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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Spatial analysis of various multiplex cinema types



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## Abstract

This study identifies the spatial characteristics and relationships of each used space according to the multiplex type. In this study, multiplexes are classified according to screen rooms and circulation systems, and each used space is quantitatively analyzed. The multiplex type based on screen rooms and moving line systems influences the relationship and characteristics of each used space in various ways. In particular, the structure of the used space of multiplexes has a significant effect on profit generation and audience convenience.

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## 1. Introduction

Movies constitute a form of mass culture that can be easily accessed by anyone. The movie market is currently growing at a rapid speed, following the dramatic development of the cultural industry in the 20th century. Although the driving force behind such growth can be attributed to the development of the Korean movie industry itself, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, the expansion and increase of movie-watching facilities along with movie theaters also have an important interactive function. In this process, the multiplex

theater, which was triggered by the launch of Gangbyeon CGV in 1998, has particularly become the representative type of movie-watching facility in the movie industry. The number of multiplex theaters has increased to 270 in 2013, making up 81.1% of the total number of theaters in Korea, with 94.9% proportion of the total screen numbers (Korea Film Council, 2013). Compared with the previous single-screen theaters, these multiplex theaters are able to increase the number of theaters with smaller size. As a result, the flexible management of screens has become possible according to the box-office record. This type of theater has also brought several spatial changes in movie watching culture for both suppliers and consumers. For example, linking theaters with diverse programs in line with the movement of viewers in the spaces used according to different viewing times. This study classifies domestic multiplex theaters and selects representative

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cases to conduct quantitative analysis on each space of usage to understand the relationship between space of usage and its spatial characteristics according to multiplex types.

Studies have been previously conducted on changes in the spatial configuration of the multiplex. Many other related studies have also been conducted on multiplex space organizations, such as those by Na (2001) and Kim (2001), and those conducted on service spaces and waiting spaces by Woo et al. (2001), Yun (2003), and See (2006). However, studies conducted to date are mostly generalized and address content related to the functions of spaces, such as space area programming or space arrangement plans. Furthermore, introducing these studies to actual multiplex project plans or remodeling plans is limited. In particular, although service spaces in multiplexes are spaces for multi-use facilities that strongly express the characteristics and images of multiplexes, most studies have focused only on material finishes in the sector of interior design or space arrangement plans. Moreover, further studies are insufficient.

To complement previous studies and to investigate the characteristics of each space of usage in multiplex, the present study conducts a quantitative analysis on each space. The definition, current situation, moving paths, and spatial composition are examined through a basic survey of multiplex. In addition, the types and classification methods, as well as representative examples of each case, are investigated. Next, using the plane structure and cross-section structure as a classification standard, seven multiplexes are chosen as representatives of each type. Using this sample, a new classification skill is developed, with the theater and circulation system as standard. Finally, the characteristics of each space, such as area share, accessibility, and visual openness, are derived using a space analysis program.

## 2. Overview of multiplex theaters

### 2.1. Definition and current situation of the multiplex theater

According to the definition of the Building Act, theaters can be largely divided into three types: cinema with a single screen, multi-cinema with more than two screens, and cine-complex with a complex structure and with a theater combined with other facilities that promote movie watching. Multiplex can be regarded as a combination of multi-cinema and cine-complex and is defined as “a theater that provides audience with diverse movies and a variety of facilities” (Kim, 2001; Lee, 2003). In the United States or in Europe, multiplex is often classified according to the number of theaters that are connected to such diverse facilities. In Korea, theaters with more than seven screens or those run by multiplex franchises are generally regarded as multiplex, but no special standard is known to date (Ryu et al., 2005).

In 1998, Gangbyeon CGV was the first theater to introduce the concept of multiplex. The success of Gangbyeon CGV was a turning point of the conversion from previous theaters into multiplex. As Megabox COEX by Dong-yang Group entered the theater market with 16 screens in 2000, which was the largest scale in Asia, the competition became increasingly fierce. As Lotte Cinema entered the market afterward, the theater and multiplex industry in Korea has since been dominated by the

three conglomerates, with the screen share of these three multiplex franchises as high as 81.1%.

### 2.2. Spatial composition and circulation system of multiplex

No single rule is known for classifying the space of multiplex. However, in general, the space is divided into theater, service area, and management space (Yun, 2003). The theater is the most important space in multiplex and is where audiences watch movies; thus, the allocation of the theater determines the composition of other spaces. Despite the lack of a uniform standard, the service area in multiplex is generally divided into public area, resting area, and entertainment area. Moreover, each area can be further segmented into individual facilities.

The circulation system (Woo et al., 2001) of multiplex can be analyzed by considering the process in which the audience enters the hall, passes the lobby area, enters the theater, and then exits from it. The total space of this system can be divided into three. The first is the hall where entrance and exit occurs. The second is the lobby, which contains the waiting, lounge, and service areas. The third is the theater where movie watching takes place. The analysis can then be conducted by adding physical or virtual entrance and exit paths that connect each element. Moreover, the compositional type of moving paths can be diversified according to the accessibility of entrance and exit from the multiplex, vertical accessibility throughout the theater, and the types of entrance and exit (Fig. 1).

The relationships between hall and lobby, between lobby and theater, and between theater and hall can be considered separately.

#### 2.2.1. Unified moving path type

The unified moving path type is the simplest type of circulation system. In this type, all the spaces, including the ticket space inside and outside the theater, entrance and exit of the theater, waiting space, and the hall have the same moving path. This type is advantageous in that it requires no separation of the moving path and is easily recognizable. However, this type has the disadvantages of un-smooth space composition and complex flow of audience before and after the show time (Fig. 2).

#### 2.2.2. Separate entrance and exit type

The separate entrance and exit type is frequently observed when the theater covers two stories. The entrance and exit paths from the theater are separated; thus, the confusion of the moving path before and after the show time can be decreased. The lobby area combines various services, and subsidiary facilities can be experienced both during the process of entrance and exit. Hence, this type is beneficial for audience convenience and theater profitability. However, the efficiency of space and facility usage can be low, particularly in the exit area. This type is often observed in multiplexes that have large-scale theaters (Fig. 3).

#### 2.2.3. Direct exit type

The direct exit type is a variation of the separate entrance and exit type. In this type, the audience can directly exit to

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