An Analysis of Trade Areas for Apparel Stores in Seoul[+]
- Based on Myeong-dong, Kangnam Station and Myeongil-dong -

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide information how to locate a apparel store based on target age, merchandise's type and price. Three trade areas in Seoul are chosen: Myeong-dong which is the biggest trade area in Korea; Kangnam station one of representative Kangnam trade areas; and Myeongil-Dong a neighborhood trade area. This study is mainly performed by analysing the locations of the stores in the given areas. The result shows that the main apparel stores in Myeong-dong are casual wear stores for young people with the range of mid-high price. The stores in Kangnam station trade area also sell the casual wear for young people but they are mostly mid-low priced. In the trade area of Myeongil-dong, however, there are various kinds of mid-priced apparel stores for residents of all ages. Apparel stores for formal wear, casual wear, and formal-casual wear tend to be located side by side. But other kinds do not. These results show that affinity is found in some types of apparel stores by the analysis of the next-door apparel stores.

Key Words : Apparel store location, Apparel trade area, Affinity

I. Introduction

The selection of geographical locations for the retail store, a basic element of retail management, is very important in the long run because it has inflexible elements. Once selected, it is not so easy to change due to thepurchase or lease of the store and an internal facility to install, which take high initial investment cost. Under these circumstances the retail store management should be well aware of the changing aspects of trade areas which are essential in designing the distribution channels and in effective management of the store[1]. Needless to say, some studies on general trade areas, which are in-depth research on existing theories, have macroscopically selected and analyzed

specific trade areas[2)3)4)5)6)] and microscopically examined various factors for the selection of the store[7)8)9)]. These existing geographical trade areas, the development of internet, and the introduction of complicated channels all have made various distribution channels. Fashion items especially, including apparel, are taking up the top portion of the internet sales amount. As containers are used as a stores, the mobile stores, which break away from the concept of traditional stationary stores, are being adopted[10)]. Furthermore, there are more apparel retail stores opening at new locations, which make the better locations ever more scarce. Under these environments of channel distribution, the competitions among the existing off-line retail stores get higher. Therefore, more detailed and in-depth research on various aspects is needed for more effective management of the apparel store. Although many studies on the apparel retail have dealt with the choice and preference of the stores by consumers[11)12)13)14)], there have been few studies on the trade areas in the apparel retails[15)16)17)].

Some studies[18)19)] show that depending on the characteristics of apparel merchandise, the consumer behavior also appeared to be different, but no study has investigated in detail the characteristics of various retail stores according to the kind of apparel products. Some useful programs such as GIS[20)21)] are introduced for the analysis of the general trade area as the preparatory process of retail store opening. There is, however, no study on the relationship between various apparel stores within the commercial area.

This study, therefore, examines what kinds of apparel stores are located and how close their locations are within the general trade areas in Seoul. This analysis of the circumstances of apparel retail stores helps find out the characteristics of apparel stores and recognize the local trade areas.

II. Theoretical Background

1. Market Geography

Market geography refers to the geographical extent of markets and where they are located. Changing market locations results from various reasons such as expanding or reducing the geographic boundaries of existing markets, opening up new, more distant markets. In the context of market geography, a trade area is a geographic sector that contains potential customers for a particular retailer or shopping center. Trade area determination is a complex process, since an area's size is a function of an individual store's character and made of operation as well as the cluster of stores surrounding that store. Trade areas may be divided into two or three zones in terms of market size such as a primary zone, a secondary zone and a tertiary zone[22)].

Bucklin[23)] provides with the relationship between market size and channel structure. When the size of market reaches the certain point, the cost of intermediary structure is equal to the direct structure. As the market becomes larger, the channel structure using intermediaries is lowers in cost. Several intermediaries, for example, such as fashion retail stores dealing with the same brand are located in the central area of the main city. Trade area analysis and site evaluation are complementary procedures: the former specifically focuses on the demand side, on situation factors; while the latter combines the demand side with the many operating requirements of the retail chain.

2. Retail Store Location

There are many types of retail locations but each with its own values. As a result, the choice of a store location require extensive decision-making due to the number of criteria considered, including population size and traits, the competition, transportation access, parking availability and the nature of nearby stores[24].

Retailers have three basic types of sites to choose from: a central business district (CBD), shopping center, and freestanding location[25]. Generally a central business district in the city belongs to the primary zone which is usually three to five miles or less than a 10-minute drive from the site. Those certain types of retailing establishment tend to cluster in specific areas and styles. Clustering stores attract customers and create markets in an urban area.

If the stores at a given location complement, blend and cooperative with one another and each benefits from the others' presence, affinity exits. When affinity is strong, the sales of each stores are greater, due to the hight customer traffic than when the stores are apart. The practice of similar or complementary stores locating near each other is based on two factors: (1) Customers likes to compare the prices, styles, selections, and services of similar stores. (2) Customers like one-stop shopping and purchase at different stores on the same trip[26]. These customers's shopping styles make affinities exist among competing stores as well as among complementary stores. Customers prefer to visit several different stores on each trip. Those activities with similar thresholds and services areas group together for the convenience of their customers[27]. Apparel merchandise belongs to shopping goods that customers prefer to visit as many stores as possible to compare various factors including

style, quality and price. Women's clothing shows concentration but there is no obvious logic to this pattern[28]. Another useful rule is retail compatibility referring to the "degree to which two businesses interchange customers." The greater the compatibility between businesses located in close proximity, the greater the interchange of customers and the greater sales volume of each compatible business[29]. This rule explains that apparel stores are located nearby various apparel stores. Getis and Getis[30] mention that clothing stores tend to become proximity and condense. Even though Arnold, et al.[31] suggest that the important attributes of consumer's store choice are quality, value and assortment rather than physical convenience. In the study of Chung and Rhee[32], unmarried female consumers perceived the factor of the location and convenience as the least important for the attributes of store selection in the formal wear and the casual wear. However, they ignore the consumer behaviour of comparing and variety seeking apparel products not only in the store but also among stores and enjoying the atmosphere of the store outside.

3. Korean Apparel Trade Areas

1) Myeong-dong Trade Area

The apparel stores in Myeong-dong trade area, the first class trade area in Korea, are clustered within the radius of 300 meters around the automobile-free 1st-3rd streets on the rear of Myeong-dong subway station. This Myeong-dong trade area has its south boundary on Myeong-dong station and its north boundary on Euljiro-Ipgu station. Its east and west boundaries are 2nd Namdaemoon Street and Myeong-dong Cathedral respectively[33].

The Myeong-dong trade area, which

77

represents the trade areas in Korea, went through a crisis in the late 90's when the foreign exchange crisis hit. Prior to the crisis, women in 30s and 40s frequented on the main street (Jungangro) of Myeong-dong where there were many luxury-oriented stores clustered. But, after the crisis, as they had difficulty making sales, these luxury-brand stores gradually slipped away to Gangnam area. And other emerging fashion stores opened in the Dongdaemoon and Gangnam areas. After this eventful change, in Myeong-dong area began the massive influx of customers in 10s and 20s. As Miliore opened at the gateway to Jungangro, the stores for young people's apparel/accessories/cosmetics came to full business. Besides, thanks to the designation of Myeong-dong area as a special tourism zone and to its successful attraction of foreign tourists, the Myeong-dong trade area was on its slow recovery phase in 2001[34].

As Myeong-dong trade area was formed in the most expensive priced land in Korea. The price of the store's lease in the area also maintains the highest level in Korea[35]. Since the rent is outrageously high, the stores here, rather than making profits, are directly managed as antenna shops aimed at identifying the market trends and at promoting effects in terms of the image improvement of mega shop of the brand. Because the rent is so expensive, the moving and closing of the small stores are frequent.

It was said that the promising businesses, besides apparel/cosmetics, in Myeong-dong area were of refurbished apparel store, general accessory store, coffee shops, ice cream shop, and fusion restaurant.

Myeong-dong area has became a casual zone for the women's apparel, accessory, denim, and casual wear. Myeong-dong's main target customers consist of girls and women in 20's and early 30's and almost all the stores deal with mid-priced merchandise.

The brands in Myeong-dong area are mostly of refurbished apparel and well-known domestic brands. In addition, for the influx of foreign tourists, the licensed and imported brands and directly operated foreign brands also occupy.

2) Gangnam Station Trade Area

Named as a class A trade area, competing with Myeong-dong trade area for representing Korean trade area, Gangnam Station trade area is increasing its range of trade. In the early 80s, the launching of the Metro Subway Line 2 going through the now 4-way crossroads of Gangnam station brought the development of satellite cities of Bundang, Suwon, Yongin, and other cities[36]. Besides, the Gangnam station area became a convergent point of buses and commuting vehicles headed to and from Hannam bridge and Seongnam. In this newly formed traffic conditions, Gangnam station area has naturally become a gateway to Seoul metropolitan area.

Afterwards, Gangnam area, swept in the strong wind of real estate investment and education, has gradually begun to crystallize as an entertainment district. With the venture businesses clustered in the area and it location on the axis of Teheranro which runs from Seocho to Jamsil, Gangnam area continues to grow up as a robust consumption/trade area.

Gangnam's office workers make up a significant portion of the floating population in this area because business facilities are crowded around the Gangnam station. So many foreign language institutes also draw many students and office workers. It also has the stops for shuttles of universities located around Seoul, and the

buses to Bundang, Suji, and Yongin go through this area. Because of all these, the various layers of people gather here. The fact that this station is located away from bus stops has helped expand the trade area around the station which has naturally followed the floating population along the bus stops.

This trade area is divided into east and west regions of Gangnamdaero, but the features of both sides do not show any significant differences between them. The immediate roadsides are lined with fashion-related stores, fast food shops, coffee shops, mobile phone stores, cosmetics stores, and banks.

The rental price of the stores on Gangnamdaero as the representative backwash trade area is so high that most stores' sales amount cannot go beyond the monthly payment of rent, but the opening of the store itself plays a role of brand's antenna store comparable to the antenna stores in Myeong-dong[37].

3) Myeongil-dong Trade Area

Myeongil-dong trade area, which became a vibrant commercial district with the development of large apartment complex in 1970s and 1980s, began to be highlighted as one of the major trade areas in Seoul with the launching of Metro Subway Line 5. This class A trade area is crowded with 8 schools including Sungduk Girls Middle and High School[38].

Around Myeongill subway stop on Line 5, 4,900 apartments in Amsa and Myeongil district are planned to be rebuilt. When the redevelopment is completed, the number of households is to increase to 5,700. It is expected that the level of consumption will rise and that advancement of trade area and the change of business types will follow the trends of the area, and that the demand population of the area is to increase. This area is a typical neighborhood trade area since the main customers are housewives, and it has relatively a low flux of floating population which consists of people in 10s through 40s[39].

III. Research Methods

This study selects the representative trade areas in Seoul, which are Myeong-dong trade area[40], Gangnam Station area that attracts young people[41], and Myeongil-dong trade area[42] located around apartment complex, and examines the features of apparel stores. The first-floor stores of target buildings are designated as the building units in the map[43].

The survey, based on the Korean Fashion Brand Annual of 2005/2006[44], was performed on types of apparel, age of the target group, and price in the apparel stores.

To research the age of target group the standard ages are used as mentioned in the Korean Fashion Brand Annual of 2005/2006. In ranging target ages of brands, some brands have a wide range, and others have a narrow range. And there are some overlapped ranges of target ages for some brands, but this study, considering it as characteristics and differentiation of the brands, tries to analyse the ages as they appear.

This study has sorted out the information of apparel-related stores based on the Korean Fashion Brand Annual of 2005/2006 and by making inquiries at nearby real estate' offices and searching the Google or Naver data bases for the information of stores not listed in it. The graphics are drawn based on target age, the type and price. The method of analysis of affinitive apparel stores includes the frequency of the left next-door stores and the right

next-door stores with the criterion store in the center since there are not many number.

IV. Results and Discussion

1. Myeong-dong Apparel Trade Area

Myeong-dong trade area as a Central Business District has 137 apparel stores and 186 other stores. As shown in <Figure 1>, with young people in 10 and 20s as main customers, the apparel stores for customers in 10s through 30s are widely spread, which show that most of the apparel stores are for customers in 10s and 20s.
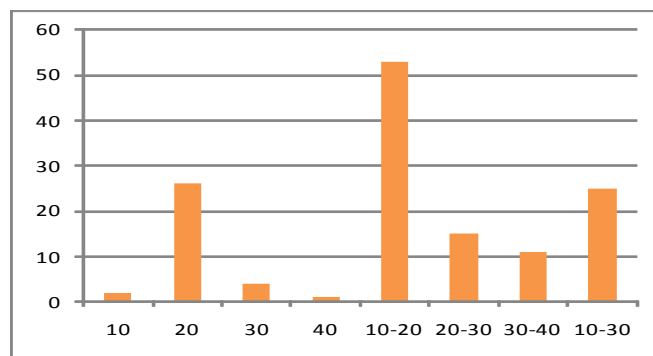
As shown in <Figure 2>, casual wear stores are 43, which tops all other kinds of stores. Next, 27 stores deal with various items; 15 stores are for sports wears; 13 stores sell formal wears; 12 stores deal with formal-casual wears; 11 stores sell jeans; and 9 stores are for underwear. This result supports the Park and Shin's[45] suggestion that the consumer's store patronage for the casual wear is considered as brand stores rather than department stores.

Compared to the past trend that so many stores have dealt with women's formal wears, nowadays casual wear stores are in the mainstream.
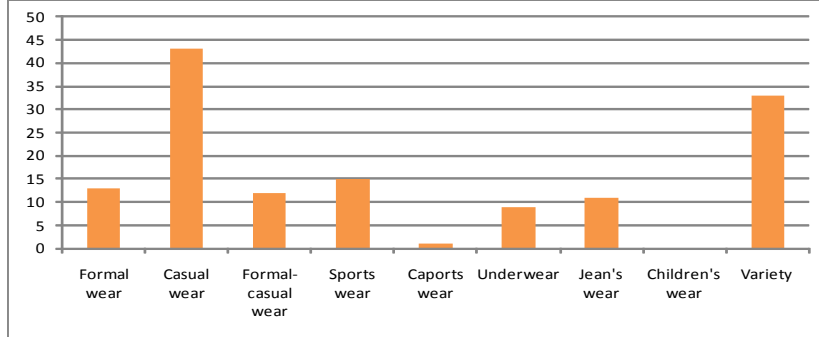
This is because mega-size stores like Migliore have opened and began to sell casual wears while the stores for high-priced, women's formal wears have moved to Gangnam area. In addition, this reflects a changing trend that customers preference for the casual wear is getting bigger in their lives.

The following are results of the analysis that sorted out the types of apparel in affinity stores. According to types of apparel for next-door Stores in <Table 1>, Casual wear stores' next doors are 13 left stores and 12 right stores dealing with the casual wear and 6 left stores and 3 right stores with the sports wear. Likewise, formal-casual wear stores' next doors tend to locate 5 left stores and 6 right stores with the same type of the wear and sometimes variety stores. Formal wear stores' next doors are mostly formal wear stores, and often 2 formal-casual or casual wear stores or 2 variety apparel stores are located around the formal wear stores.

However, there is only one underwear store that comes next to underwear store. It is the same in the case of sports wear store. There is no jean's wear store next to the jean wear store. In Myeong-dong trade area, the stores' cluster depends on the types of apparel they sell. The stores for formal, formal-casual, and

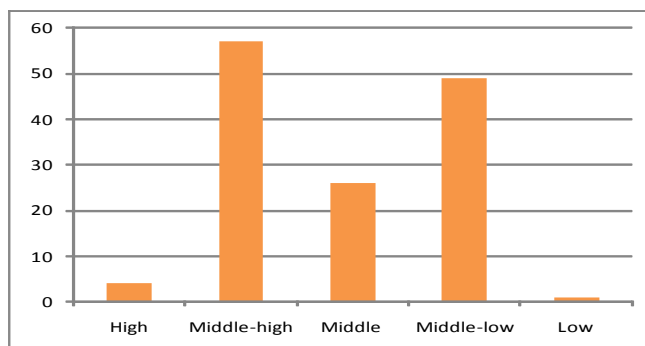<Figure 1> Age Range of Items of Myeong-dong Apparel Stores

<Figure 2>Types of Apparel in Myeong-dong Apparel Stores

<Table 1>Types of Apparel for Next-door Stores in Myeong-dong Apparel Stores

Type＼Type＼Affinity		Formal Wear	Casual Wear	Formal-Caual Wear	Sports Wear	Caports Wear	Under-wear	Jean's Wear	Children's Wear	Variety	Total
Formal Wear	Left Store	3	1	2				1			7
	Right Store	2	1				1			3	7
Casual Wear	Left Store	1	13	2	6		1			3	26
	Right Store	2	12	1	3	1	2	3		3	27
Formal-Caual Wear	Left Store		1	5			1			1	8
	Right Store	2	2	6	1		1				12
Sports Wear	Left Store		4		1			1		2	8
	Right Store										0
Under-wear	Left Store	1	2	1			1				5
	Right Store		1	1			1			1	4
Jean's Wear	Left Store		3		1						4
	Right Store	1			1					4	6
Variety	Left Store	3	3				1	4		9	20
	Right Store		3	1	2					9	15

<Figure 3>Price Range of Apparel in Myeong-dong Apparel Stores

casual wears tend to locate affinity, but stores for sports, underwear, and jean's wear do not. And variety stores are also located in proximity, sometimes with four casual and jean's wear stores around them. Therefore, affinity of apparel stores depends on the types of apparel they sell.

As shown in <Figure 3>, the price ranges of the items in the apparel stores are as follows: the most items are in the range of mid-high price; items in the mid-low price range are the next most; and the middle price range comes the last. This result shows that, instead of the stores of high priced items, the casual wear stores for young people are widespread in Myeong-dong, but in terms of price, mid-high priced items are dominant because the area has mostly the stores of imported brands or famous national brands.

2. Gangnam Station Trade area

The trade area of Gangnam Station accommodates only 13 apparel stores and 117 other stores. As shown in <Figure 4>, there are 5 stores with the dominant customers in 10s and 20s; 3 stores with those in 20s; also 3 stores for the customers in 20s and 30; and 2 stores for those in 10s to 30s. Most of these

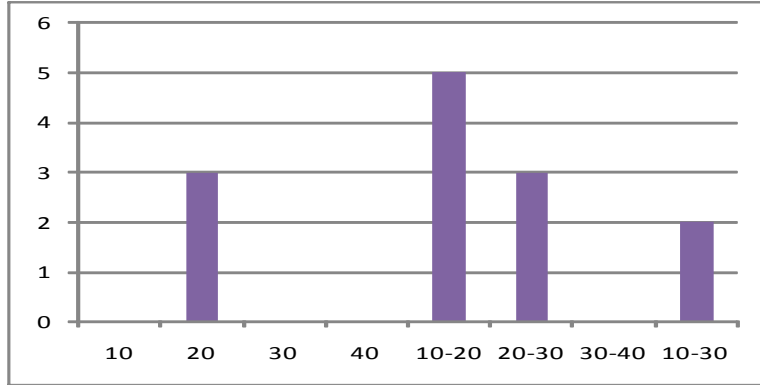stores sell apparel for young people.

Casual wear stores such as Teeni Weeni, Hubu, Giodano, WHOAU, and Eigen Post are dominant in this apparel trade area. There is only one store for men's shirts, formal wear, sports wear and variety. A Nike sports wear store occupies quite a big space <Figure 5>. However, there are not a caports store, a underwear store, a jean's wear store, and a children's wear store.

As restaurants, cosmetic shops, stationery stores, opticians are scattered around Gangnam Station trade area, this area is a place for enjoying tea and beverage because it is also surrounded by offices, private institutes, and restaurants.
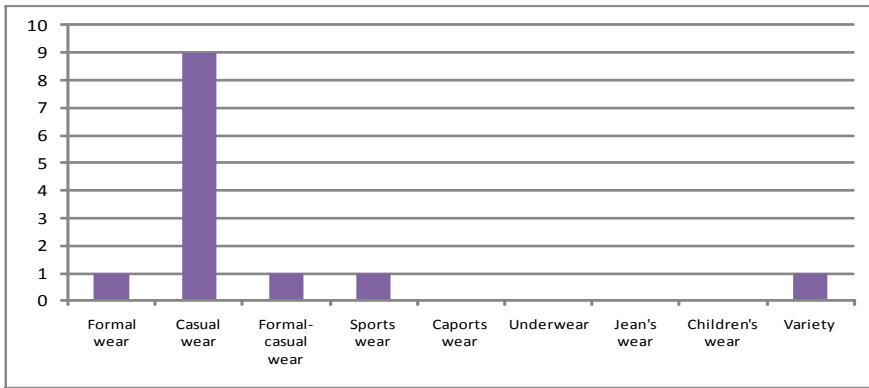
In terms of item's price, the stores for items in the range of mid-low price are 6, which tops the others. Among other stores, 3 stores sell items in the range of mid-low or middle price; one store sells items in the range of low price <Figure 6>. The reason the stores for items in the range of mid-low price are dominant is that this area is a backwash area that attracts young people. It is also because the large-size stores for casual brands work as antenna shops.

3. Myeongil-dong Trade Area

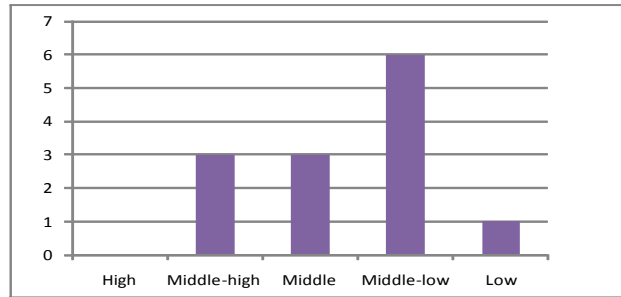Myeongil-dong trade area has 28 apparel

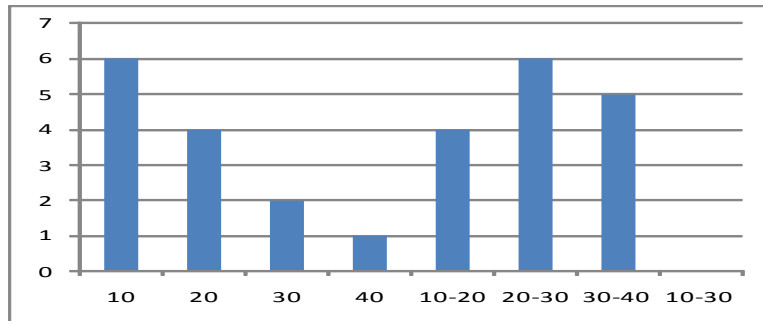<Figure 4> Age Range of Items of Gangnam Apparel Stores

<Figure 5>Types of Apparel in Gangnam Apparel Stores

<Table 2> Types of Apparel for Next-door Stores in Gangnam Apparel Stores

Type / Affinity		Formal Wear	Casual Wear	Formal-Caual Wear	Sports Wear	Caports Wear	Under-wear	Jean's Wear	Children's Wear	Variety	Total
Formal Wear	Left Store										0
	Right Store				1						1
Sports Wear	Left Store	1									1
	Right Store										0

<Figure 6> Price Range of Items in Gangnam Apparel Stores

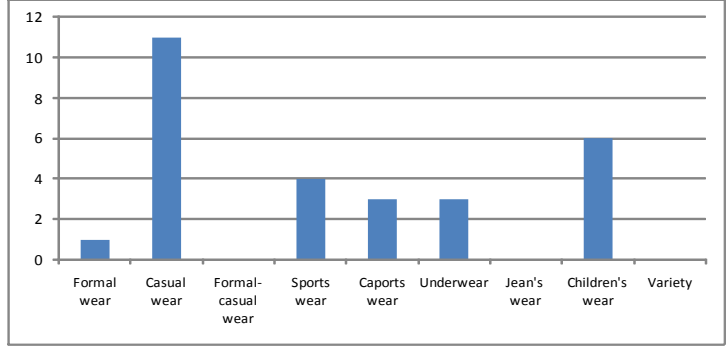<Figure 7> Age Range of Items of Myeongil-dong Apparel Stores

stores and 84 other stores. As shown in <Figure 7>, there are 6 stores for customers in 20s and 30s; also six stores for the customers in 10s; 5 stores for the customers in 30s and 40s; 4 stores for the customers in 10s and 20s; and four stores for the customers in 20s. Since there are also some stores for the customers in 30s, it can be said that this area enjoys various age groups.

While Myeong-dong's and Gangnam's apparel trade areas are dominated by the stores for the customers in 10s and 20s, Myeongil-dong trade area has various apparel stores for the customers in various age range from the surrounding apartment complex. Therefore, the characteristics of stores' location and grouping in this area can be considered as a typical neighborhood trade area.

The analysis of apparel stores in Myeongil-dong trade area shows that although there are casual wear stores in the mainstream, various other stores are also located in the area: children's outfits, sports and caports wears, and underwear. However, the jean's wear store and the variety store are not located in this area. While Myeong-dong and Gangnam Station trade areas do not have any children's apparel store, this area has 6 of them. In the study of Chung and Rhee[46], married female consumers prefer a convenience location to purchase the formal wear and the casual wear than unmarried ones. The neighborhood trade area which reflects the purchase characteristics of the apartment residents shows the characteristics of neighborhood apparel stores <Figure 8>.
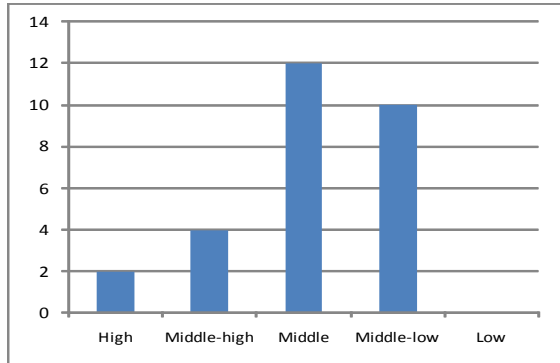
Casual wear stores are mostly located next to the casual wear stores. 2 sports wear stores, 1 casual wear store and 1 underwear store are located next to one sports wear store.4 Children's

<Figure 8> Types of Apparel in Myeongil-dong Apparel Stores

<Table 3>Types of Apparel for Next-door Stores in Myeongil-dong Apparel Stores

Type / Type / Affinity		Formal Wear	Casual Wear	Formal-Caual Wear	Sports Wear	Caports Wear	Under-wear	Jean's Wear	Children's Wear	Variety	Total
Casual Wear	Left Store		2		1						3
	Right Store		2				1		1		4
Sports Wear	Left Store				1		1				2
	Right Store	1			1						2
Under-wear	Left Store										0
	Right Store				1	1					2
Children's Wear	Left Store		2						2		4
	Right Store	1							2		3

<Figure 9>Price Range of Items in Myeongil-dong Apparel Stores

wear stores and 3 casual wear stores are located next to a sports wear store<Table 3>.

In this neighborhood trade area, the formal, formal-causal, jean wear and caports stores do not have other same type of the store next door. Therefore, the characteristics of this neighborhood trade area is that almost all the stores of different types of apparel are scattered evenly, except for a few adjunct stores.

Unlike the Myeong-dong and Gangnam Station apparel trade areas, the apparel's price ranges in the stores of Myeongil-dong apparel trade area are mostly in the middle-priced range. The second most is the mid-low range and the third most is the mid-high range. There are two stores in the range of high price. The overall price in this neighborhood apparel stores are distributed in all ranges except the low-ranged price <Figure 9>.

V. Conclusions

This study has been examined the Myeong-dong trade area which represents downtowns of Seoul, the Gangngam Station trade area which is located near bustling Gangnam subway stop, and Myeongil-dong is a residential area. The results of research are as follows:

Although the Myeong-dong trade area has high commercial value, casual zoning is in the mainstream, instead of the stores for high priced women's Apparel. The target customers are young people in 20s and 30s. Most items' prices fall into the middle range; the stores for mid-high priced items mostly dominates the area. As there are various types of Apparel except for children's, so are there many selected and variety stores that deal with various apparel. However, when next door store to

Myeong-dong apparel stores are analysed, the stores for casual wear, formal-casual wear and formal wear are affinity so that customers can easily compare the items and prices. However, stores for sports wear, underwear, and jean wears tend to locate different types of apparel next to door. So it can be said that affinity of apparel stores depends on the types of apparel they sell.

In the Gangnam trade area which attracts so many young people, apparel stores and various stores such as coffee shops and restaurants are mixed together so that they can enjoy eating, drinking and sightseeing. Maybe a underground mall of the Gangnam station where is cheaper rent has many apparel stores for the young. This point should be researched for the location type of apparel trade areas in the future. Unlike the Myeong-dong area, this trade area is mostly dominated by the stores of the middle priced casual wear. But there is no cluster of same types of stores, except for only one apparel store located next to a apparel store. This is because the large stores of casual wear for young customers are operated as the antenna shops in the area.

Myeongil-dong trade area with the residents from the nearby apartment complex enjoys not only various age ranges but accommodates various apparel stores. Casual wear stores and children's stores tend to be affinity even though few stores. These results also show differences from other trade areas' grouping of the stores. The items of apparel stores are mostly in the range of middle price. As this trade area is much smaller and more various than other trade areas, there is no tendency of grouping of the same type of stores. Therefore, it can be said that the variety of stores' grouping depends on the location of trade area.

It might be helpful for the apparel retail manager to consider the phenomenon of clustering stores of women's formal wear, casual wear, or formal-casual wear. That helps customers compare and purchase products easily and also plays a role of attraction to mass customers. However, in some stores dealing with jeans wear, sports wear and underwear, it is reasonable to keep in mind that other kinds of stores next door is more possible than the same types of stores.

Finally, this study examines only three trade areas in Seoul shown in a book of trading map. However, current apparel stores might have been changed in terms of number, types and locations, so the difference of apparel stores should be understood by the following study. Besides, further studies are needed to see if there exists the same tendency of the apparel stores in any other trade areas to help the retail manager find out a good apparel store location.

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