还经常涨价，要是生意好也就算了，但感觉我们这个夜市的生意都挺一般的。然后，我觉得配套设施够吧，比如没有足够的卫生间，这给我们和顾客都带来了很大不便，我上个厕所要跑很远，很耽误时间。而且感觉这个夜市供电和供水也不稳，有次停电了好久，直接一片漆黑。其他嘛你突然问我，我一时半会也想不到。(Quite a lot. First of all, the stall fee is quite high, and the price is often increased. If the business is good, it would be fine, but it seems that the business of our night market is just so-so. I think the supporting facilities are sufficient. For example, there are not enough toilets, which brings a lot of inconvenience to us and customers. I have to run a long way to go to the toilet, which is very time-consuming. It seems that the power and water supply of this night market are not stable. There was a power outage for a long time, and it was completely dark. If you suddenly ask me about something else, I can't think of it for a while.)

我：做夜市摊贩对您的生计和收入有何影响？(What impact does becoming a night market vendor have on your livelihood and income?)

他：那肯定比呆家里没收入好。这收入感觉还行吧，也算稳定，我原来还以为会饥一顿饱一顿呢。但我前面也说了，你也能看到，客流一般，我的收入也就够我生活吧，反正不用向家里人要钱了，但肯定不够我大手大脚花钱的。(That is definitely better than staying at home with no income. This income feels okay, it is stable. I thought it was unstable. But as I said before, you can see that the customer flow is just so-so, and my income is enough for me to live. Anyway, I don't have to ask my family for money, but it is definitely not enough for me to spend lavishly.)

我：您与夜市管理人员的互动如何？(How is your interaction with the night market managers?)

他：我与夜市管理人员的互动还行吧。但感觉他们挺忙的，几个人管这么多摊位，有时候找他们帮忙的时候态度还是不错的，不过我也没太多事情需要找他们，然后我也挺守规则的，所以大家平时接触也不多。(My interaction with the night market management is okay. But I feel like they are quite busy. There are just several people in charge of so many stalls. Sometimes they have a good attitude when asking for help. However, I don't have many things to ask them for, and I also abide by the rules, so we didn't interact much)

我：您认为可以做出哪些改变来改善夜市顾客的体验？(What changes do you think can be made to improve customers' experience at night markets?)

他：夜市环境弄弄好啊，然后卫生间多弄几个，垃圾桶也是。奥对，还有食品安全这块吧，我其实看到有几个摊位会把烂的水果也榨汁，毕竟看不出来，但我用的水果保证新鲜哈。(The night market environment should be improved, and there should be more toilets and garbage cans. Oh, yes, and about food safety, I actually saw a few stalls juicing rotten fruits. After all, you can't see it, but the fruits I use are guaranteed to be fresh.)

我：您认为夜市环境或规章制度方面需要改进的地方有哪些？(What do you think needs to be improved in terms of the night market's environment or regulations?)

他：夜市的环境肯定需要改善啊，谁不喜欢干净整洁的。规章制度方面，我希望他们赶紧降低摊位租金或提供点补贴，然后也别整天罚款罚款的，有这时间不如赶紧多宣传宣传，想想怎么增加人气。(I hope they will quickly lower the stall fees or provide some subsidies, and then stop charging fines all day long. If they have this time, why not do more publicity and think about how to increase popularity?)

我：关于南京的夜市，您还有什么要补充的吗？(Do you have anything else to add about Nanjing's night markets?)

他：我都从来没想到自己会成为夜市摊贩。我本来以为名牌大学毕业后就能轻松找到合适的工作，但现实直接给了我一巴掌。说实话，我真看不起这个工作，觉得我这么多年的学都白上了。后来我发现也有其他大学毕业的过来摆摊，我才渐渐释然。但我还是努力白天找工作、准备公务员考试，找到工作之后就不在夜市。但不管怎么说，我也非常感谢夜市，至少暂时缓解了我的压力。(I never thought I would become a night market vendor. I thought I could easily find a suitable job after graduating from a prestigious university, but the reality hit me hard. Actually, I looked down on night market vendors and

felt that all my years of study were in vain. Later, I found that some college graduates had come to set up stalls at the Sanjiang College Night Market, and I gradually felt relieved. But I still try to find a job and prepare for the civil service exam during the day, and I will not be a night market vendor when I find one. Anyway, I am also very grateful to the night market, at least it temporarily relieved my pressure.)

## **Appendix C**

### **Reply from the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics**

Only the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics responded via email, and the screenshot of the email is as follows,

# 南京市统计局政府信息公开申请答复

市统计局

[Details](#)

宁统依复〔2024〕第44号

## 政府信息公开申请答复书

汤凡：

您好，我局于2024年8月16日收到您在线提交的《政府信息公开申请表》。

您申请获取“南京夜市2020年至2024年的GDP贡献，带来的经济收入的相关定量数据”，现答复如下：按照当前核算体系，无法测算夜市对南京GDP贡献率，无相关数据。

感谢您对统计工作的关注。

南京市统计局

2024年8月22日

Some pictures of Shenghuatun Night Market (Beijing)



