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Opening small public libraries in quiet shopping malls could boost local businesses in Goyang, Korea

Young-seok Kim

Assistant Professor at the Department of Library and Information Science

Myongji University in Seoul, Korea

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Abstract

Korea is one of the fastest growing countries in the world. People say that 'if you attempt to find the place you visited before, you would not recognize the place. This is because everything in Korea is changing quickly.' However, library services are slowly changing and growing. There are 487 public libraries including 34 branches in Korea as of December 2004. One of the reasons of the slow growth of the Korean public library services is a matter of size. That is to say, Korean public libraries are large.

It is considered that placing small public libraries in multi-functional complexes may be one of the best solutions of building more public libraries and improving library services in Korea. Opening a small public library in a local shopping mall could redevelop this area by bringing new people into the area.

In the last twenty years, many satellite cities have been built near Seoul, the capital city of Korea. Goyang is one of them, which operates five public libraries including one branch library for its 880,000 citizens. Each library serves around 176,000 people. As mentioned above, Korean public libraries are big. The average floor space of the libraries in Goyang is 3,265 . These facts contrast sharply with the public libraries in Sheffield, UK. Sheffield having 520,000 people operates one central and twenty six branch libraries, which has an average floor space of 437 . Several branch libraries of Sheffield are placed in multi-functional complexes.

When Goyang city was constructed, one small local shopping mall was opened on every residential block in which there are about 2~3,000 houses. However, after many huge, new shopping malls were established in the city center, people did not visit local shopping malls any more. Since then, hundred of small shops in local shopping malls were closed.

It is deemed that placing small public libraries in local shopping malls could bring the following advantages to Goyang, Korea:

- . To redevelop local shopping malls which are dull by bringing new people into this area.*
- . To build more small public libraries.*
- . To save budgets for maintaining and operating libraries.*
- . To provide local people more easier access to public libraries.*
- . To give shopkeepers chances to visit public libraries, who rarely visit libraries.*

Therefore, I would like to talk about how opening small libraries in local shopping malls could boost local businesses and could improve library services in quantity and quality. I am going to talk about one specific example in Goyang, Korea.

Introduction to Public Library Services in Korea

Korea is one of the fastest growing countries in the world. People say that ‘if you attempt to find the place you visited before, you would not recognize it today. This is because everything in Korea is changing quickly.’ The public library service sector in Korea is no exception to this rule. Over the past 40 years, the sector grew 27-fold with the quality of service undergoing a commensurate enhancement.

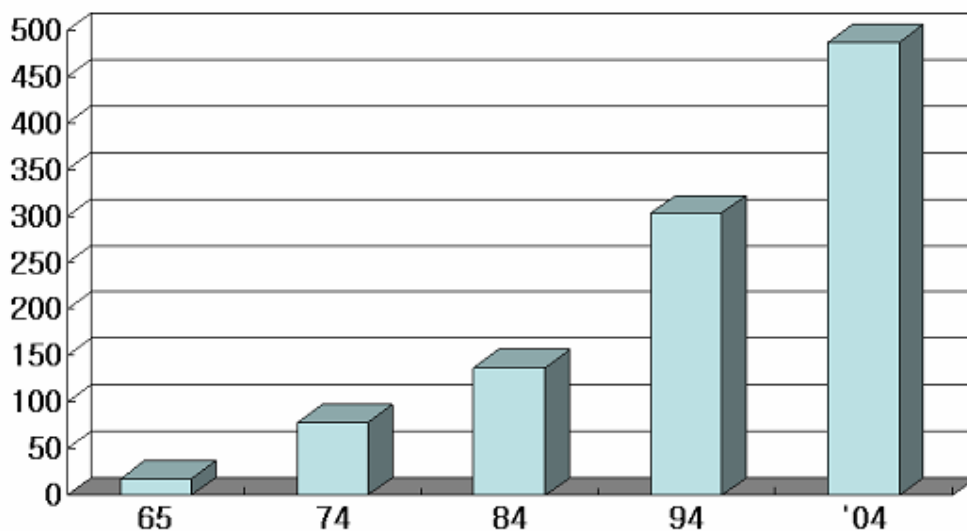


Figure 1 Increase of the number of public libraries in Korea over the past 40 years.

Modern public library services began in Korea in the early 1900s. The Japanese occupation, which shortly followed, succeeded by the U.S. military government and the Korean War, put the development of public libraries on hold until the end of the 1950s. In 1963, the Libraries Act, Korea’s first library law, was enacted. The 1970s and 1980s, two decades of accelerated economic growth, saw scores of new public libraries spring up across the country. In 1990, a Division of Libraries and Museums was created within the Ministry of Culture (present-day the Ministry of Culture and Tourism). Following the introduction of a local self-government system in 1995, Korea’s public libraries enjoyed a period of rapid growth. Early in this century, we have witnessed a notable progress in library informatization and substantial improvements in children’s service.

The number of librarians in public libraries across the country has massively surged over a relatively short period, and public library collections have continuously increased. In recent years, their operations and services were overhauled, equipping them with a digital library system and enabling them to provide library services via the Internet. Public libraries in Korea are generally rather large in size, but do not have many branch libraries.

Year	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	...	'11
Number	304	319	330	370	400	420	437	462	471	487	...	750*

Figure 2 Number of Public Libraries in Korea in the last ten years. * Planned number.

As can be seen in Figure 2, at the end of 2004, the number of public libraries in Korea was totaled at 487 (including 39 branch libraries). Of these, 250 were owned and operated by local governments, 223 by local educational authorities and 14 by individuals or private organizations.

The aggregate holdings amount to 38,400,000 books, breaking down to 78,000 volumes per library and 0.79 volumes per capita. Average staff size (full-time employees only) is 12 per library. An estimated 2,000 librarians serve in public libraries, corresponding to 4.1 per library and 38% of total library workforce. Annual operating costs amount to 710,000,000 Korean won (USD 887,500) on the average, 12% of which (KRW 91,000,000/USD 113,750) is used for the acquisition of library materials.

In 2002, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism unveiled its 'Library Development Roadmap', a policy blueprint for the development of public library services in Korea in upcoming years. One of the plans is to increase the number of public libraries from 471 (as of 2003) to 750 by the year 2011. It means that 279 public libraries should be built in the next eight years. That is to say, around 35 libraries a year.

As mentioned above, at present there are 487 public libraries including 34 branches in Korea as of December 2004. According to the plan, there should be 506 libraries by the end of 2004. At the moment, we are behind schedule by 19 libraries. I consider that one of the big problems of the plan is the misjudgement of the size of future public libraries. The people who developed the plan considered building a big library. This is because large libraries have only been built in the last twenty years in Korea. Therefore, the plan should be revised in terms of the size of public libraries. That is to say, small libraries should be

built instead of large libraries because building small libraries particularly have many advantages, such as saving budgets for maintaining and operating libraries and improving local businesses.

Introduction to Goyang City and its Public Library Services

The name of the city, Goyang has a long history. The name first became known as Goyang in the early 15th century. In the early 1990s, many satellite cities were built near Seoul, the capital city of Korea. Goyang is one of them. In 1990, the construction of a new and huge town was started in 1990 and completed in 1995 in the Goyang area. During that time, Goyang county became Goyang City.

The city of Goyang, which has its own local government, is divided into three wards and a further 53 neighbourhoods. The wards are autonomous and elect their own councilors and mayors. There is a population of 905,773 as of March 2006 in Goyang.

When the new town was constructed in 1995, there was only one public library in Goyang. The second library was opened four years later in May 1999. Three other public libraries were built between January 2002 and September 2003. This means that the plan for constructing new towns was not perfect enough. The people who developed the plan didn't consider building public libraries in the new town of Goyang. Therefore, most of the people who moved into Goyang lived without any public library service for several years. The mayor of the city of Goyang, who was firstly elected by the people in 1995, like any of cities in Korea, began to recognize the importance of public library services and started to build public libraries. However, when he started to build public libraries, there were problems of finding land. This is because when the construction of the new town was completed, all the land had been sold to individuals and companies. The only possible space available for building public libraries were public parks, which are the only green areas in the city.

At present, there are one central and four branch libraries. Each library serves around 181,000 people. Goyang government recognized that the current public libraries are not enough to provide basic services for the people. Thus, the government is in the process of building more libraries. At the moment, as can be seen in Figure 3, three more public libraries and three children's libraries are under construction.

	Type	Year of Open	Size ()	Construction Cost	FTSN
Madu	CL	May 1999	3,851	NDG	18
Haengsin	BL	May 1994	2,359	NDG	5
Wondang	BL	Jan. 2002	1,466	NDG	5
Hwajeong	BL	Sept. 2003	4,580	NDG	6
Baekseok	BL	Sept. 2003	4,070	NDG	6
Jeongbalsan	BL	(Dec. 2006)	1,637	780,000,000(KRW) 821,000(USD)	NDG
Daehwa	BL	(Oct. 2007)	NDG	775,100,000(KRW) 815,895(USD)	NDG
Hanmoe	BL	(Oct. 2007)	NDG	749,600,000(KRW) 789,000(USD)	NDG
Haengsin	CsL	(Dec. 2006)	1,650	280,000,000(KRW) 294,740(USD)	NDG
Juyeop	CsL	(Dec. 2006)	1,650	NDG	NDG
Hwajeong	CsL	(Dec. 2006)	1,650	NDG	NDG

Figure 3 Public and Children's Libraries in Goyang.

FTSN: Full Time Staff Number, CL: Central Library, BL: Branch Library, CsL: Children's Library, NDG: No Data Gained.

A children's library is very popular in Korea. In almost every local government area there is one children's library. Children's libraries are only for children who are under the age of 14 and people who accompany the children are only allowed to get in the libraries.

There will be eight public libraries and three children's libraries in Goyang in 2008. However, the population of Goyang is growing exceptionally every month. Thus, each library would serve around 125,000 people by 2008. It means that still there should be more public libraries. However, it seems that building more libraries in a short time is not easy. Furthermore, there is a problem with the policy for building public libraries. As can be seen in Figure 3, the local government has only built large libraries. As mentioned above, Korean public libraries are big. There is one central and four branch libraries in Goyang. The

average floor space of the libraries is 3,265 . These facts contrast sharply with the public libraries in Sheffield, UK. Sheffield having 520,000 people operates one central and twenty-six branch libraries, which has an average floor space of 437 (CIPFA, 2003). Libraries in Goyang are 7.5 times bigger than Sheffield libraries. This result clearly shows how the local government builds big libraries. Goyang is not the only case. Almost every city and county in Korea is the same as Goyang.

Therefore, the cost for building one large library is huge. As mentioned, three libraries are under construction in Goyang. The total cost for building one library is expected to be KRW 7,751,000,000 (USD 815,895) and another one is expected to cost KRW 7,496,000,000 (USD 789,000). Among many cities in Korea, Goyang is exceptional in opening six libraries with spending such a huge budget in only a few years.

I don't think the city can afford to do this on an ongoing basis. Therefore, it is suggested that opening a small library is effective in building and managing a library.

Opening Small Public Libraries in Local Shopping Centers

As mentioned above, there needs to be more public library services in Korea and, specifically, Goyang. However, not large libraries but small libraries. It is considered that there should be around 53 libraries in Goyang because there are 53 neighbourhoods in the city. These number of libraries will serve around 18,800 people.

The next question regarding building small libraries is the choice of a site for the small library. It has been suggested that placing small libraries in local shopping centers has many advantages. Locating small libraries in local shopping malls satisfies three (No.2, 3, and 6) of the following six factors. These are generally used for determining the site for placing a library (Thompson, 1963). The six factors are:

1. Traditional site, i.e. land already in the library's possession.
2. Grouping of the library with related cultural or civic buildings.
3. Accessibility to readers.
4. Space round the building.
5. Design and dignity.
6. Cost.

In addition to the three factors, placing small libraries in local shopping centers has another huge advantage. A small public library in a local shopping complex could boost local businesses, which need help at the moment in Goyang, Korea.

In terms of ‘grouping of the library with civic buildings’, small public libraries in local shopping complexes provide benefits for both the libraries and the shops. Shop customers could use the libraries and library users could do their shopping. Therefore, shopkeepers can increase their income and libraries can increase library use.

In terms of accessibility to readers, libraries in local shopping complexes have a huge advantage. This is because local shopping complexes are located at the main entrance of each apartment block. Therefore, in general, the distance between the local shopping complex and the house are within a hundred meters, or even less. Libraries in local shopping malls could dramatically increase library use and book borrowing.

Cost is another important reason why small libraries should be located in local shopping complexes. At the moment, many local shopkeepers are in difficulties. This is because people are going to go the city center, big shopping malls and super markets. These circumstances suggest opening small public libraries in local shopping complexes in order to boost local businesses. As can be seen in Figure 5 and 7, many shops, particularly shops underground are now closed because people do not go to the local shopping complexes. Therefore, local government could lend the space from empty shopping areas at a reasonable price. Local government could save budgets if they open small libraries in lent space instead of building a small library in another place. Regarding placing libraries in the basement of local shopping centers, the only thinkable problem is that there is no lift in the basement. However, this is a technical problem. Therefore, the problem can be easily solved.

Figure 4 Local shopping center A in Goyang

Figure 5 Shops closed in the basement of local shopping center A

Opening Small Libraries in Local Shopping Centers Could Boost Local Businesses

In Korea, when a new town is planned to be constructed, many building companies buy huge amounts of land, and build apartment complexes and a small business building for placing shops. Building companies make profits by selling apartments and shopping areas. Like other places, when new towns in Goyang were constructed, one small local shopping center was created in every residential (apartment) block where there are about 2-3,000 households. Figure 4 and 6 are two of the many local shopping centers in Goyang.

Figure 6 Local shopping center B

Figure 7 Shopping area completely closed in the basement of local shopping center B

When apartment complexes were completely constructed, people moved to their new apartment. New people used to go to local shops. This is because there was no other place where they can do their shopping. It means that the main streets were developed several years after the apartment complexes were constructed. As can be seen in Figure 8 and 9, after new shopping malls in the busy streets and huge supermarkets were opened, less people came to local shopping centers.

Figure 8 Main shopping area in the busy street which is not far from the local shopping center A & B

Figure 9 Another big shopping mall in the city center which is far from the local shopping center A & B

When I first visited the local shopping center A in 1998, three years after the people moved into their homes, already many shops were closed. When I visited the same shopping center in April 2006, which is eight years later, all the shops were closed except one laundry.

The laundryman said that only he survived among the shops in the basement of shopping center A. Shopping center B is worse. Its basement was completely closed because there were not enough customers.

Figure 10 Local area map

A: Local shopping center A, B: Local shopping center B, BL: Branch Library
CC: City Center.

One local property agency employee was interviewed. He said when shopping center B was opened, 3.3 (1 Korean Pyeong) was 5,000,000 KRW(USD 5,260). However, at present, the value of the same area has decreased five times. The man suggests that 3.3 of the space of the basement of shopping center B can be lent for 10,000 KRW(USD 10.5). Therefore, if a small library demands 165 (50 Korean Pyeong), the cost to lease may be 5000,000 KRW(USD 525) per month. This equals 6,000,000 KRW(USD 6,3000) per year. This is a huge saving compared to building a new library.

How Small Libraries in Local Shopping Center Could Boost Local Businesses?

Another new and big city, Bucheon city operates 11 small public libraries with an average floor space of around 132 (40 Korean Pyeong). According to the statistics on these libraries, there is an average of 70 library users per day. Some libraries have 2,300 visits per month. This makes 27,600 visits in one library per year. If there are ten small libraries, it means that 276,000 people use local libraries.

There is enough evidence that libraries in multi-functional complexes boost local businesses. In Sheffield, several branch libraries are placed in multi-functional complexes. Tinsley library is one of them. The library is located between local shops, which are close to the residential area. Not far from these local shops, there is a huge shopping mall, possibly Europe's largest shopping mall. However, local people still visit these shops because the library is there. It is deemed that a library with 38,976 visitors per year could boost local businesses.

There is another interesting case supporting the claim. One children's librarian in Bucheon, Korea says that:

There is one small grocery shop in the same floor where the library exists. When the library closes on Saturday and Sunday, the income of the shop decreases. The library is in a multi-functional complex, a regional cultural center. There is a theater on the first floor of the cultural center. I believe that more people go to the theater because people come to the cultural center in order to visit the library.

Therefore, it is considered that a huge number of people visit local shopping centers in order to use small libraries. There could be more library use, if libraries are located in shopping centers. This also means more people visiting local shops.

Conclusion

Public library services in Korea have been dramatically developed in quantity and quality over the past 40 years. However, the speed of the development has been slow down in the last several years. One of the reasons of the slow growth of the development is a matter of library size. The local governments in Korea have been built large public libraries and the total cost for founding a large library has been increased. Therefore, the local governments have difficulties to invest continually a large amount of budgets.

However, still, public library services are not enough in quantity in Korea. Goyang city also needs more public libraries. It is deemed that placing small public libraries in local shopping centers could bring the following advantages to Goyang, Korea:

- . To redevelop local shopping centers which are dull by bring new people into these areas
- . To build more small public libraries.
- . To save budgets for maintaining and operating libraries.
- . To provide local people more easier access to public libraries.
- . To give shopkeepers chances to visit public libraries, who rarely visit libraries.

In conclusion, the Goyang government is strongly recommended to found small public libraries in the local shopping centers because this could lead to the improvement of local businesses and public library services, too.

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Author Information

- . Name: Dr. Young-seok Kim
- . Email: y9s9kim@hanmail.net
- . Division (Libraries Serving the General Public) Liaison Person for WLIC 2006 Seoul
- . Part-time Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science, Myungji University and Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea.
- . Gained a Ph.D. degree at the Department of Information Studies, the University of Sheffield, UK in April 2004.
- . Worked as a Korean Librarian in August 1995 to August 1998 and a (part-time) Korean Cataloguer in January 1999 to July 2004 in Sheffield University Library, the University of Sheffield, UK.

* Research Areas:

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