

The Insights of Japanese Street Stall Management and Cultural Design for the Development of China's Street Economy

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Abstract

In the development processes of many countries, changes in economic policies, insufficient driving forces for economic development, and financial crises leading to rising unemployment have resulted in the expansion of the street economy. As a significant component of informal employment, the street economy holds crucial significance in addressing livelihood issues and promoting urban economic growth. Therefore, measures and policies that regulate, guide, and support the development of the street economy need to be implemented. This paper, through the compilation of data and relevant research works on street economies in China and Japan, explores the relevance and insights of Japanese street stall management and cultural design for the development of China's street economy. It begins by discussing the background of Japan's street stall economy, conducting a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of its management models and the uniqueness of its cultural design, highlighting the advantages of Japanese street stalls. Next, it introduces the current status of China's street economy development and emphasizes the current attention on the "micro" economy, along with the pressing issues it faces. It then compares the street economies of both China and Japan, emphasizing the strengths of Japan's street economy and the shortcomings in China's low-carbon economic development. Taking into account the development status of China's street economy, it examines the relevance and insights for China's street economy development. Finally, it concludes by summarizing the significant potential of street economy development and suggests the importance of establishing clear legal provisions to positively influence its growth.

Keywords: street economy, Japanese street stalls, Chinese street stalls, insights, legal provisions.

1. Introduction

Street economy is a modern form of economic activity in which individuals or groups earn income by selling goods at specific locations, along streets, or without fixed premises. It has become an integral part of China's economy. However, imperfect management models, lack of technical guidance, and deficiencies in stall design have also impacted urban management and cityscape. These issues have imposed limitations on the development of street economy and demand immediate attention. The study of street economy is of significant importance for understanding the current market economy and driving economic development.

This paper, through a comparative analysis of street economies in China and Japan, aims to identify the similarities and differences between the two nations' street economies. By drawing from the development experiences of neighboring countries, it seeks to discover new models for street economy development and discuss reform policies that are aligned with the practical economic conditions. The ultimate goal is to enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of street economy, thereby paving the way for a more promising future in the field.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background of Japanese Street Stall Development

The mobile roadside stalls on the streets of Japan originated during the Edo period (1716-1736) and gradually flourished after the Meiji period (1868-1912). In the early days, roadside stalls emerged in the form of

peddlers carrying poles and hawking along the streets. Later, they gradually formed the form of setting up immovable simple storefronts on the streets. This flourishing street market culture was even documented in famous ukiyo-e paintings such as "Tokyo's Top Spots, the Night Before a Festival." After World War II, as Japan's economy experienced significant decline, people turned to street vending in what was known as "yamiichi" to alleviate financial pressures. Yamiichi was a type of informal market where individuals exchanged furniture, surplus American goods, second-hand items, and more. With the development of the economy, many self-employed stall owners have started to become enterprises and have fixed stores. For these individual businesses, the Japanese government also provides tax incentives, resulting in a relatively relaxed living environment. Therefore, it can be said that the stall culture was the source of commercial culture among Japanese citizens after the war. Street vendors gradually accumulated wealth, and some of them transitioned from open-air stalls to indoor spaces, following government guidance. This transformation led to the establishment of organized marketplaces with regulated management systems. Today, despite the historical yamiichi markets becoming part of history, the street vending culture and the style it has accumulated continue to have a significant impact on modern Japanese society. Flea markets and mobile street vendors, including farmers coming to the city to set up stalls, are the most common forms of street vending in Japan.

2.2 Analysis of Japanese Street Stall Management Models

2.2.1 Strict and Rational Legal Regulations

Take mobile street vendors as an example: the limited presence of mobile street vendors in Japan can be attributed to the strict legal regulations set forth by government departments. These regulations encompass a variety of laws and ordinances, including basic food hygiene laws, road traffic laws, road laws, and fire safety laws designed to ensure public safety and the safety of vendors. Those aspiring to earn money as mobile street vendors must strictly adhere to these policies to obtain vending permits. This involves a complex application process. Street vendors must first apply for a food business license and undergo professional training, obtaining relevant qualifications. Since mobile street vendors often use small carts and stands as platforms, there is a high probability that modifications are needed, and these modifications require official approval. Operating on the streets also involves adhering to regulations, for example article 76 of Japan's Road Traffic Law stipulates that stacking obstacles that hinder traffic on roads is an "absolutely prohibited act". According to this law, any act of setting up stalls on roads and sidewalks is illegal.

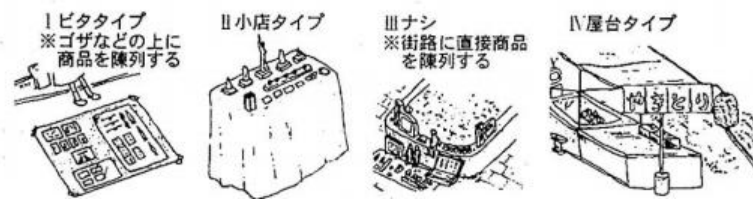
2.2.2 Supportive Policies with a Human Touch

The Japanese government not only implements strict regulations but also collaborates with various entities to introduce supportive policies. Firstly, there are specialized guidance teams available to provide guidance to "novice vendors," along with regular lectures for public reference. Secondly, Japanese bookstores stock numerous books that teach people about vending requirements, equipment, and how to beautify their stalls to make them visually appealing. Furthermore, some large corporations offer assistance to street vendors. For instance, food vendors may face issues with inadequate hygiene at home or limited space. To address these concerns, food-related companies have introduced the concept of "shared kitchens" to provide suitable facilities. Additionally, designers work on planning the layout of the vending area, avoiding the common issue of being perceived as "dirty and disorderly." Many media outlets actively promote street vendors to attract audiences. These support activities also extend to educating children from a young age, fostering their practical skills and encouraging in-depth research and discussions on issues such as environmental pollution and conservation. By September 1st of this year, the "Fukuoka City Housing Basic Regulations", the first domestic regulation in Japan to regulate stall operation rules, will be in effect for 10 years. The strengthened control once accelerated the recession, but overcoming the influence of shopkeepers' old age and the COVID-19, street stalls began to revive.

2.3 Analysis of Japanese Street Stall Culture

Japanese street stalls typically come in several forms, including:

1. Ground-based stalls (ビタタイプ): Goods are displayed on cloth spread directly on the ground for showcasing and sale.
2. Small shops (タイプ): Goods are placed on tabletops.
3. Roadside stalls (街路を使う): Goods are directly displayed on the road surface.
4. Stall (タイプ): Mobile vendors with roofs.



These stalls are often mobile, with unique designs and layouts. Japanese street stalls are known for their wooden structures with simple layouts and moderate sizes. They are often foldable or detachable, making them easy to move. They typically feature small roofs to protect customers and merchandise from sunlight and rain. Some come with folding tables and chairs for customer convenience while purchasing and enjoying the products.

Design-wise, Japanese street stalls often incorporate traditional elements such as projecting roofs, red eaves, and wooden decorations. They use bright colors and eye-catching slogans to attract consumers' attention. These stalls have a distinct Japanese identity, including cherry blossom patterns, Japanese fonts, and anime illustrations. Some follow a minimalist design style using simple lines and colors, avoiding overly complex decoration, such as wood-style or modern American styles.

The uniqueness of the product is the greatest center of interest. The most representative one is the Fukuoka Bodo Night Market (Utai) Ruth Benedict, a renowned contemporary cultural anthropologist in the United States, wrote "The Chrysanthemum and the Knife" during World War II, which became a cross generational work in anthropological history. He deeply studied the national character of the Japanese: the importance of Japanese etiquette, the god of Bushido, the essence of inheritance, the concept of unity, and the transmission of culture. It is precisely because of its "uniqueness" - the national character that runs through Japan, and the inheritance, that the rooftop still stands firm, It is still passed down to this day.

In summary, the design of Japanese street stalls provides a unique appearance and functionality, offering consumers a distinct shopping experience. Their design not only reflects traditional Japanese culture and features but also demonstrates an emphasis on aesthetics, functionality, and portability in modern times.

Overall, Japanese street stalls have a distinctive design that contributes to their value as a selling platform, and they offer customers a unique shopping experience. Thus, they are worth studying and referencing.

3. Comparative Analysis of Street Economy in China and Japan

Baidu's AI big data platform shows that the most relevant search terms related to street stalls include "street economy," "Shanghai urban management," "design concept," and "artistic style." The term "artistic style" has shown an increasing search frequency, indicating that it may provide new directions for the street economy in the new era but has not yet been widely adopted.

3.1 Current State of Street Vendor Development in China

Small and micro-enterprises, as well as individual operators, have always held a crucial economic position in the development of the economy, especially in China with its large population base. Throughout the vast river of history, street vending, an integral part of the "small and micro" economy, has continuously garnered people's attention. The first recorded and vivid depiction of street vending in China can be found in the "Qingming Shanghe Tu," showcasing the prosperity of street vending during that era. Another period of thriving street vending emerged in modern times. With the rapid growth of China's overall strength, the "small and micro" economy is receiving increasing recognition.

In terms of regulations, for instance, in Jiangsu Province, on May 27, 2021, the Standing Committee of the Jiangsu Provincial People's Congress officially promulgated and implemented the "Jiangsu Provincial Regulations on the Supervision and Management of Small Food Workshops and Food Stall Operators." These regulations emphasize that food stall operators, particularly those involved in food workshops, must strictly comply with relevant laws and regulations. This includes holding valid health certifications and adhering to regulations concerning urban aesthetics and environmental hygiene. Moreover, the decision by the Standing Committee of the Hainan Provincial People's Congress to strengthen governance related to irregular charges, fines, and various street vendors, while lightening the tax burden on businesses, is also being rigorously enforced. To protect the interests of relevant businesses and street vendors, the document clearly states that any unauthorized fees and standards have the right to be refused, and no entity or individual can gratuitously occupy

the resources or finances of businesses and street vendors or seek sponsorship. These measures aim to help street vendors reduce unnecessary financial waste and losses, thereby lowering costs and enabling them to better survive in the industry. These actions underscore the importance attached to urban street vendors and the street vending economy by the country.

3.2 The Development of Street Vendor Economy Still Lacks Effective Management and Cultural Design

China's management model for street vendors significantly differs from Japan's. Early street vending in China was formed spontaneously by people and lacked effective connections with the formal economy. Measures to control and manage it were only introduced once problems became apparent, thus limiting the development of the street vending economy. Additionally, the style and design of street stalls in China differ from the diversified designs found in Japan. China's street stall design lacks specific cultural elements, with stalls often placed haphazardly, featuring outdated and uninnovative styles. This lack of variety and innovation acts as a limiting factor in the development of the street vending economy in the modern era.

4. Strategies for the Development of China's Street Vendor Economy

4.1 Recommendations for Improving the Current State of China's Street Vendor Economy

While China places significant emphasis on the development of the street vendor economy, there are areas where it can learn and borrow from other countries to better promote this economic sector. Below are some recommendations for addressing the current state of China's street vendor economy:

(1) Improve urban legislation to achieve "total control" over mobile vendors.

1. Clarify the illegal nature of street occupation by mobile street vendors in urban areas.
2. Strengthen legal publicity and reduce the living space for illegal activities.
3. Legislation should be established to establish an access mechanism and effectively control the overall number of mobile vendors.

(2) Improve the legislation of laws and regulations related to comprehensive law enforcement in urban management, and improve the efficiency of urban management law enforcement.

1. Fully authorize the urban management department and staff.
2. Perfect law enforcement procedures and departmental law enforcement cooperation system mechanisms.
3. Establish and improve a supervision system and clarify the illegal responsibilities of law enforcement personnel.

(3) Legislative division and strict management of areas, optimizing the guidance and management of mobile vendors.

1. Scientifically divide and strictly manage areas.
2. Scientifically plan and increase the allocation of stalls.
3. Establish the industry association to optimize market management.

(4) Establish a sound and comprehensive "exit support" mechanism to reduce job demands.

1. Establish an "exit mechanism" to eliminate the subject of violations.
2. Improve the assistance mechanism and guide the transfer of employment.
3. Assist enterprises and individuals in digesting commodity inventory.

In summary, China's street vending economy is currently developing relatively rapidly, and as Cai Fang, Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has emphasized, regardless of the economic situation, street vendors can absorb disadvantaged groups into the labour market and avoid a large waste of human resources. This highlights the tremendous power and potential of the street vending economy. Especially in the economic recovery phase after the epidemic, the street vending economy has indeed provided a very large number of part-time job opportunities. According to the national situation, although China's street vending economy is currently developing well, there are still some problems that hinder the refinement of the street vending economy in terms of long term development in the future, so what we need to do is to rectify these small insufficiencies to assist in the development of the street vending economy in the future. Comparatively speaking, Japan has done a good job in standardizing the handling of urban vendors, and there is a lot for our country to draw on and learn from. For example, they have a humane management policy, ornamental placement of house platforms, standardized laws and regulations, and so on. If it is reasonably borrowed, it will have more positive

impact on the future of China's street vending economy.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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