

[Working Paper Series: 2019 MDRN Survey 7]

Public Opinion of the Markets

Yangon School of Political Science (YSPS)

Introduction

Markets play a crucial role in the development of people's lives in a country. They can improve living standards and provide essential goods and services for urban residents. The population of Yangon is increasing significantly. In 1983, there were 1,302,462 people in Yangon, which has increased rapidly to 5,243,989 in 2017. In order to provide sufficient goods and services for this increasing population, markets are very important in our daily lives. Markets need to provide fresh, healthy, and clean food to the public, and there is a need to manage these markets effectively and efficiently. Responsibility, accountability, and transparency in Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) management affects the service and quality of markets in the Yangon region.

People want better services provided by public markets such as a safe environment, healthy food, and so on. People are currently facing many problems relating to the markets in Yangon and YCDC's management in the public administration sector. This paper specifically aims to explore public opinion of the markets.

Survey Methodology and Limitations

This study is only based on the general public opinion about markets under the administration of the YCDC. In this quantitative research, the sampling design is based on four-step probability sampling. The sample size is 485 adults aged 18 and above in the Yangon Municipal area. MDRN assigned trained supervisors from its member organizations and enumerators chosen through interviews. Each survey was done in a face-to-face interview, and the survey was conducted from April 3, 2019 to April 12, 2019. As the data collected is not objective, and the opinions of some specific groups such as sellers, shopkeepers, and YCDC officials were excluded from this research, the findings focus solely on the general opinion of respondents.

The Role of YCDC in Managing the Markets

In general, there are four types of markets: municipal-run markets, private markets, street stalls, and illegal street markets. In Yangon, there are 178 markets under the Yangon City Development Committee, and YCDC divides the municipal markets into the four types A, B, C and D. YCDC is the primary administrator of these public markets and manages these markets under Articles 29 and 30 of the Yangon City Development Committee Law (2018). The law guarantees that YCDC's management shall raise the development of Yangon city and the living standard of its people. It also states that YCDC will guarantee accountability, responsibility, transparency, and people-centered

management.

Functions of the YCDC Market Department

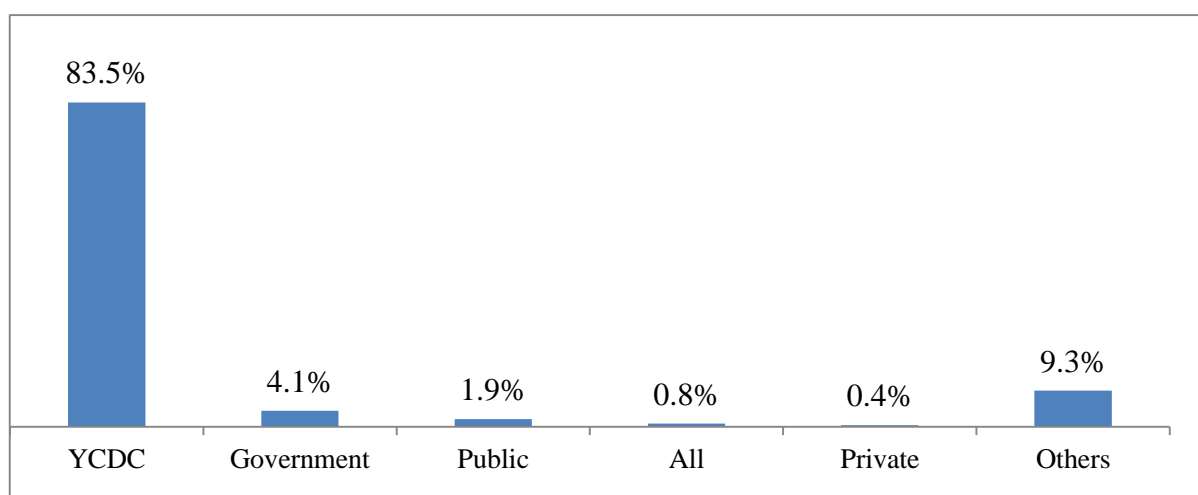
The Yangon City Development Committee has the responsibility to manage the markets and support communication between markets and urban residents. The designated functions of the department are as follows:

- (a) Maintain the right to revoke the leases of markets shops/stalls in the municipal area that have violated regulations and allow the persons who have been officially transferred ownership to manage the shop.
- (b) Supervise market regulations and take action against those who have broken the rules.
- (c) Issue market stall tax bills and coupons, and supervise bill collection of the market stalls.
- (d) Systematically maintain and supervise the security and cleanliness of the markets.
- (e) Keep in order the blueprints of the shop plans, records, and data about work related to the markets.
- (f) Maintain and repair the shops in the market and the office of the market superintendent in terms of the water supply, electricity supply, and toilet fees.
- (g) Create markets and posts for hawkers.

YCDC Administration of Markets

The management of markets is very important to the public administration sector, and YCDC is the major governmental organization in charge of managing these markets. General public knowledge of YCDC administration can be seen in the following table (1).

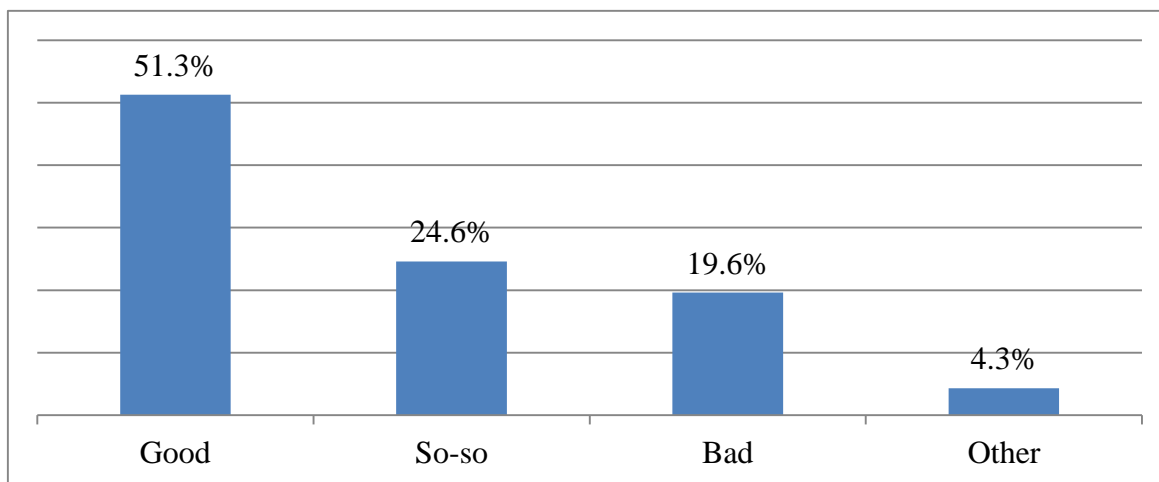
Table 1. YCDC Administration of markets (Source: MDRN survey, 2019)



We first asked respondents who they believed was responsible for managing the markets. This table shows that 83.5% of survey participants answered that YCDC is responsible for managing the markets, while 4.1% said that the central government has is responsible for managing the markets. Of the remainder, 2% percent said the public is responsible, while 0.8% said all organizations, 0.4% said private, and the remaining 9.3% selected other organizations as responsible for management of the markets.

According to the survey data, 51.3% of participants thought that the administration of YCDC was good, 24.6% answered that the administration of YCDC was neither good nor bad, 19.6% replied that it was bad, and 4.3% of the remaining respondents answered other relevant answers. The rating of YCDC administration on markets can be seen in the following table (2).

Table (2) Public opinion of YCDC Administration

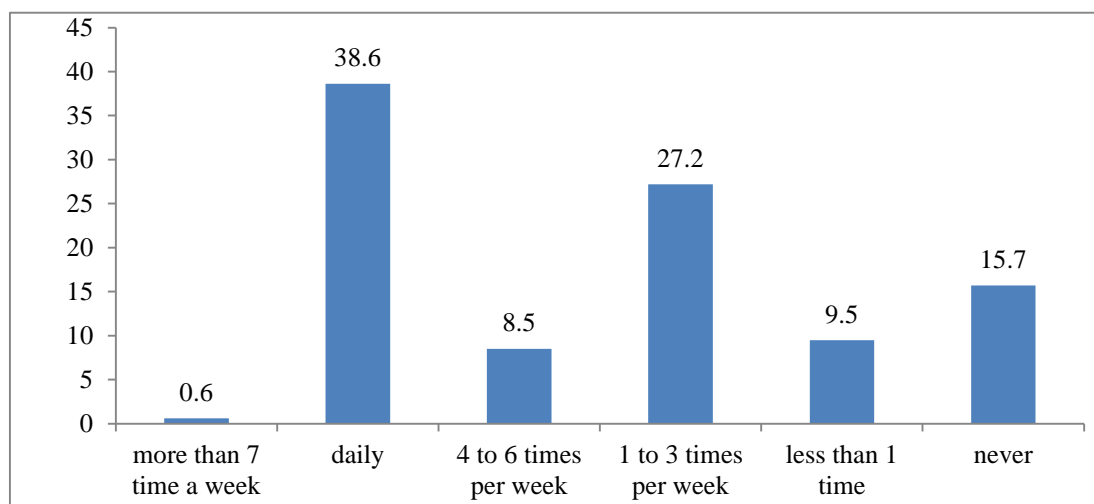


(Source: MDRN survey, 2019)

Findings

In Table (3) it shows that 38.6 percent of people of the sample population go to the market daily, 8.5 percent goes to the market 4 to 6 times per week, 27.2 percent of them goes to the market 1 to 3 times per week, 9.5 percent go less than once per week, and the remaining 15.7 percent never go to the market. The frequencies of people who go to the market a certain number of times per week can be seen in the following figure (3).

Table (3) the frequencies of people who go to the market per week



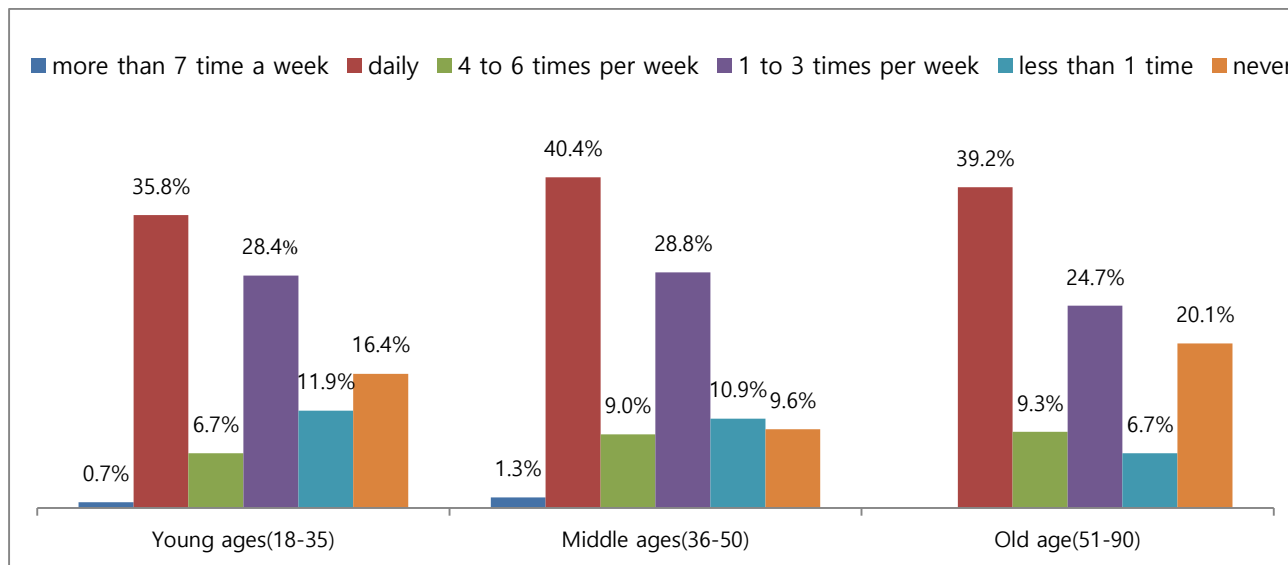
(Source: MDRN survey, 2019)

Cross tabulation between age and gender on how often people visit the market

1. Age

The survey data shows that the habits of people who go to the market are not directly related to age. Everyone needs to go to the markets and many people go to the market every day. The percentages of how frequently people go the market can be seen in the following table grouped by age.

Table 4. How often do you go to the market? (by age)

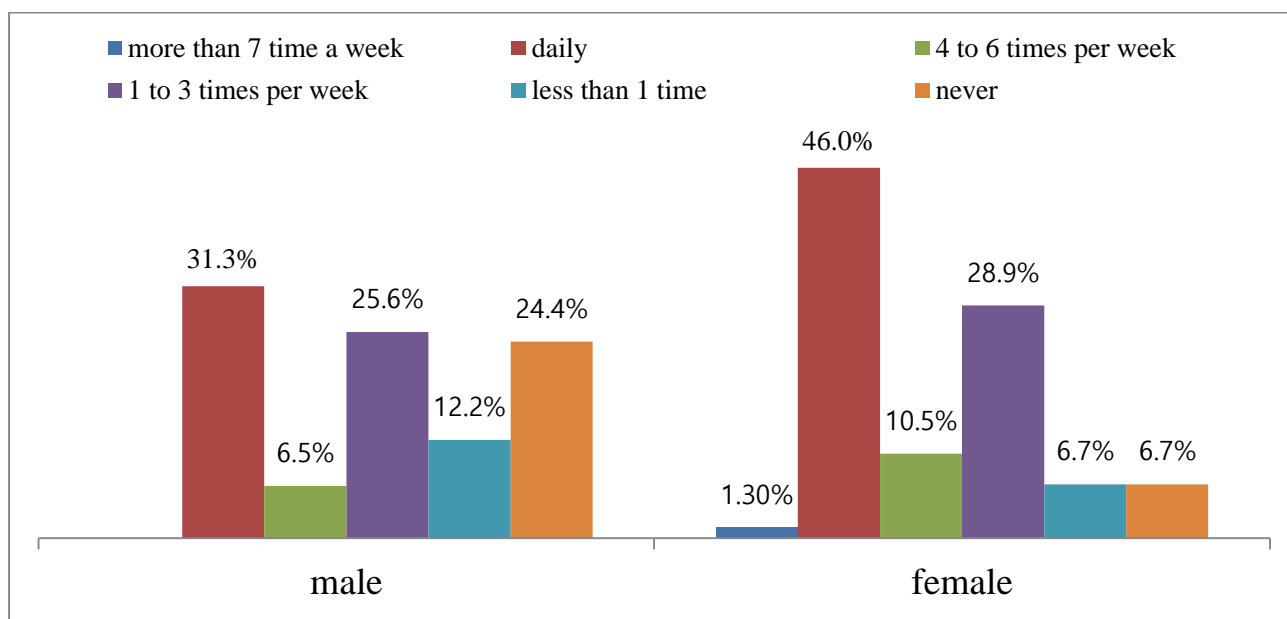


(Source: MDRN survey, 2019)

2. Gender

The data below shows the cross tabulation between how often people visit the market and gender. Around 31% of men go to the market daily, 6.5% of men go four to six times per week, 25.6% go one to three times per week, 12.2% go less than once per week, and the remaining 24.4% never go to the market. In comparison, 46% of women go to the market daily, 10.5% go four to six times per week, 28.9% go one to three times per week, 6.7% go less than once per week, and the remaining 6.7% of female participants never go to the market. This can be seen in the table below.

Table 5. How often do you go to the market? (by gender)

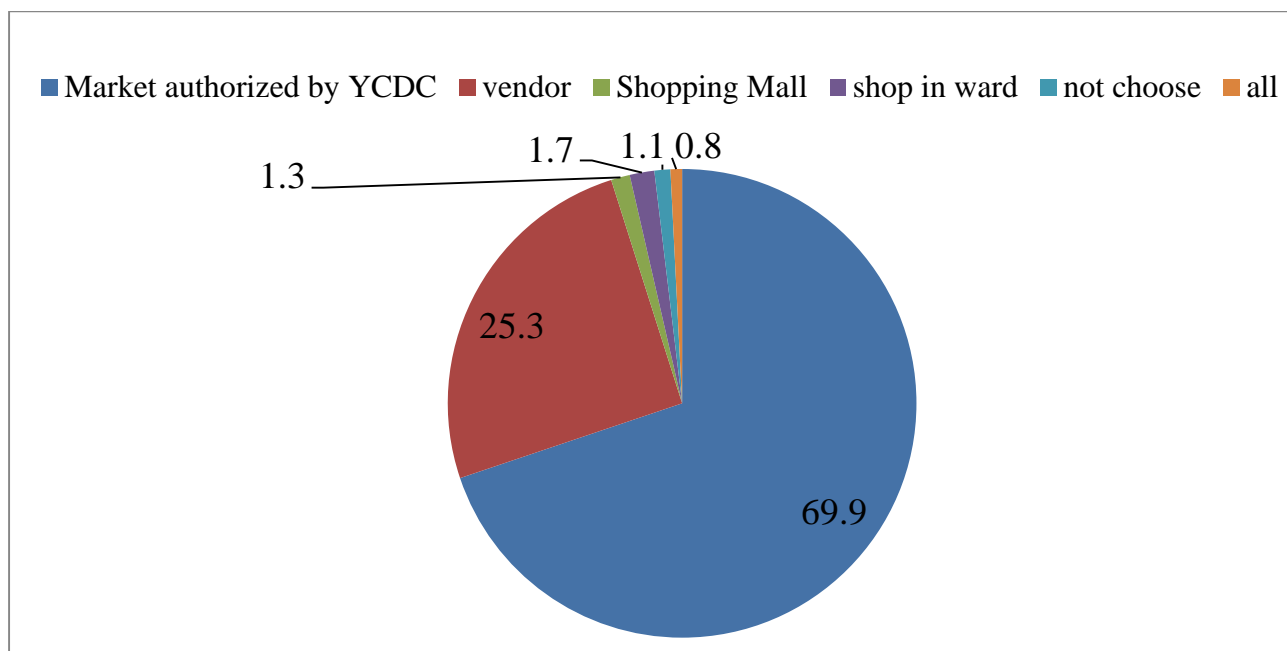


(Source: MDRN survey, 2019)

Types of markets

According to the survey data, 69.9 percent of markets are authorized by the YCDC, 25.3 percent are owned by individual vendors, 1.3 percent are shopping malls, and 1.7 percent are shops in the wards. The data shows that the markets authorized by the YCDC make up the greater portion of the markets in Yangon, and the public opinions of these markets are very important. The types of markets can be seen in the following table.

Table 6. Types of Markets

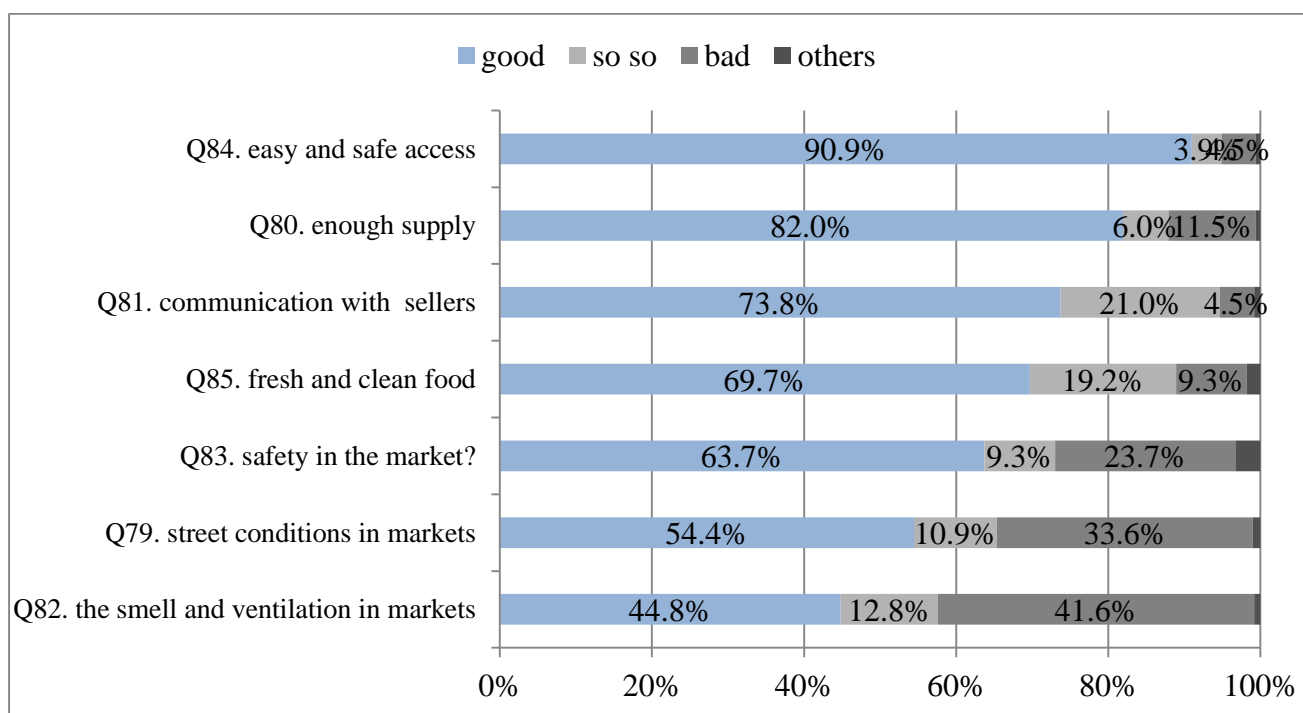


(Source: MDRN survey, 2019)

General Assessment of the Markets

In the survey, we asked about some aspects of market quality such as safe and easy access, adequate supply of goods, communication with sellers, fresh and clean food, safety, street conditions, and the smell and quality of ventilation in the markets. When asked whether access to markets was safe and easy, 90.9% of respondents answered yes, 3.9% responded somewhat, and 4.5% said no. In response to the question about whether markets had an adequate supply of goods, 82.0% said yes, 6.0% said somewhat adequate, and 11.5% answered no. When respondents were asked about the quality of their communication with sellers, 73.8% said that it was good, 21% said it was neither good nor bad, and the remaining 4.5% replied that it was bad. In response to the question about whether the markets had “fresh and clean food,” 69.7% said yes, 19.2% said it was so-so, and 9.3% of respondents answered no. Regarding market safety, 63.7% of respondents stated that it was good, 9.3% said it was neither good nor bad, and the remaining 23.7% indicated that the markets were unsafe. When asked about the condition of the streets in the markets, 54.4% of respondents said that it was good, 10.9% indicated that it was neither good nor bad, and the remaining 33.6% said that it was bad. In response to the question about the smell and quality of ventilation in the markets, 44.8% of respondents said that it was good, 12.8% indicated it was neither good nor bad, and 41.6% responded that it was bad. The high percentage of respondents who answered negatively to these questions shows that the government authorities need to maintain these conditions by establishing better policies.

Table 7. General assessment of the markets

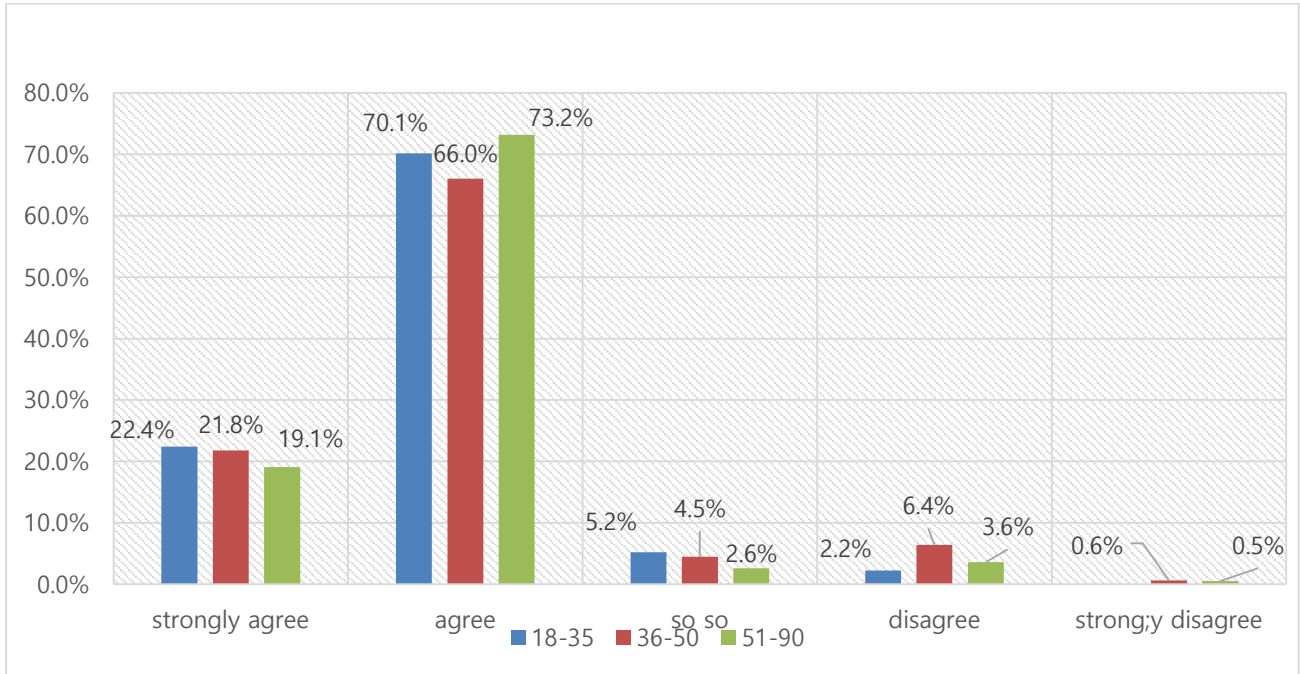


(Source: MDRN survey, 2019)

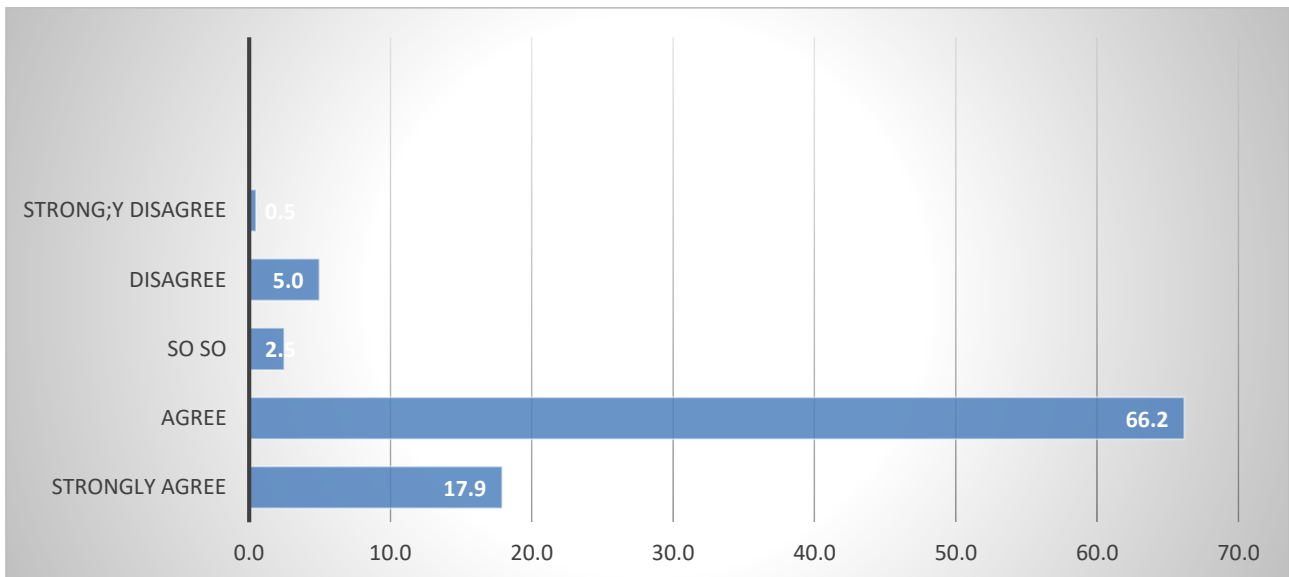
Further analysis of responses to the question regarding whether people could safely and easily access markets by age showed that all age groups surveyed responded positively to this question: 70.1% between ages 18-35, 66% between ages 36-50, and 73.2% between ages 51-90 answered **agree** to the question “Can you go to the market

safely and easily?”

Table. 8 Can you go to the market safely and easily? (by age)



Likewise, when we analyzed the responses of daily users of the markets to this same question, we found that 17.9% of respondents strongly agreed, 66.2% of respondents agreed and just 5% disagreed.



According to the survey results, respondents were quite positive with regard to most of the questions asked. Similarly, when daily market-goers were asked if they can buy everything they want from the market, 61% of daily users agreed and 14.9% strongly agreed. Just 9% disagreed and only 1% strongly agreed.

Table. 10 Is the food supply at the markets adequate?

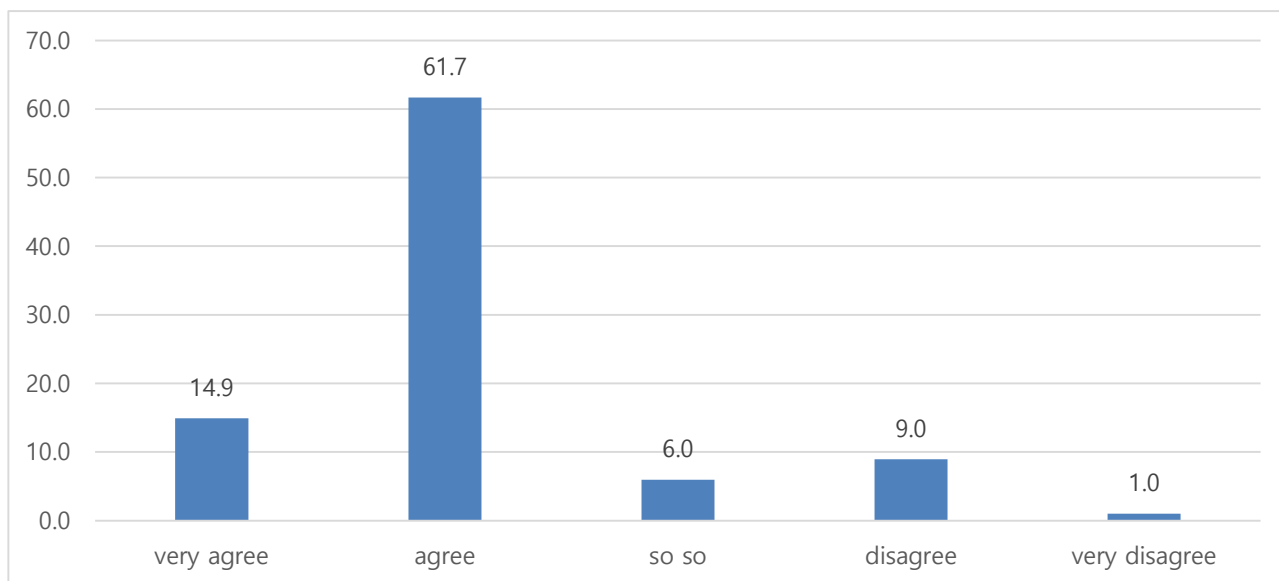
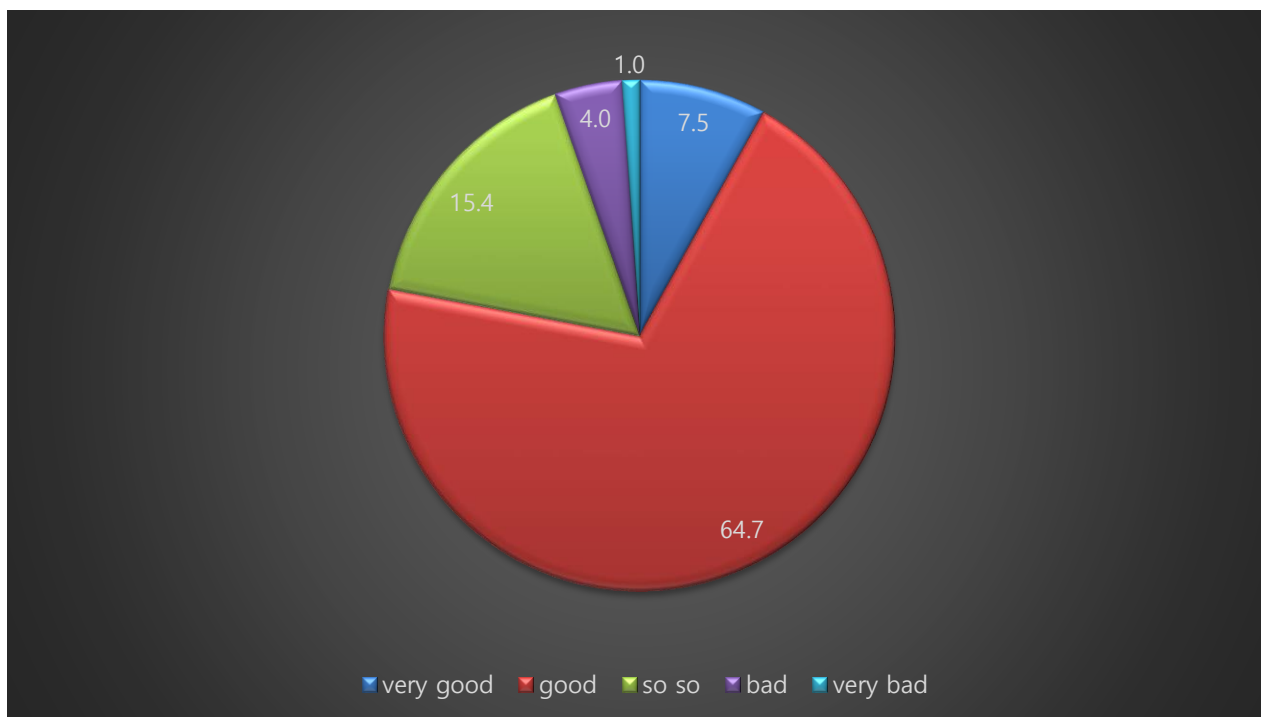


Table 11 shows that daily market users felt that communication with sellers was generally good. In response to our question, 7.5% replied that communication was very good, 64.7% said that it was good, 4.1% said that it was bad, and 1% said that it was very bad.

Table. 11 How would you rate communication with the sellers? (Daily Users)

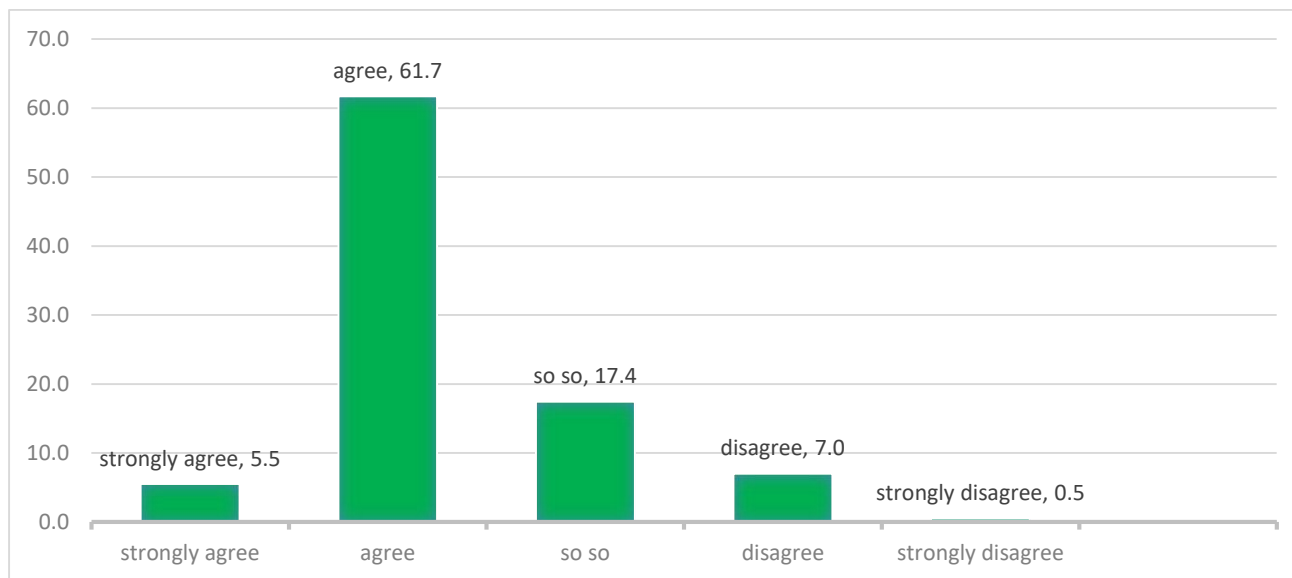


Food hygiene in the markets

Foods sold in the markets should be healthy for the public. To evaluate whether this was the case, our survey asked the question “Is the food sold in the markets fresh and clean?” Table 7 above shows the responses of all survey

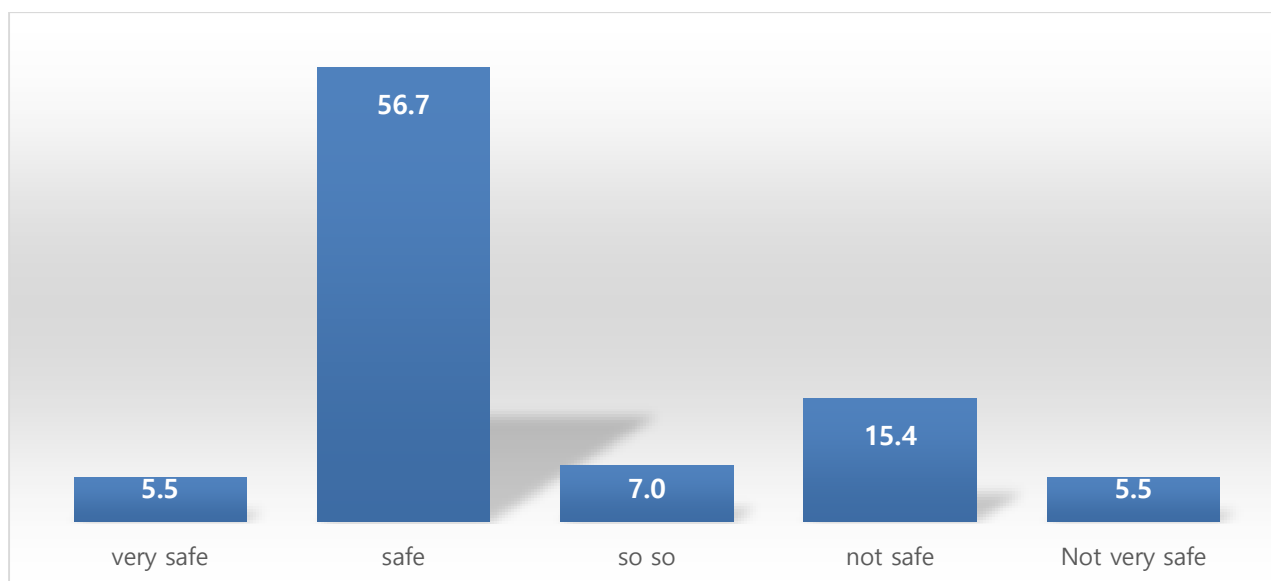
participants to this question. When we analyzed the opinion of daily market users on food hygiene, we found that 5.5% of daily users strongly agreed that the food available was fresh and clean, 61.7 agreed, 17.4 somewhat agreed, while just 7% disagreed and 0.5% strongly agreed (see table 12).

Table 12. Is the food sold in the markets you usually go to fresh and clean? (daily users)



When we analyzed the opinion of daily market users regarding how safe the markets are, 5.5% of respondents said that they were very safe, 56.7% said they were safe, 7% said they were neither safe nor unsafe, 15.4% said they were not safe and 5.5% said they were very unsafe (see table 13).

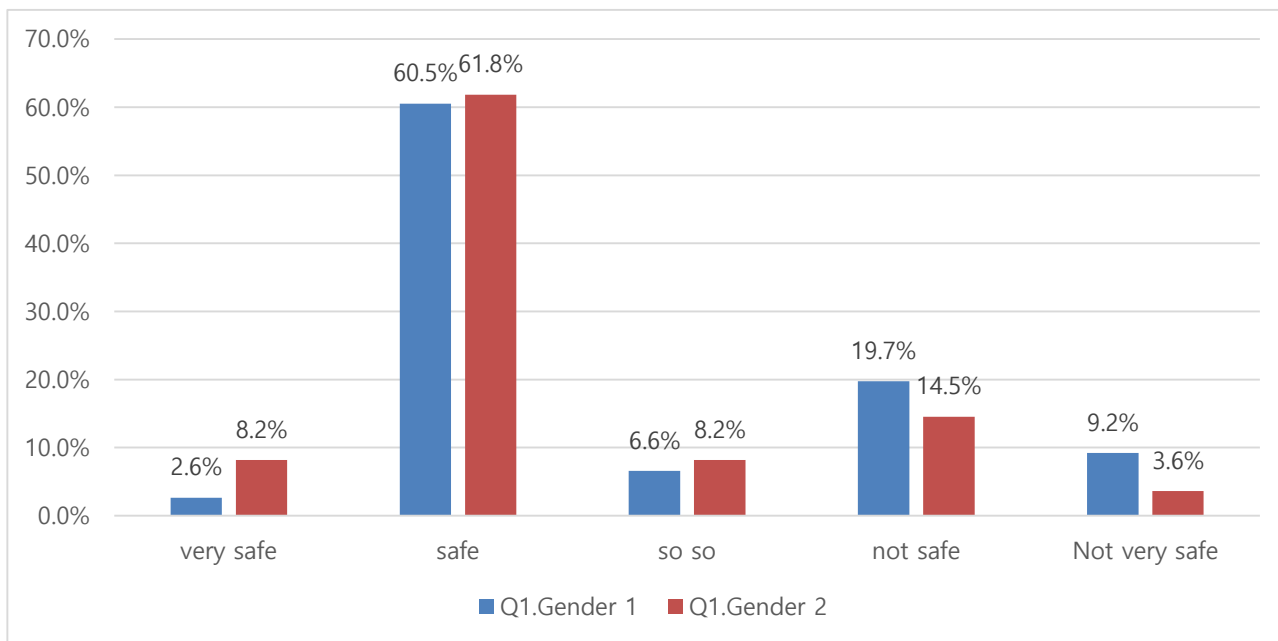
Table 13. Is the Market Safe? (daily users)



When daily market user opinions of how safe they feel in the markets were further analyzed by gender, we found that both genders felt relatively safe, with 63.1% of male respondents and 70% of female respondents indicating

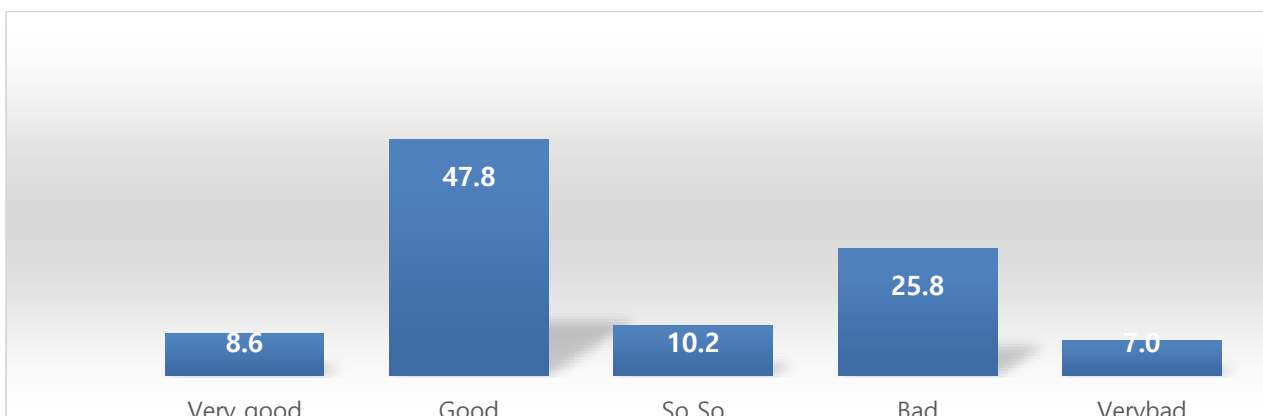
they felt safe. At the same time, 28.9% male and 18.1% female respondents felt unsafe (see table 14).

Table 14. How safe do you feel in the market? (crosstabulation of daily users by gender)



The overall survey results on the condition of the streets in the markets showed that all market-goers had a generally positive opinion of the street conditions in the markets, and the opinions of daily market users was no different. As shown in table 15 below, 56.4% of daily users felt that the conditions of the streets in the markets were good, but 10.2% said they were so-so and 32.8% said they were bad.

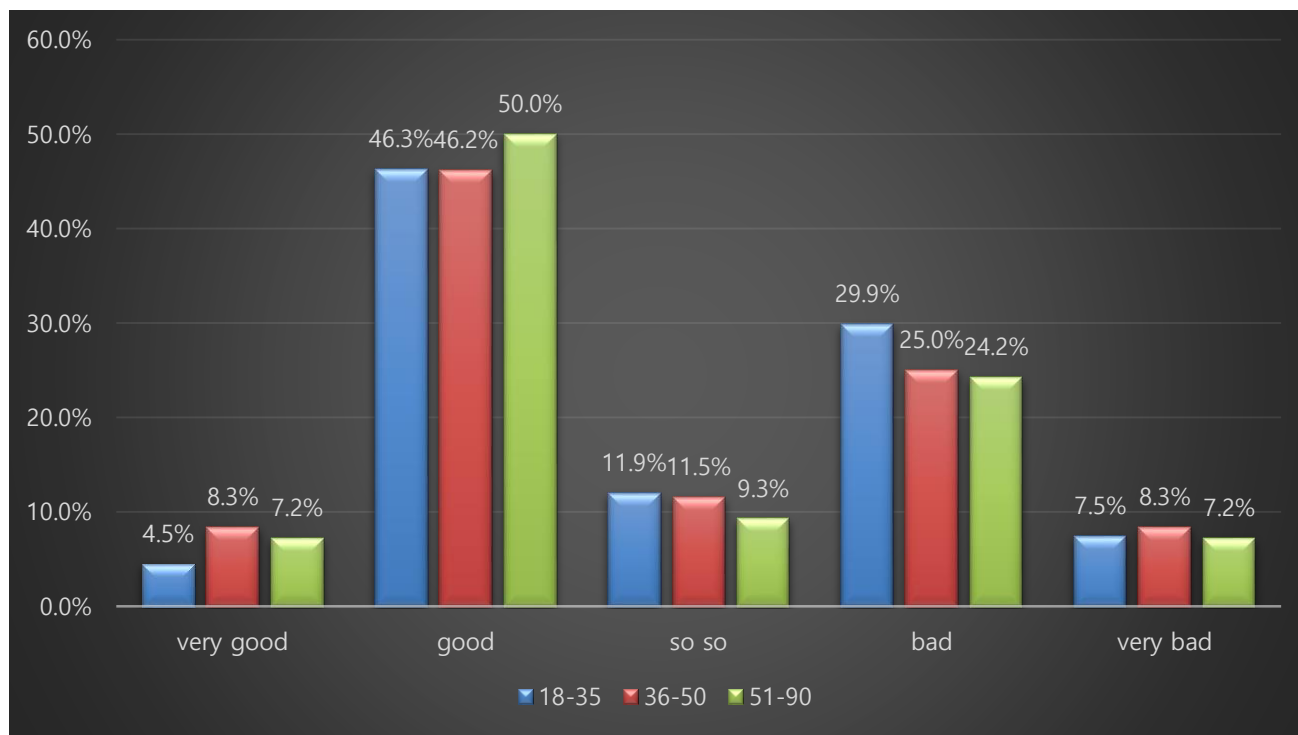
Table 15. How would you rate the conditions of the streets in the markets? (daily users)



When the opinions of daily users on the conditions of the streets in the markets were further broken down by age, 4.5% of those between 18-35, 8.3% of those between 36-50, and 7.2% of those between 51-90 said they were very good. About 46% of those between 36-50, 46.2% of those between 36-50, and 50% of those between 51 and 90 said they were good, while 29.9% of those between 18-35, 25% of those between 36-50 and 24.2% of those between 51-90 said they were bad. Just 7.5% of those between 18-35, 8.5% of those between 36-50 and 7.2% of those between

51-90 said they were very bad.

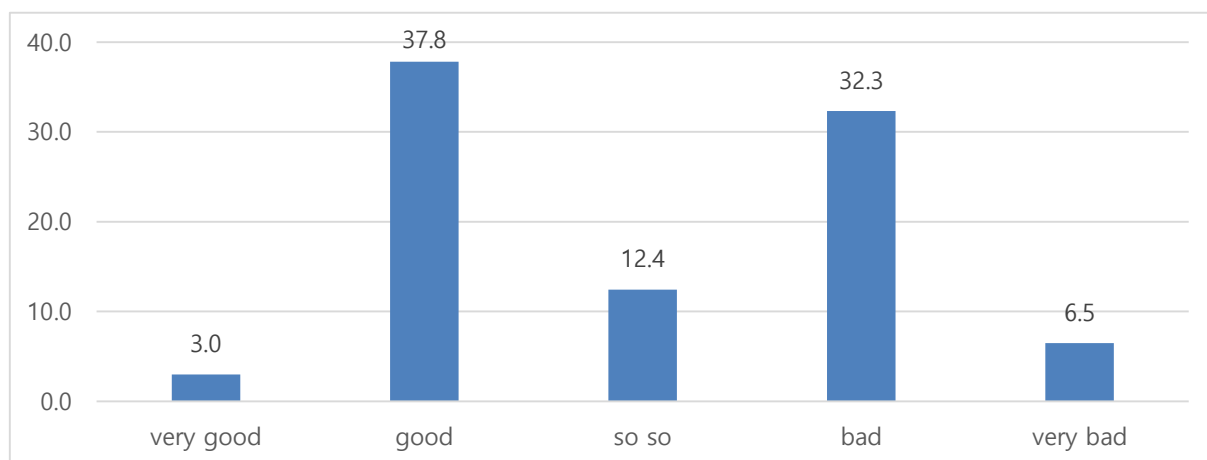
Table 16. How would you rate the conditions of the streets in the markets?
(cross tabulation by daily users and age group)



Smell and quality of ventilation in the markets

According to the survey data, 40.8% of respondents who are daily market-goers said that the smell and quality of ventilation in the markets was good or very good, while 38.8% said it was bad or very bad, and 12.4% said it was neither good nor bad.

Table 17. How would you rate the smell and quality of ventilation in the markets? (daily users)



General Discussion on Findings

In general, the findings were quite good and most of the public opinion on the markets was positive. Based on the results of the survey, middle-aged and older people usually go to market daily and both groups think that YCDC is doing a good job in managing the markets. One interesting finding is that both female and male respondents had similar habits and frequencies of going to the markets.

The responses to the questions on street conditions and the smell and quality of ventilation of the markets were mixed and it was difficult to evaluate the actual situations of markets in Yangon based on these survey findings. This survey showed that around 25% of people feel that they are not safe in the markets. In the survey, many people responded that they could get fresh and healthy food from the markets; therefore, public opinion about the food hygiene of vendors in these markets is quite positive.

According to the results of the survey, many people (85.3%) believe that YCDC is responsible for managing the markets. The next important fact that we learned is that 51.3% of the survey population answered that YCDC administration of the markets is good.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Based on the results of the survey, there should be cooperation between YCDC, respective government departments, health officials, Members of Parliament and civil society organizations (CSOs) on the issues of market cleanliness, air quality, infrastructure integrity, and food safety. It is important to increase the coordination between organizations, government offices, and YCDC for the further development of the markets. It is also important to establish a public access center to facilitate better public participation in the improvement of the markets. To obtain healthy, fresh, and clean food, a public awareness campaign should be made to inform the public and stakeholders on the relationship between public health and market hygiene.

In conclusion, YCDC, governmental organizations, CSOs and NGOs should promote better public awareness and involvement in market hygiene and food safety as they are directly related to public health and daily life.



References

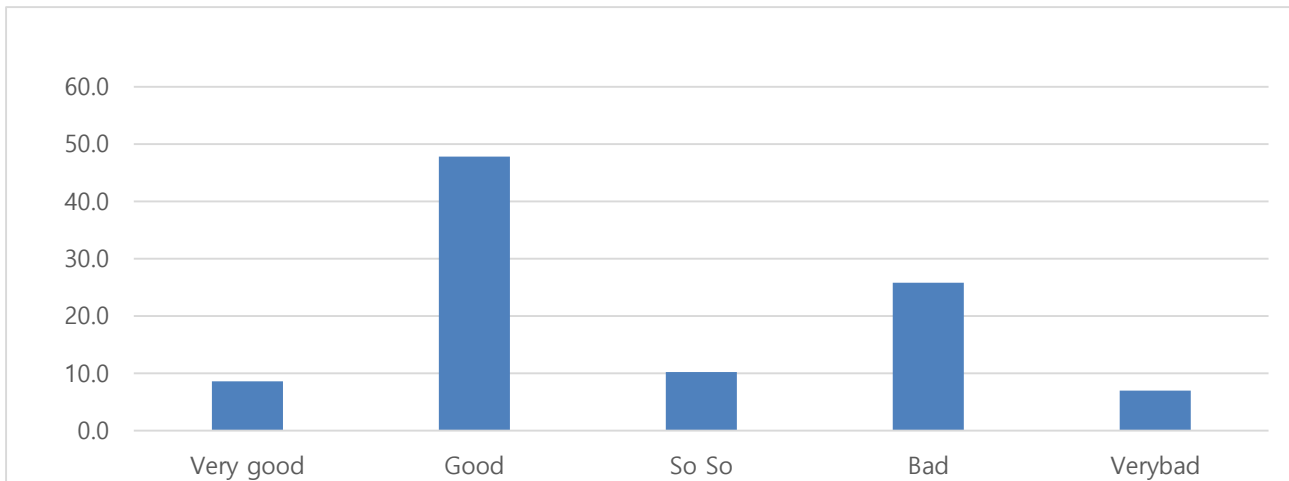
2014 Census

Yangon City Development Committee Law (2018)

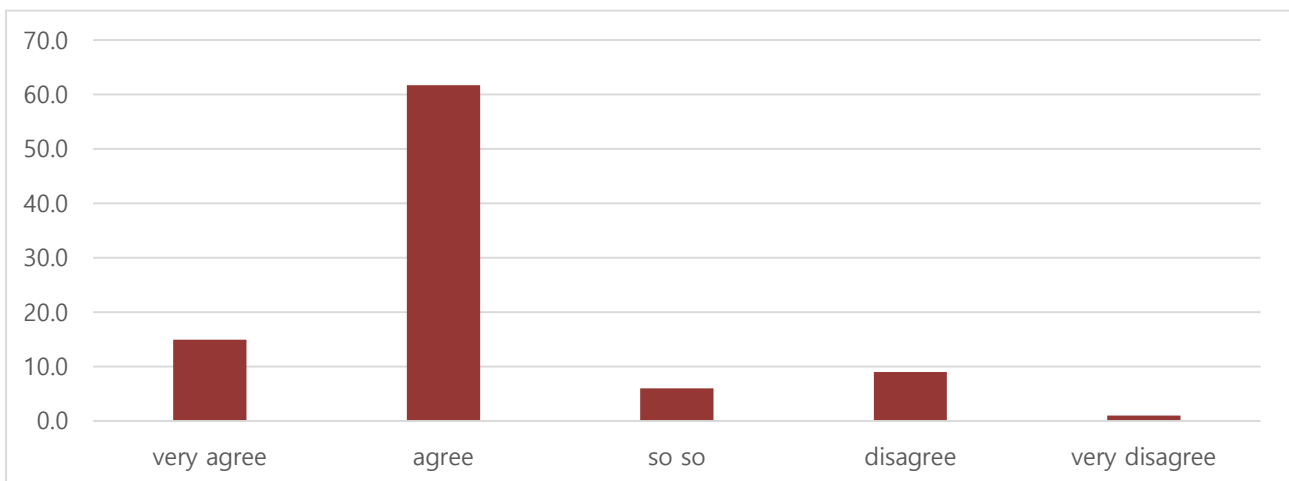
Yangon City Development Committee website

Appendix

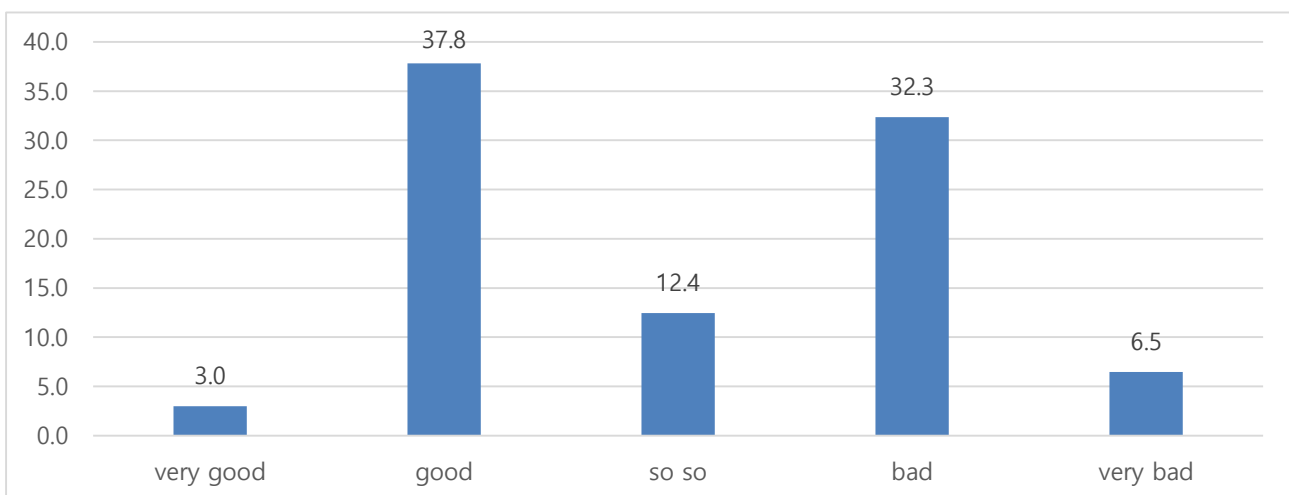
Appendix 1. Street Condition in the Market by Daily Users



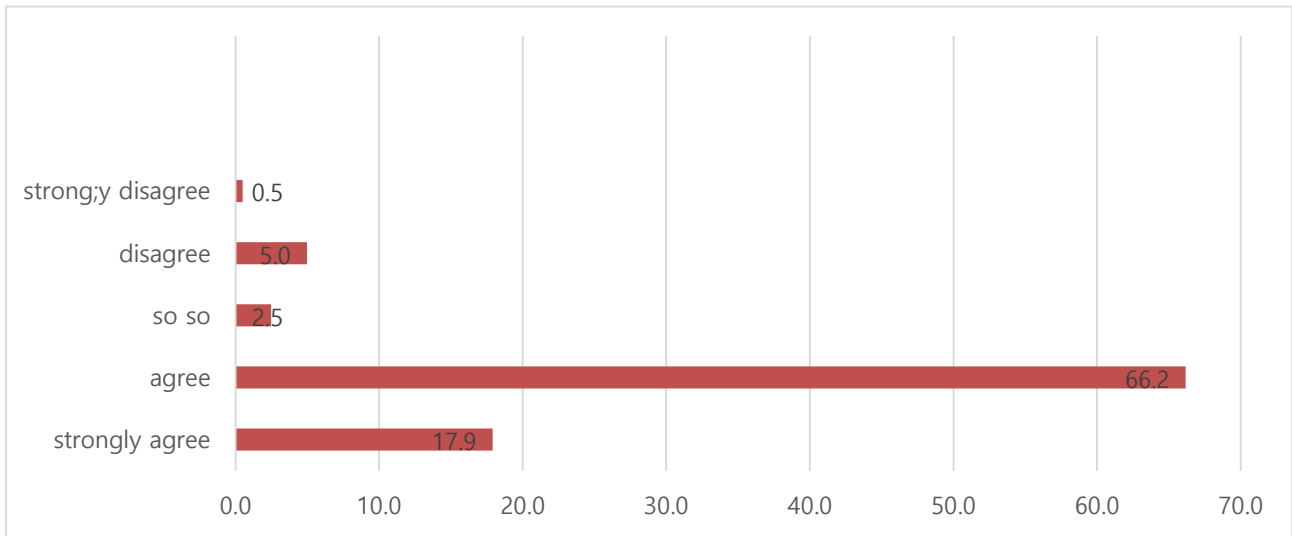
Appendix 2. [Q80] Can you buy everything you want from the market that you usually go to? (daily users)



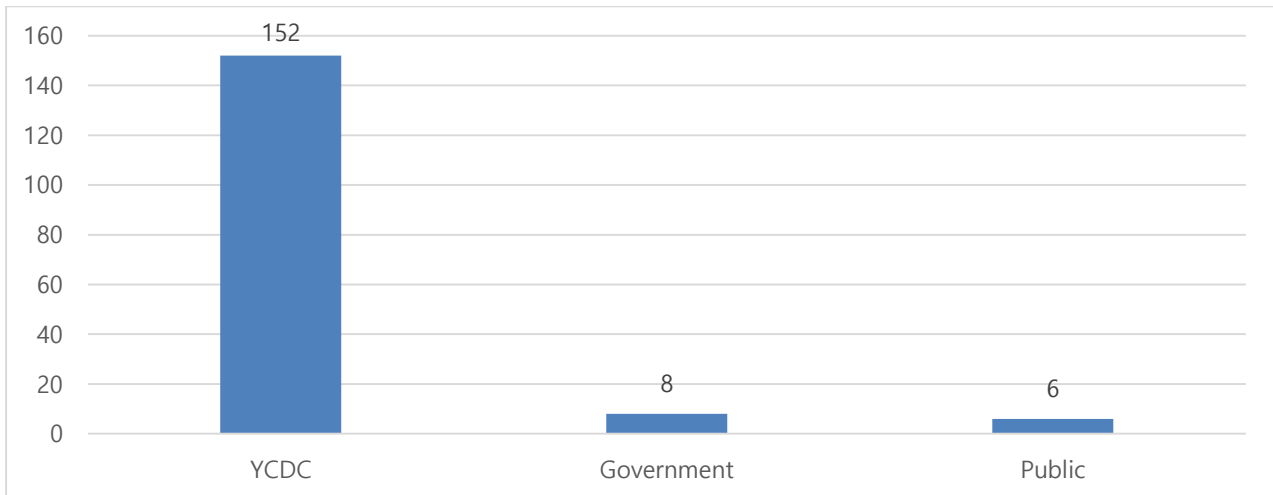
Appendix 3. [Q82] How would you rate the smell and quality of ventilation in markets? (daily users)



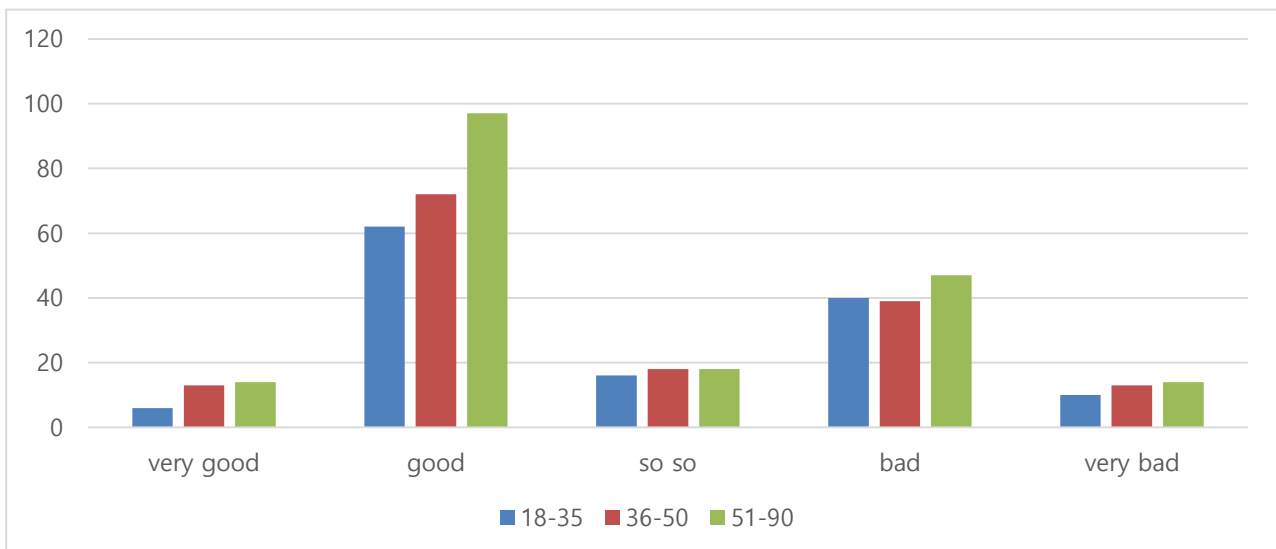
Appendix 4. [Q84] Can you go to the market safely and easily? (daily users)



Appendix 5. [Q86] Who should be responsible for managing the markets? (daily users)

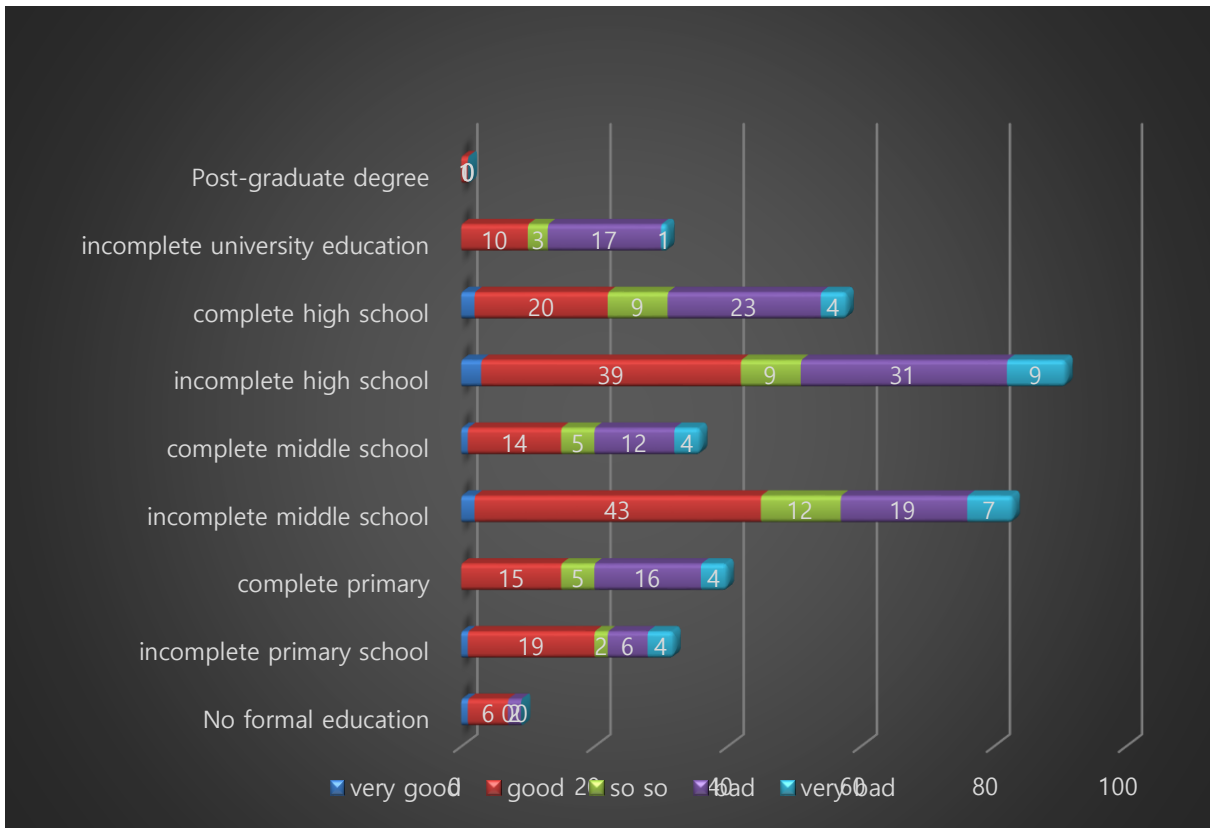


Appendix 6. [Q79] How would you rate the condition of the streets in the markets? (crosstabulation by age)



Appendix 7. [Q82] How would you rate the smell and quality of ventilation in the markets?

(crosstabulation by education level)



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This series of reports was compiled as a part of the "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations in Myanmar Year Three" program. The research for these reports was conducted entirely by EAI's partner think tanks in Myanmar, including Sandhi Governance Institute, Open Myanmar Initiative, Yangon School of Political Science, Yone Kyi Yar Knowledge Propagation Society, Salween Institute for Public Policy, Another Development, and Naushawng Development Institute.

This program was funded in part by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

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"Public Opinion of the Markets"

979-11-90315-33-3 95350

Date of Issue: 20 December 2019

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