

## Study on Ways to Stimulate Traditional Markets Based on Cultural Community Space Creation-Focusing on the Hongcheon Central Market

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**Abstract:** In this situation, the number of customers visiting traditional markets is decreasing. In order to restore the competitiveness of traditional markets, they need to create new value of their own instead of reinforcing their commercial functionality. This study presented a unique space of marketplace and environmental design to examine ways to stimulate traditional markets by creating space for cultural community therein. In this study experiment, the cultural community environment of Hongcheon Central Market was improved. As a result, visitor's satisfaction with the marketplace was found enhanced. Such an improvement was also found to serve as the foundation to elevate people's awareness on the market, restructure their places of visit and promote clearer promotional messages leading to sales increase and self-supporting ability.

**Key words:** Traditional market, cultural community, brand identity, Hongcheon Central Market, environmental, commercial functionality

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### INTRODUCTION

In Korea, traditional markets have lost their original functionality despite the governmental policy to revive traditional markets from early 2000's.

Event the regional commercial districts have been threatened continuously. Persistent risk factors of traditional markets include changes in distribution environment such as large-scale discount stores, homeshopping channels and internet shopping sites as well as changes in customer's lifestyle and shopping culture (Yang, 2010).

Traditional markets however, still play important roles for our society and local economy in this diversifying distributional environment. With this understanding, the government has continued its supports to activate traditional markets but those have been less than sufficient to restore the competitiveness of traditional markets in the economically different set of distribution and marketing structures. In other words although, traditional markets look more modern in their appearances, they need to improve their own contents on shelves or own special factors to recover their socio-cultural values.

There are a few recent good examples of government-supported traditional market projects such as the Jeongsun Arirang Market where regional cultural

assets were combined with products, Jangheung Saturday Market where the main regional product of Jangheung Samhap was developed as a traditional market brand and Gwangju Dain Market which has become a tourist destination in the region in cooperation with cultural artists (Ho and Wook, 2016). These are good examples demonstrating that traditional markets need to modernize their facilities, actively respond to environmental changes and further develop own unique characteristics according to their locations or capacities in order to renew themselves as a cultural place and settle firmly into their local communities through such transformational procedures. Therefore, it needs to be clarified that traditional markets are our precious assets that should be protected and taken care of by all of us based on the continued support from the central and local governments.

The Hongcheon Central Market, this study subject, maintains the form of a usual large-scale marketplace of the past on allies. The market mainly relies on Hongchong rice cake and 5 days market products. It has been left behind customer changes. In this situation, the present study seeks to develop its own market specialization factors and present image specialization based on spatial, environmental and design development to explore the restructuring of cultural community space in the hongchun market.

This study aims at analyzing the characteristic strong points of the Hongcheon Central Market, conduct the SWOT analysis, identify required improvements, establish marketing identity, structure spatial creation for the recovery of traditional market community functionality and cultural values and survey customers. By doing so, the study seeks to investigate the effect of cultural community space creation on traditional market activation.

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**Idea and characteristics of traditional market:** Traditional markets are closely related to the lives of local residents. In any region, they play central roles in local culture, society and economy as shown in Table 1. Traditional markets are a medium to connect the personal relationships of all of the social members. They reflect the long history of people’s lives, contain diverse kinds of information for people to share with each other while informing about the local people’s good clothing and shelter as well as their traditional lifestyle (Yang, 2010).

The dictionary definition of traditional market is ‘a place where diverse goods are purchased and sold’ or ‘a place where many people are gathered everyday or regularly for product sales and exchange’. The dictionary definition of conventional market, the term used before the traditional market is ‘a marketplace that has existed from old times and a market with old facilities and cheap products for ordinary people to use often’. Traditional markets can be categorized as follows under 7 criteria including their size, ownership types and commercial district scale (Sub, 2010).

Traditional markets are near local residents to be fused into certain time and space of their lives and provide their necessary sources, information, entertainment, etc.

**Current status of Hongcheon Central Market:** The Hnogcheon Central Market is located in the commercial and residential district at center of Hongcheon-eup, Hongcheon-gun. The area has been the central commercial district traditionally and has been fostered as the regional capital of administrative service, education and cultural activity.

The Korean administrative district of Hongcheon-eup where the Hongcheon market is located was elevated into eup in 1963 and has 47 ris now thereunder as shown in Fig. 1. The market maintains the form of usual marketplace with allies. It is concerned that the Hongcheon Central Market may lose its local customers to the capital region and Suncheon area due to its road improvement.

Table 1: Types of traditional market

Points	Description
Market size	Large-scale market, medium large market, medium market, small market
Ownership	Corporate market, individual market, public market, common market
Commercial district scale	Nationwide market, broader regional market, regional market, neighborhood convenient market
Market type	Building type, street stall type, outdoor shelter type, commercial shop-residence combined type
Period	Standing, regular period, standing+regular period
Products sold	Ordinary market, specialized market
Location	Big-city market, smaller-city market, farming/fishing community market

Table 2: Status of Hongcheon Central Market

Points	Description
Name	Hongcheon Central Market
Type	Standing/registration
Location	112, Kotmoe-ro, Hongcheon-gun, Gangwon-do, South Korea
Date of open	1981.10.27
No. of shops	116
Main products	Photoato cake, tadpole-shaped noodles, bucksheat pancake, Hongchong rice cake, other food stuffs, etc.
Feature	Center of broader region (near residential area, downtown city)
Rivaling stores	Semi-large-scale stores such as nonghyup local food and hongcheon market



Fig. 1: a, b) Hongcheon Central Market

On the opposite side, the market enjoys favorable transportational connections to attract more target customers among the large floating population as shown in Table 2.

**Analysis of Hongcheon Central Market environment:**

The Hongcheon Central Market is a main marketplace of Hongcheon-gun and has long-term loyal customers, surrounded by the rich tourist attractions in Hongcheon, the market enjoys a large number of visiting tourists and other floating population. There are plenty of regional

specialties (Korean beef, ginseng, buckwheat and other fresh agricultural products directly traded in the place of farming) as well as special regional food including Hongcheonchong rice cake and tadpole-shaped noodles. Its weaknesses include the absence of unique character, lack of product options in standing shops, poor environment (convenient facility, old standing store facility, etc.) and others which are less responsive to the rapidly changing customer needs. In this situation, the Hongcheon Central Market will need to promote its image as an easily accessible traditional market to foster cultural community space and market activation.

**Strength:**

- Main market in Hongcheon-gun with long-term loyal customers
- Rich tourist attractions in Hongcheon
- Rich regional specialties (Korean beef, ginseng, buckwheat and other fresh agricultural products traded directly in their farming area)
- Main famous food including Hongcheonchong rice cake, tadpole-shaped noodles
- Strong enthusiasm of merchant's association executives

**Weakness:**

- Absence of unique market characteristic
- Lack of marketplace foodstuffs
- Lack of product options at standing shops, lower reliability
- Poor environment (convenient facility, old standing shop structures, etc.)
- Different senses of risk among shop owners and merchants
- Lack of responsive ability to rapidly changing customer needs

**Opportunity:**

- Road improvement (Seoul-Hongcheon expressway, etc.) to enjoy easy access from the east part of Seoul
- Increasing number of 1 day tourists to have good evening hours
- Image of a well-being city with easy access
- Nationally famous local festivals (Hongcheon ginseng Korean beef festival, waxy corn festival, etc.)
- Gate to the Seolak region, the largest inland tourist destination of the country

**Threat:**

- Decreasing customer preference for traditional markets
- Road improvement to lose customers to large-scale retailers in the capital and Chuncheon regions

- Customers moving out into internet or social market sites
- Opening of the Hongcheon Hanaro Mart local food

**Role of cultural community space creation:** Cultural community space creation is to transform and use outdated facilities to change them in line with customer's lifestyles and shopping culture and stimulate traditional markets. If customers using such a place can build experiences, feelings, memories and expectations, they would add a new meaning to the place to make the previously meaningless place into an important place. For this reason, Relph stated that, whereas space has the abstract nature, functional nature and physical nature; place has the specific nature, analytical nature and aesthetic nature (Yeong and Kim, 2009).

Cultural community creation means diversified efforts to stimulate traditional markets by helping customers remember the image of place. The idea refers to the marketing part applied to space including the economic and social activities of place management by traditional markets as well as merchant's efforts to improve market image. Based on them, physical environment is improved and positive image is created to make customers develop a positive view on the place, come to the place and invest in the place (Jaehyun, 2013).

**CULTURAL COMMUNITY SPACE CREATION OF HONGCHEON CENTRAL MARKET**

**Market environmental improvement based on brand identity:**

It will be largely effective in stimulating the market to utilize underused space, empty shops and space, rooftop and street to make some cultural symbols local people can be proud of clean and symbolic cultural streets or specialized streets, place of rest and public place for people to get together and talk (Lee, 2015).

This study pursued a market environment improvement project to manage the outdated market passageways and improve aesthetic impression and appearances. Brand identity was developed to establish the image of traditional marketplace with improved environment. After building a unique image of Hongcheon Central Market, differentiating factors were developed and integrative image was operated to maximize inflowing customers in this study. The old grating inside the market posed a risk of fall or trap young people's shoe heels. So, they were replaced. Moreover, specialized designs were developed for distance signs in the market to help customers easily recognize different shops. The market space was specialized with the floor info line on specialized market street as shown in Fig. 2.

The merchant's association, shop owners and merchants were interviewed to consult the rooms for

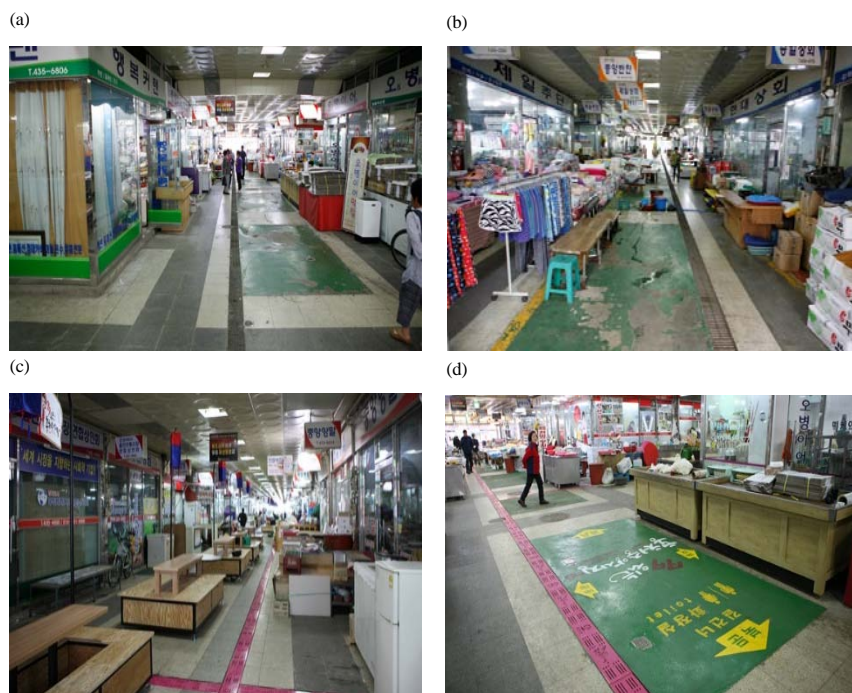


Fig. 2: Market environmental improvement project: a, b) Before and c, d) After

improvement, place of line mark, marking details, facility installation sites, etc., before selecting each corresponding space. After the market environmental improvement project, effective line marking system was established and visual market identity was granted. As the outdated market passageways were renovated, the market image became clearer, maximizing the market promotional effect to attract more customers. Based on the active market environmental improvement such as brand development and color and identity use, brand identity was established in market environmental improvement. Customer satisfaction with the improvement was surveyed and 81.2% of customers were found to be satisfied.

**Specialized environment fostering to revive the old marketplace image:**

An important study aspect was to foster the image of ancient inns and pubs to improve buckwheat-related product sales while creating an antique market image. Buck wheat-related foodstuff kiosks received environmental improvement support to resolve the sanitary problem on street while improving a clean market image to maximize space structuring. In line with the night market stimulation strategy, appropriate indoor lighting was planned and signs were improved. The existing seat place was restructured to foster cultural community space with the impression of ancient pubs.

Food shop names were applied to develop shop concepts. Simple sign posts were provided in the concept related to shop names to contribute to fostering the old marketplace images. Old seat places used to have different sizes or forms, causing sanitation problems. So their functionality and aesthetic aspects were improved and they were properly arranged to generate a cozy marketplace atmosphere while providing improved functions and design in the specialized set of environment as shown in Fig. 3.

To establish specialized environment in the hongcheon central market, design strategies were established based on space status survey and case investigation. Among the regional cultural background and multiple values, the value with the largest potential was selected as a key theme of research. The value was specified and symbolized with diverse factors. Its design was changed according to the consultation with the merchant's association or its proposals. Through the fostering of specialized environment, market identity was established. The Hongcheon Central Market established its own unique specialized environment while improving a clean market image. Customer satisfaction was surveyed with the specialized environment fostering (seat place installation to create a traditional marketplace image). As a result, 81.2% of the customers were found to be satisfied.



Fig. 3: Before and after the specialized environmental fostering: a, b) Survey (survey board, survey by visit) and existing seat place and c, d) Seat place installation to create traditional marketplace image as a specialized factor

## CONCLUSION

The study analyzed the Hongcheon Central Market which had been much activated and crowded once before to look at why the number of its visitors reduced and differentiating factors were lost. Based on the analysis, the study established and researched cultural community space to stimulate the traditional market.

The Hongcheon Central Market has been playing central roles for the regional culture, society and economy.

Declining traditional markets would be activated once again if their regional characteristics are sufficiently reflected in establishing their own brand identity and if consistent design system is established and operated. If traditional market's spatial awareness is improved with the marketing concept based on their regional location and placeness, customers would have new impression of such places as a new community space (Hyori 2016).

Merchants themselves would also be proud of their marketplace and develop a good service mind. Traditional markets used to be a sociocultural place of emotional purification while sharing tradition and culture. For this reason, fostering cultural community space in traditional markets can raise expectations for diverse effects as a means to revive their functionality (Seungkil, 2014).

This study researched that such a cultural community space is related to the financial gains of traditional markets. Based on the research, the study established such a space and surveyed awareness level change

accordingly. As a result, it was found that customers had experienced change in their awareness. Cultural community space is regarded importantly of recent as a new key means to determine the value of a place. As it has been examined based on literature review and diverse cases of traditional market development, cultural environment impacts economic effect, regeneration and re-arrangement effect, living quality improvement, community reinforcement and regional image improvement. Therefore, cultural community space needs to be combined with space activation.

The study presented market environmental improvement in combination with the market brand identity and specialized environment establishment to create old traditional marketplace image. These are specialized solely for the Hongcheon Central Market and they were found to have induced market activation. Based on the findings, it is expected that building mutual community at the center of local people's life would help improve the comp.

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