

A Study on Strategies for Activating Cultural Welfare Services Based on Museum Exhibitions -Focusing on Major International Museums-

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Abstract

This study analyzes the implementation of cultural welfare services in museum exhibition spaces, examines the relationship between exhibition environments and cultural welfare through case studies of major international museums, and proposes strategies for enhancing these services. The analysis of the British Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Louvre Museum, based on exhibition-space configuration, accessibility, digital environments, and program operations, reveals that multilingual services, flexible admission policies, support for people with disabilities, and digital services are key components of cultural welfare. Based on these findings, this study proposes expanding personalized online services, developing community-linked exhibition spaces, and strengthening experience-oriented programs. The significance of this study lies in redefining museum exhibition spaces as core platforms for realizing cultural welfare.

Keyword : museum exhibition spaces, cultural welfare, cultural accessibility, exhibition environments, participatory exhibitions

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Necessity of the Study

Modern museums are transitioning from traditional artifact repositories into participatory cultural spaces that enhance public quality of life and expand cultural access. Although recent efforts have incorporated visitor-centered designs and digital services, systematic research on how exhibition spaces concrete realization of cultural welfare remains limited. Particularly lacking are empirical, case-based studies examining how exhibition environments foster broader cultural enjoyment, creating an urgent need for practical guidelines. Accordingly, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of cultural welfare services within museum exhibition spaces, examining advanced international cases to evaluate the interaction between exhibition design and cultural accessibility. Ultimately, this research proposes practical strategies

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Received(May 24, 2026), Review Result(1st: June 15, 2026), Accepted(August 7, 2026), Published(August 31, 2026)



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to revitalize cultural welfare and provides foundational insights for establishing systematic cultural policies

1.2 Research Methods and Analytical Framework

This study combines a literature review and case studies of three major global institutions—the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Louvre Museum—to analyze cultural welfare services in museum exhibition spaces. Based on a theoretical framework established through literature analysis, the implementation of cultural welfare was evaluated across four key indicators: exhibition space composition, accessibility, digital environment, and program operation. By comparing and synthesizing these cases, this research categorizes how exhibition environments contribute to expanding visitors' cultural enjoyment.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 The Concept and Significance of Cultural Welfare

Cultural welfare is a composite concept that combines “culture” and “welfare”; it is an expanded concept of welfare that has emerged amid changes in social structure and growing cultural needs. It is understood as a concept that goes beyond economic and social welfare to aim for the improvement of cultural quality of life [1]. In Korea, policy discussions on cultural welfare began in the 1980s within the discourse on the welfare state, but initially, it was treated only as a limited subset of cultural policy. Subsequently, as the discourse on “quality of life” spread in the mid-1990s, the importance of cultural participation was emphasized, and since the 2000s, policies have taken concrete form through initiatives such as cultural vouchers and support programs for arts and culture education. However, despite this policy expansion, the concept of cultural welfare still tends to remain confined to a supply-centered perspective focused on “providing opportunities for cultural enjoyment.” In other words, there is a relative lack of discussion regarding the quality of cultural experiences or the formation of meaning during the participation process. Furthermore, there is a tendency to limit cultural welfare to “policies supporting marginalized groups.” This limitation leads to cultural welfare being perceived as selective welfare rather than a universal right. While the Korea Culture and Tourism Institute defines cultural welfare as a social effort aimed at improving individuals’ quality of life and fostering creativity, it has not provided sufficient concrete discussion on how it is actually formed and operates. Therefore,

cultural welfare needs to be reinterpreted as an expanded concept that encompasses the quality of cultural experiences, the process of participation, and the spaces and environments that facilitate them [2]. In particular, there is a need for analysis on the role that experiences in cultural spaces, such as museums, play in the realization of cultural welfare.

2.2 The Concept and Functions of Museums

Museums preserve artifacts—traces of the past—as well as contemporary artworks and present them to visitors by assigning them new meanings. Accordingly, museums no longer perform a single function but fulfill a diverse range of social, educational, cultural, and administrative roles. While museums traditionally focused primarily on research, collection, preservation, and exhibition, they are now placing greater emphasis on educational functions [3]. In other words, the museum strives to achieve its educational goals by sparking the interest and curiosity of the general public and helping them develop their skills [4]. Ultimately, museums perform the fundamental functions of collecting, preserving, researching, exhibiting, and educating, and to this end, they engage in public service, management and administration, and special programs [5].

The various functions of a museum are not mutually exclusive but form an organic system in which these functions overlap. The paradigm of museums is shifting from an artifact-centered approach to an experience-centered one, from a preservation-centered approach to an education-centered one, and from a provider-centered approach to a user-centered one. This signifies that museums are transforming from mere exhibition venues into cultural platforms centered on the visitor experience. However, despite these changes, we need to move beyond simply viewing the museum's functions as an expanded role and engage in a discussion about how exhibition spaces and services operate in an integrated manner centered on the visitor experience. An approach that reinterprets the functions of museums from the perspective of cultural welfare is now required.

2.3 Museum Exhibition Spaces and Cultural Welfare

Museum exhibition spaces are experiential environments that serve as the core where visitors engage with artifacts and shape their cultural experiences. Recently, the introduction of digital technologies such as interactive media, AR, and VR has further expanded the functions of these spaces. These cutting-edge digital technologies encourage active visitor participation and create new exhibition environments.

Furthermore, today's exhibition spaces demonstrate their potential as important mediating spaces for

realizing cultural welfare for the public. In particular, facilities for people with disabilities, multilingual guidance, and the provision of digital information are key elements that enhance cultural accessibility [6]. However, existing studies have generally focused only on the technological advancements or design elements of exhibition spaces. Consequently, there is a lack of analysis regarding how exhibition spaces specifically contribute to the realization of cultural welfare. Additionally, theoretical discussions linking visitor experiences within exhibition spaces to cultural enjoyment, active participation, and social integration remain insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to reinterpret museum exhibition spaces as key mediating structures that drive the realization of cultural welfare. In conclusion, research is required to empirically analyze the correlation between exhibition spaces and cultural welfare in order to substantiate this claim.

3. An Analysis of Exhibition Spaces in Major Overseas Museums from a Cultural and Welfare Perspective

3.1 Exhibition Policies on Cultural Welfare at Major Museums Abroad

From a cultural welfare perspective, museums are expanding accessibility to ensure that people from diverse social backgrounds can enjoy cultural experiences, and they are implementing various cultural welfare policies centered on exhibition spaces and visitor services. Major museums abroad operate multilingual exhibition guides, online information services, diverse admission policies, and support programs for visitors with disabilities to enhance cultural accessibility for the public. They play a crucial role in expanding visitor participation in culture and increasing opportunities for cultural enjoyment, with a focus on exhibition spaces. This study selects the British Museum in the UK, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the US, and the Louvre Museum in France-all leading international museums-as case studies to analyze the characteristics of their exhibition operations and visitor services from a cultural welfare perspective.

3.2 Case Studies of Exhibition Management at Major Museums Abroad

3.2.1 The British Museum, UK

The British Museum in London, UK, is a world-renowned institution that exhibits a diverse range of cultural heritage and expands public access to culture. In terms of language services, it provides comprehensive exhibition descriptions in six languages, including French, English, and Japanese [7][8]. In

the online services sector, the museum has established a website that provides exhibition information, visitor guides, and ticket and merchandise sales. This helps visitors from around the world check information in advance and prepare for their visit systematically. Regarding admission policies, the museum maintains a basic free admission system, charging separate fees only for special exhibitions. This flexible free admission policy lowers economic barriers, allowing everyone to enjoy culture, and serves as a prime example of cultural welfare. In terms of the visitor experience, the museum enhances understanding by strategically placing exhibition audio guides and professional docents throughout the galleries. In particular, the museum demonstrates practical consideration for people with mobility challenges and disabilities by allowing guide dogs for the visually impaired and providing face masks. Additionally, it operates tailored welfare programs by segmenting its target audience into at least four categories, including adults, families, teachers, and people with disabilities. Specifically, the museum realizes comprehensive cultural welfare through family audio tours, free guided tours, children's activity kits, and teacher training programs.

3.2.2 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, as the world's largest art institution, actively operates visitor-centered exhibition services [9]. First, in terms of language services, it provides comprehensive exhibition information in a total of 10 languages, including English, French, and Spanish. This policy enhances cultural accessibility for visitors from diverse national and cultural backgrounds. Regarding online services, the museum's website features a "Calendar" system that provides comprehensive information on upcoming exhibitions and events. This proactive information service helps visitors plan their museum visits in a long-term and systematic manner. The admission policy adopts a donation-based fee structure to lower economic barriers to entry, and visitors who make a donation are presented with a unique badge. At the same time, the museum offers twice-weekly evening openings and discounted admission services, thereby expanding the available visiting hours and economic options for a diverse range of visitors. In terms of visitor services, a digital guide system has been established, and it is provided free of charge to specific student groups and visitors with visual or hearing impairments. In addition, maps and guidebooks are provided, and customized accessibility facilities-including hearing assistance systems-are fully equipped to accommodate vulnerable groups. Furthermore, while maintaining a pleasant exhibition environment through a policy requiring all personal belongings to be stored in the cloakroom, the museum allows strollers to enter, thereby welcoming families.

3.2.3 Louvre Museum, France

The Louvre Museum in Paris, France, is the world's most-visited cultural institution and operates a wide range of programs for children, people with disabilities, and others. In terms of language services, it provides exhibition descriptions in three languages-French, English, and Japanese-to assist international visitors [10]. Regarding online services, the museum's website provides exhibition information, ticket reservations, and souvenir sales to help visitors prepare for their visit in advance. The admission policy applies a tiered pricing system based on time slots-specifically around 3:00 PM and on Sundays-to efficiently distribute visitor demand. At the same time, it offers generous free admission benefits to holders of international teaching certificates, art majors, youth under 18, people with disabilities, and the unemployed. This inclusive admission exemption policy contributes to the realization of a substantive cultural welfare system by lowering barriers for economically disadvantaged groups. In terms of visitor services, exhibition audio guides and certified docents are strategically placed throughout the venue to help visitors gain a deeper understanding of the exhibits. In particular, the museum places a strong emphasis on programs for children, actively operating art experience workshops for children aged 4 and older. Furthermore, the museum ensures accessibility for vulnerable groups by providing sign language interpretation programs for the hearing impaired and tactile exhibition spaces for the visually impaired. As a result, the Louvre Museum is implementing multifaceted welfare services to enable the general public to enjoy culture, transcending the barriers of age and disability.

3.3 Results of the Case Study Analysis

An analysis of major museums overseas reveals that, from a cultural welfare perspective, exhibition spaces and visitor services exhibit the following characteristics [11]. These details are summarized in [Table 1].

[Table 1] Comparison of Cultural Welfare Services in the Exhibition Spaces of Major International Museums

Category	British Museum	Metropolitan Museum of Art	Louvre Museum
Exhibition Space Layout	Traditional exhibitions as the primary focus, with supplementary hands-on programs	Large-scale exhibitions with digital guides.	Traditional exhibitions hands-on workshops
Language Accessibility	Available in approximately 6 languages	Available in approximately 10 languages (Highest)	Available in approximately three languages
Online Services	Basic information and reservation services	Long-term schedules and program information	Focused on providing information and handling reservations

Admission Policy	Free admission; special exhibitions require a fee	Donation-based admission	Time-of-day pricing
Support for People with Disabilities	Service dogs permitted; basic support provided	Digital guides and assistance systems	Active support through sign-language interpretation and tactile exhibitions
Program Operations	Family, Education, and Hands-On Programs	A wide range of educational and event programs	Child-centered experiential programs are thriving
Features of Cultural Welfare	Accessibility-focused	Focus on Service Diversity	Experience- and education-focused

The key cultural welfare elements identified in at least two of the museums analyzed are language accessibility, admission policies, and support for people with disabilities. Based on these findings, cultural welfare services at overseas museums can be categorized into three types: accessibility-focused, digitally enhanced, and experience/education-focused. Among these, language accessibility and admission policies are universal elements, while digital services and experiential programs emerged as factors that differentiate individual institutions. This demonstrates that museum exhibition spaces serve as multifaceted platforms that fulfill cultural welfare functions in diverse ways. However, despite these achievements, cultural welfare services in modern museums still face several distinct limitations. First, current welfare services remain limited to providing visitor convenience, lacking active welfare initiatives that utilize the exhibition spaces. Second, while multilingual and digital services have expanded in scope, there is a lack of content that fosters cultural empathy. Third, while services for vulnerable groups do exist, the incorporation of universal design from the initial stages of exhibition planning remains insufficient. Therefore, museum cultural welfare must transcend the existing passive dimension of merely improving physical and institutional accessibility. In conclusion, a shift in perception is required to transform and expand the exhibition space itself into an active, core platform for realizing cultural welfare.

4. Strategies for Promoting Cultural Welfare through the Use of Museum Exhibition Spaces

4.1 Expanding Online Cultural Welfare Based on Visitor Characteristics

Despite their quantitative growth, online services offered by modern museums still face limitations in that they remain focused primarily on providing information and guidance. As a result, these services have not yet expanded into personalized cultural welfare services that reflect the diverse characteristics and individual needs of visitors. Therefore, museums must transition into “open museums” by developing data-driven personalized content, E-learning programs, and online exhibitions.

4.2 Realizing Cultural Welfare through Landmark Exhibition Spaces

Meanwhile, while museum exhibition spaces serve as cultural symbols of a city, existing discussions tend to focus primarily on tourism and economic benefits. As exemplified by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in Spain, cultural facilities can be key drivers of urban regeneration and transformation of the local cultural environment. However, if these achievements remain centered solely on attracting out-of-town tourists, it becomes difficult to translate them into tangible cultural welfare for local residents.

4.3 Expanding Experience-Centered Exhibition Programs

Museums must become community-based cultural welfare platforms by connecting with local communities and creating spaces for everyday use. Finally, the experiential exhibitions currently on the rise often stop at merely inducing curiosity and one-time consumption, failing to translate into welfare value. Contemporary exhibitions, based on interdisciplinary convergence, need to incorporate empathy, communication, and healing-key functions from a cultural welfare perspective. In conclusion, we must expand storytelling and technology-based participatory programs to transform exhibition spaces into venues for social connection [12].

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed approaches to implementing cultural welfare centered on exhibition spaces by examining case studies from major museums abroad and derived strategies for revitalization. The case analysis identified multilingual services, online information provision, flexible admission policies, and support for people with disabilities as key factors. This demonstrates that museums overseas are expanding public access to culture and strengthening their welfare functions by focusing on exhibition spaces. However, existing museum cultural welfare programs still face limitations, as they remain focused primarily on simple visitor convenience and the provision of fragmented services. In particular, there is a lack of exhibition design that utilizes the exhibition space itself as a core medium or fosters visitor experiences and social connections. Accordingly, to revitalize cultural welfare, this study proposed, first, the expansion of customized online cultural welfare services that reflect visitor characteristics. Second, it argues that museums should strengthen their public welfare functions by establishing landmark exhibition spaces closely linked to local communities. Third, it proposed expanding interactive and

experiential exhibition programs that go beyond one-time consumption to deepen public participation and engagement. These strategies transform museums into active public cultural welfare spaces that facilitate social communication, healing, and community building.

In conclusion, an integrated approach that incorporates inclusivity from the early stages of exhibition planning is required, and empirical research on user experiences must continue in the future.

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