

The Influence of Number of Tourists and Staying Time on the Development of Food Industry

-Taking Hangzhou Hefang Street as an Example

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Abstract—Hangzhou Hefang Street has been a busy commercial street since ancient times, attracting visitors from all over the world. By using data analysis and field observation, this paper explains the positive influence of human flow and staying time on the business pattern distribution and development of Hefang Street food industry, including maintaining healthy commercial competition, ensuring environmental hygiene of historical blocks, and protecting historical and cultural heritages. Taking Hefang street in Hangzhou as a case study, the corresponding suggestions for future development are put forward into improving the long-term sustainability of Hefang Street and its food industry.

Keywords—*Historical block; Food industry; Number of Tourists; Staying time*

I. INTRODUCTION

Together with Huishan old street in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, Wukang road in Shanghai, Lipingqiao street in southeast Guizhou, etc, Qinghefang historical block in Hangzhou was listed in the top ten "famous historic and cultural streets of China." Compared with these famous historical streets, the current situation and development of Hefang Street is particularly optimistic: based on the protection of traditional culture, the street has become the top historic and cultural street in China through renovation and renewal of historical buildings, and protection and introduction of traditional industries. Contemporarily, Hefang Street not only integrates the modern architectural style, but also carries out the neighborhood hygiene standards, and retains its historical value and popularity as well: since ancient times, Hefang Street has been one of the most prosperous neighborhoods in Hangzhou, and has held important commercial, economic, cultural and trade positions in the development of the city of Hangzhou. After the southern Song dynasty established its capital in Lin'an, building the imperial city and bustling streets, a variety of time-honored brands, which have been go-to choices for local residents and tourists for hundreds of years, such as Wan long ham shop, Kong Fengchun powder shop, Hu Qingyu Medicine, Zhang Xiaquan scissor shop, etc, were gathered on Hefang Street. With the developmental focus of Hangzhou moving northward, the area around Hefang street is gradually neglected in central management and proper planning, deteriorating into chaos: traffic congestion (combined mobile and pedestrian flow), unorganized businesses (lack of cultural characteristic),

and short staying time (a large number of tourists come and go). In 1999, Hefang street was regarded the subject of renovation by the government of the city of Hangzhou. With the government as the main driving force for renovation, demolition and reconstruction, and the public opinion as the ultimate beneficiary of respecting history and protecting culture, Qinghefang street has become one of the few historical and cultural commercial streets in China with a new look and a successful outcome through all efforts on the basis of preserving the ancient customs and culture.

From 2001 to 2002, the administrative committee of Qinghefang took the proceeds from the transfer of some property rights as the financial budget of the neighborhood renewal and renovation, which greatly broadened the standard of business distribution. At the same time, in order to maintain the vitality of the block, the administrative committee introduced craftsmen from all over ZheJiang province, greatly enhancing the pleasure of visiting. These two factors have contributed to the booming development of the restaurant industry, since the demand for food never drops with the huge number of tourists. It is an obvious conclusion that there is a positive correlation between the number of tourists and the proportion of food industry in the overall business form. However, based on the existing research results, the impact of other factors on food industry cannot be excluded.

This paper mainly explores the impact of the number of tourist and their visiting time on the proportion of food industry in the overall business of Hefang Street, and based on this conclusion, puts forward suggestions and prospects for the future. The number of tourists and visiting time, two variables that are positively correlated with the ratio of food industry: the increase of number of tourists will increase the overall demand for food industry, while the extension of staying time will increase the possibility of tourists' demand for food services within the block, thus promoting the growth of the proportion of food industry and its sustainable development.

II. IMPACT OF NUMBER OF TOURISTS ON FOOD INDUSTRY

A. Tourism Data of the Block

From the direct data of the number of tourists, we can see the success of the reconstruction and renovation of Hefang

street: since the renovation of the street in 2002, the 460m-long Hefang street has welcomed more than 18 million tourists annually, and the daily visitor flow during the peak period could reach 100,000. Compared with other historical travel destinations in China, Hefang street enjoys great popularity: about 10 million people visit Chongqing Ciqikou ancient town annually, 5 million people visit Pingjiang road in Suzhou annually, and about 4.5 million people visit Wuhou temple in Chengdu annually.

After the implementation of the block renewal and renovation, the 17 shops launched by the management committee in the first phase of public auction in 2001 earned a total of more than 88 million yuan. At first, the successfully bidden merchants ran their own businesses, with a wide variety of businesses and chaotic and individual management. After the administrative committee of Hefang Street decided to adjust the distribution of business of different focuses, they gradually went on the right track. In 2018, the daily rent on Hefang Street can be as high as 55 yuan per square meter, which puts enormous pressure on merchants to make profits. At the same time, an endless stream of tourists proves to be a great advantage of Hefang Street. The two factors combined propelled the development of food industry.

The prosperity and success of Hefang Street depend on and promote the surrounding natural scenery, historical buildings, and cultural center clusters: because of its geographical location (being close to Wushan and West lake), Hefang street and these historical scenic spots have similar tourist groups. Data show that the number of visitors travelling to the West lake during holidays exceeds 800,000, and the average daily traffic for the rest of the time was about 100,000. The West lake, with an annual flow of about 30 million people, promotes, develops and stimulates the development of culture, tourism and commerce on Hefang street, enabling it to keep up with the pace of contemporary development, while retaining its ancient culture and respecting its residents' opinions, with a new look to welcome the endless stream of local and foreign tourists.

B. Reason for Food Selection

Most visitors will choose to visit both the Hefang street and the surrounding scenic spots. On one hand, this visiting pattern allows tourists to experience the diverse customs of Hangzhou, including scenic spots and historic districts. On the other hand, because of the commercial and cultural atmosphere of the Hefang Street, tourists can purchase souvenirs and cultural icons of Hangzhou, such as silk, tea, pastries, etc. According to the Measures for the Protection of Hangzhou Qinghefang Historical Street promulgated by Hangzhou municipal government in 2000, the function of Qinghefang Street is planned to be tourism, shopping, food, entertainment and leisure, incorporating famous time-honored brands, ancient painting and calligraphy, tourist souvenirs and local products into the commercial and cultural layout of the block, diversifying the historical and cultural atmospheres of Hangzhou Hefang Street.

Focusing on the selling of local commodities, the food business of Hefang Street is divided into three categories, which are, shops with strong local characteristics, shops with

certain local characteristics and shops with no local characteristics. This classification explains the reason to visit from different perspectives of different groups.

1) with strong local characteristics. It refers to restaurants/stores with distinctive characteristics of Hangzhou, inheriting the historical context of the neighborhood and containing traditional cultural significance of the city of Hangzhou. For example, the Zhuangyuan restaurants, the Xi Le park, Wang Runhing restaurant and Tai chi tea garden; souvenirs such as Wanlong Ham; as well as Jiang Tongshun and Jiang Shunfa, the two local pastry shops. This kind of food service is aimed at tourists from other cities and countries, and aims to show the unique culture of Hangzhou. Usually such stores are favored by tourists who are not well acquainted with the culture of Hangzhou, people who visit Hefang Street for the first time.

2) with certain local characteristics. This kind of shop has cultural connotation and historical background, and usually sells special foods of Hangzhou and the surrounding area, but does not have the historical characteristics of Hangzhou or Hefang Street specifically. For example, menu items such as fried eel noodle; tea and pastry that Hangzhou and its surrounding area are famous for. Such food services take into account the taste preferences of tourists from Hangzhou and its surrounding areas, and attract other tourists from Hangzhou as well as abroad. Generally, such stores are frequented by two different groups for different reasons: tourists from the surrounding areas of Hangzhou choose to dine because their characteristics conform to the taste of their hometown, and tourists from regions with totally different food cultures outside of Zhejiang province will also choose this kind of restaurants for dining, and the main consumption purpose is to experience the cuisine of Zhejiang.

3) with no local characteristics. It refers to the dining places that are basically the same as other urban regions and incompatible with the atmosphere of the historical Hefang Street. For example, milk tea shops, Starbucks, McDonald's, Yonghe king shop, DQ and other fast-food restaurants. Such restaurants reflect the mainstream preferences of today's society, and are popular within tourist groups from different regions and cultural backgrounds, for reasons such as, convenience, economy and speed. Also, the familiarity the brands carry also serve as a factor: when facing a neighborhood full of strange foods, usually visitors tend to choose the familiar fast-food chains first, and then try the unheard-of local restaurants to ensure the overall quality of dining. Such restaurants, though deviating from the ideal planning for the initial rectification of the block, have made remarkable profits in the actual operation, balancing the classic charm and enhancing the vitality of the street.

C. Food Service Requirements

There is a need for the restaurant industry in any tourist pedestrian street: the 460m-long Hefang Street includes four food courts (80 stalls in total), 30 specialty shops and 35 snack

¹ Lili Pan, Yuhong Luo, "The commercial network of Hangzhou Hefangjie Historical District and its impact on urban planning"

and cold drinks shops. Through field investigation and data analysis, it is found that the planning distribution of the food industry in the street has a tendency of agglomeration. The higher the passenger flow, such as the intersection of Zhongshan middle road and Hefang street, and the intersection of Dajing lane and Hefang street, the higher the probability of finding clusters of restaurants.

Most restaurants on Hefang Street are located on the east, from Datong lane to Zhongshan middle road and Huaguang road to the west of the block. This distribution trend is closely related to the characteristics of tourists' behaviors: it is observed that tourists enter from Huaguang road, travel from west to east to have meals and rest near Datong lane, and then turn back to the original road, presenting a round-trip tourism route. For the food industry, the east end of the street has the geographical advantage for commercial management and profit of businesses, attracting the tourists of Hefang Street and residents of the neighborhood to come and eat, expanding the range of consumers and increasing profits.

Although statistically speaking, the food and beverage homogenization competition is serious, in fact it is not: the growth of passenger flow ensures the diversified growth of food industry to cater to the different needs of different consumer groups. Taking the intersection of Hefang street and Zhongshan middle road as an example, all four corners, west, north and south, are restaurants, while the fierce homogenization competition does not weaken the proportion of food industry in the total business form, but instead enriches the diversity of businesses and serves as the long-term development force of food industry. Foreign brands (McDonald's and Starbucks) dominate the northeast corner of the intersection, attracting tourists who love fast food. In the northwest and the southwest corner, the traditional Hangzhou Wanlong Ham and Wangrunxing restaurant are preserved, providing traditional tastes for tourists who are interested in the history and culture of Hangzhou. The southeast corner is dominated by popular Chinese snacks, selling fruit juice, milk tea, pastries and so on, providing various choices for tourists.

As a result, the increase of the number of tourists can enrich the diversity of business distribution and development of food industry, provide various choices for a large number of tourists with different backgrounds and demands, attract more passenger flow, and promote business profits.

III. IMPACT OF TOURIST STAYING TIME ON FOOD INDUSTRY

Huang Ying points out in "A Brief Discussion on the Renovation and Renewal Design of the Southern Song Dynasty Imperial street and Hefang Street of Hangzhou" that the street is "difficult to stay" and "does not consider the behavioral needs of people" in the renovation and renewal design. Although the prolonged staying time of tourists does not have direct economic effects, the longer the tourists stay on Hefang Street, the higher the consumption possibility, which indirectly promotes the accumulation of interests of the food industry.

A. Target Groups of Food Industry

There are three categories of food industry businesses on Hefang Street, being with strong local characteristics, with certain local characteristics and with no local characteristics.

1) with strong local characteristics. The staying time for this kind of store is relatively short for Hangzhou locals, but it especially attracts tourists from other places who are interested in traditional cuisine culture of Hangzhou. Foreign tourists are willing to learn about the local customs and practices of Hangzhou through culture and cuisine. Due to the large number of tourists from other places, the average staying time is relatively long, giving enough time and opportunity for business owners to display the unique tradition and culture of Hangzhou, which is a win-win situation for both tourists and businesses.

In addition, such stores also play a positive role in the integration of Hefang Street's food and culture, and are encouraged and supported by the district's management committee. Such stores take the opportunity to balance the development of Hefang Street's business and set up a good model for incorporating commercial benefits with promoting food culture as its core orientation.

2) with certain local characteristics. Because foreign culture is not the main purpose for tourists to visit Hefang Street, tourists usually stay for a shorter time. In order to retain tourists' appreciation and experience of such culture, stores usually increase their sales by providing services such as free-food-tasting, exhibiting the process of production, and explaining the historical stories and culture of its foods.

In addition, due to its lack of popularity, merchants on Hefang Street will not sell other cultural specialties in order to avoid the fierce homogenization competition of Hangzhou specialty, which ensures that the block's food industry is dominated by shops with historical features of Hefang Street and local features of Hangzhou, guaranteeing the quality and sustainability of Hefang Street.

3) almost no local characteristics. Because of the high rent of the street, most of the shops have small storefronts and few seats, so visitors will choose such chain restaurants, with large spaces and adequate seating areas. No matter the cultural background of the consumer group, the demand for a break stays constant. As a result, tourists of this kind of store stay the longest and have the highest consumption probability, while the restaurants have the largest area, and are equipped with infrastructure such as seats for leisure.

To sum up, due to the diversity of tourist groups, people from different backgrounds choose to stay, visit, eat and rest in different shops and restaurants. This phenomenon plays a positive role in the diversity of food industry on Hefang Street. Among them, although the chain fast food restaurants does not hold historical and cultural significance, they are located in the crowded Hefang Street to provide a resting place and extend the time of visiting, which promotes the prosperity of the restaurant industry.

²Ying Huang, "About Hangzhou Hefangjie Historical District and its urban renewal and renovation".

B. Scale of Food Businesses

1) small stores and restaurants. Such shops generally have difficulty retain its visitors, so merchants rely mostly on distinctive signs and shouting along the street to attract tourists. Tourists can enjoy local food in a relatively small time, but they cannot experience local food culture. Shops and restaurants with smaller spaces are mainly focused on profits, unable to provide cultural services related to its food served. Due to the low overall rent of small shops, such stores have a short turnover time, lack of cultural atmosphere, and have a strong profit-oriented goal. This kind of restaurant/store accounts for the largest proportion on Hefang Street's food industry, with a store quantity of more than 30.

2) medium stores. Because there are plenty of space for merchants to display and sell items, they attach cultural backgrounds and historical significance to their commodities, providing visitors not only food to enjoy, but history and culture to learn, increasing tourists' staying time. However, one major disadvantage of this category is that visitors do not stay, rather, they tour the store, try some foods, stop and learn but do not sit or rest, thus, tourists cannot deeply feel the local cultural characteristics. Because such stores have cultural and historical heritage in this block and combine commercial profit and cultural preservation as its business purpose, the frequency of replacement is relatively low. The number of such stores on Hefang Street is smaller, about 20.

3) larger shops. This category attracts tourists to stay for the longest, due to its characteristics of large store space and adequate resting places. By providing resting places, these businesses increase the consumption desires of tourists and thus, the ability to expand and further develop, creating a virtuous circle of mutual support and benefit. However, such stores have the least number (two) on Hefang street, which is likely to cause the problem of tourists staying too long and reducing the opportunity for merchants to continue to make profits.

IV. CONCLUSION AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Both the number of visitors and their visiting time affect the growth of food industry on Hefang Street: the tourists are the foundation and beneficiary of the rising food industry, while the visiting time serves as the premise of prosperity of the food industry.

For future development, Hefang Street should make use of its geographical and historical advantages to maintain its ability to attract tourists, and extend the visiting time to balance the conflict of business interests and cultural significance in food industry. In order to maintain the sustainable development and vitality of Hefang Street, diversified ground transportation should be developed, tourists should be continuously introduced, interactive experience center should be built to prolong the staying time, and the implicit problem within property ownership should be resolved.

A. Increasing Number of Tourists: Developing Ground Transportation

The number of tourists is an important indicator to determine the development of restaurant industry on Hefang street. Therefore, by maintaining the continuous tourist flow, the long term development of the historical bloc can be guaranteed. Thus, by focusing on the development of ground transportation facilities, large amount of visitors can be introduced to and from Hefang Street and its surrounding tourist attractions, such as Wushan Square and West Lake, promoting the development of all.

Because city planning has its focus on the construction of public transportation system, for the convenience of the majority, there is not much space left around Hefang Street to construct parking lots for private vehicles. Therefore, Hefang Street should continue its emphasis on public transportation system, including but not limited to, bus and subway, so that tourists can travel in an easy and fast fashion, eliminating travel inconvenience as the reason to not visit Hefang Street.

B. Extending Staying Time: Establishment of Interactive Experience Centers

Based on the existing culture (medicine culture, tea culture, antique culture and food culture), Hefang Street can establish interactive museums, combining technological components and integrating into parent-child experience programs, to give visitors opportunities to understand culture in a more thorough and meaningful manner. For example, to establish a tea museum, with daily tea drinking activities and tea ceremony performances. This not only gives students the opportunity to exchange ideas and practice tea ceremony, but also gives interested tourists the chance to come into close contact with authentic tea culture, benefiting both parties. Or, establish a traditional pastry museum, to introduce the history and culture of different pastries, to provide parent-child hands-on courses to enhance children's interests in and understanding of traditional culture of Hangzhou. This renovation not only extends the tourists' staying time, but also satisfies the fundamental purpose of the block's establishment – inheriting the traditional culture of Hangzhou.

C. Address the Implicit Risk After the Transfer of Property Rights: Unified Management Under the Management Committee

As the Qinghefang Management Committee holds only 15% of the Street's property, the remaining private-owned properties are not subject to direct and strict management by the committee. In order to avoid a series of adverse consequences caused by non-standard operation, such as low hygienic environment and weakened cultural atmosphere, the committee should try its best to take back the property rights as soon as possible, or strictly control and enforce the commercial pattern and operation standards.

As the restaurant industry risks less but profits more, most land owners prefer that. To a certain extent, this trend has a negative impact on the diversified development of all kinds of industries on Hefang street. The distribution of restaurants on Hefang street mainly depends on the decisions of property

owners, with the management committee only playing a small role on standardization and guidance, which makes the overall development of restaurant industry and Hefang Street largely uncontrollable. Therefore, if all property owners consider only their own profits and ignore the preservation of traditional culture and the importance of the long-term development of the block as a whole, Hefang Street is highly likely to return to the state of disorganization and poor sanitation conditions.

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