

Variations between In-house and Independent Curatorial Procedures

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ABSTRACT

Curators bridge the gap between artworks and audiences and are vital for promoting cultural and artistic activities. Their curatorial plan determines the subjectivity and comprehensiveness of a given exhibition and its subsequent success. Recently, how exhibitions are staged has changed considerably, contributing to the flexibility afforded to curators for exhibition planning. Therefore, the present study classified curators into in-house and independent types and conducted in-depth interviews with six experienced curators to explore their curatorial experiences, exhibition plans, promotional strategies, and exhibition models. A total of 41 unit terms were extracted from the main points, events, and ideas identified in the interview transcripts and subsequently grouped into 10 exhibition factors. Subsequently, variations between individual exhibition factors and various exhibition factor pairs between the in-house and independent curatorial procedures were discussed. The results showed that the in-house curatorial procedure spans the early, middle, and late stages of development, which involves a variety of exhibition factors. By contrast, independent curators do not follow the same pattern of development. In-house curators undertake curate exhibitions in accordance with the exhibition themes determined by their institutions and the research directions and organizational missions of those institutions. Independent curators determine exhibition content, planning, and overall importance and collaborate with artists to determine how exhibits should be created. Moreover, independent curators do not receive institutional funding, and thus seek financial resources while establishing the exhibition mechanism and preparing exhibits with artists. Despite limited funding, independent curators apply greater ingenuity and flexibility to exhibition planning than do their in-house counterparts. This research contributes to curatorial planning and the development of curatorial processes in relation to diversity and relevance.

Keywords: In-house curator, Independent curator, Curatorial process, Interview method

1. INTRODUCTION

The word “exhibit” evolved from “display.” In Western museums and art galleries, exhibits are held to display items of interest for public consumption and to represent the “interpretative” and “meaningful” aspects of such items (Han, 2000). Generally, an exhibition involves the planning and design of a display space. Museums typically use exhibit items, signs, and videos to deliver knowledge about artworks on display for visitors (Luh, 1997). One of the most effective approaches for enabling viewers to engage with an exhibit is to impart knowledge about the exhibit through visual means or by providing information on the characteristics, form, or sometimes sound of each part of the exhibit (Lin, 2003). Moreover, many contemporary artworks adopt the form of new media art such as video art, concept art, socially engaged art, and performance art. These forms of new media art enable curators to diversify the presentation of exhibitions.

However, their application poses a challenge to exhibit designers (Graham & Cook, 2010).

Curation is sometimes perceived as a form of social practice that connects people, objects, and environmental structures in wider society (Kreps, 2003). Davies (2010) asserted that curation protects the fundamental value of creations and is the most complicated job in the art industry. Exhibition planning involves preserving and maintaining collections of artwork while allowing viewers to explore the artistic expression of the works, thereby engaging audiences with the philosophies of the artists in question and the rationale behind their works.

The etymology of “curator” dated back to the sixteenth century. The word originated from the Latin *curare* (to take care) and refers to a person who cares for the soul. A curator is responsible for caring for artworks housed in museums (Szeemann, 2001). Previously, in Western muse-

ums and art galleries, the main duties of a curator were conserving, maintaining, and managing art collections. However, the role of the curator has gradually shifted from guardian of museum collections to overseer of exhibitions. A curator requires artistic sensibilities and the ability to work independently, implement exhibition plans, and coordinate the administrative tasks involved in such plans. In addition, a curator should be able to judiciously connect and disconnect coherent and incoherent ideas and actions in spatial and temporal terms (Norton-Westbrook, 2015).

The job title “curator” varies between countries; for example, it is *gakugeiin* in Japan (Lin, 2005a), “keeper” in the United Kingdom, and *conservateur* in France. *Conservateur* originates from the Latin word *conservare* (to maintain or hold) and refers to the job title, “researcher” (Chang, 2006). The following definition of *conservare* is in *Dictionnaire de l'Administration Française* (a French dictionary published in 1862): a public servant tasked with overseeing a museum, library, or other public sector organization (Octobre, 1999).

The Chinese word for curator, *tse jan ren*¹, was first used in Taiwan in 1998 when the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art (Taiwan’s first national-grade fine arts museum) hosted the first International Chinese Art Curator Conference (Lin, 2005a). This global event introduced the role of curator and concept of curation in Taiwan (the following year the museum hosted another international conference, the title of which also included “curator.” The conference was called Developing a New Network of Asian Art: An International Conference of Contemporary Asian Art Curatorship). In the same year, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum invited Nanjo Fumio, a Japanese curator, to organize the Taipei Biennial, an exhibition of contemporary art. Ever since, the museum has staged the event periodically, thereby increasing public awareness of the role of curators in exhibitions (Yang, Liu, & Lin, 2009).

Curation requires a curating organization (or curator), artists, and consumers (Lin, 2007). In Taiwan, the curation community has collaborated with artists since the 1990s (Lin, 2005b). To successfully organize exhibitions, curators typically work with artists who share the same characteristics or possess specific qualifications. The curator is vital to an exhibition and may serve as the exhibition’s narrator (Lin, 2005). Moreover, whereas previously exhibitions were traditionally planned through collective work and reviewer consensus, they are now mostly prepared by curators who coordinate and promote the art industry through professionalism and personal philosophies (Wang, 2015) and play a decisive role in the success of an exhibition project (Wang, 2015). Chou (2008) referred to the role of curator as a facilitator, mediator, visual anthropologist, and cultural agitator, which suggests that when implementing an exhibition plan, a curator serves as a viewer, artist, and contemporary art mediator. In summary, curators create understanding between audiences, museums, and artists (Siang, Lin, Huang, Hsiao, & Tsai, 2015). A competent curator should be able to popularize cultural and artistic exhibitions.

Existing spaces are increasingly being used for exhibitions as multiexhibition areas, public galleries, bases for artistic creation, artist villages, and international artist residences. Such drastic changes in how exhibitions are staged have prompted curators to conceive new ideas about exhibition planning. Through exchange with curators abroad and the reform of fine art history and contemporary art, Taiwan has housed works of contemporary art displayed in many forms such as collection exhibitions, biennial exhibitions, digital collection exhibitions, archive exhibitions, local art exhibitions, and arts district exhibitions. Furthermore, such works are infused with local cultural themes and current social issues and exhibited at art museums, commercial galleries, and artist villages. Therefore, the role

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of curator varies depending on the domain of the curator and curation partnership he or she engages in.

Lin (2005a) classified curators into the following three types: (1) in-house curator (a well-trained researcher who plans exhibitions based on the objectives of the museum, art museum, gallery, or private organization for which he or she works); (2) guest curator (originating from the 20th century system of modern art, a guest curator provides individualistic artistic ideas for various organizations and is also known as an independent curator); and (3) nomadic curator (one who is hired by organizations on a contractual basis). Based on this classification system, curators can be broadly divided into in-house and independent curators. An in-house curator plans exhibitions based on the research directions of the public or private organization for which he or she works, whereas an independent curator is hired by organizations on a contractual basis and stages exhibitions according to his or her interests.

Previously, in-house curators served as directors or researchers at museums, the organizational structures of which vary across different organizations. However, an exhibition is typically planned by the director, who oversees the delegation of tasks and personnel, and executed by a specialized team. Wu (2001) proposed that the main duty of an in-house curator is to research collections of works based on themes and compose exhibition proposals. Therefore, the curator is the most crucial figure in having a proposal approved by the top management and subsequently implemented.

Further, in the past most independent curators were artists, art critics, or art historians. The word “independent curator” first appeared in 1969 when curators began to embrace contemporary art and regard museums’ interpretations of art with skepticism. Among other curators,

Harald Szeemann and Walter Hopps left their respective organizations to become independent curators (Lin, 2009) and were among the earliest to work independently of any museums. Independent curators develop exhibition plans based on requests or submit proposals to plan and implement exhibitions of interest (Chou, 2008). The role of a curator depends on the budget and supporting staff at the curator’s disposal. Curators oversee exhibit selection, liaison with artists, venue selection, funding, contract signing, transportation, insurance, venue design and layout, promotion, publication, and contact with the media. Despite the title suggesting independence, independent curators do not undertake these tasks alone, but rather collaborate with institutional partners to establish planning teams, seek sponsors, and implement exhibition plans. Moreover, the lack of institutional influence enables independent curators to diversify exhibition content to provide information about current social events.

Han (2000) discussed what constitutes a successful exhibition project and proposed that planning should precede design. Planning is the most crucial step in exhibition development because it determines how an exhibition is interpreted and what it implies. The curator is responsible for exhibition planning and the role, life experience, and curatorial philosophy of the curator determine the subjectivity, comprehensiveness, and success of an exhibition. Moreover, how curation is conducted varies from between curators and learning about different curatorial ideas from different curators may promote the development of curatorial practices. However, research into different curator types is scarce.

To address the literature gap, this study conducted in-depth interviews to investigate the factors to be considered for in-house and independent curation and discussed the differences in curation style between curators. This study explored

only the curatorial procedures adopted by both curator types during the early stages of exhibition planning. The later planning stages, which involve exhibition design and the supervision of an exhibition's progress, are not discussed in this paper. In addition, because of labor, financial, and time constraints, only in-house and independent curators in Taiwan with expertise and experience in the curation of collections and contemporary art exhibitions were recruited in this study.

2. METHODOLOGY

Davies (2010) listed the elements of the exhibition planning process, indicating that the process is fundamentally creative and involves collaboration between the curator, his or her team, and the museum. Han (2000) divided the exhibition project development into early and late stages. The early stage involves formulating a plan for the exhibition and in the late stage, the administrative staff design the exhibition and ensure that it runs smoothly.

This study investigated and summarized the curatorial processes executed by in-house and independent curators, as well as the exhibition-related factors involved in these processes. Because these processes are essentially decision-making processes, and thus are difficult to quantify, this study collected data through semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews with in-house and independent curators to structure the respective curatorial decision-making models of both types and exhibition factors involved in these models.

The experimental procedure was conducted via the following three steps (Figure 1): (1) recruiting participants with at least 5 years' professional experience in curation and who had planned at least 10 cultural or creative art exhibitions, as well as presenting their respective profiles; (2) conduct in-depth interviews; and (3) perform thematic analysis with coding on interview data.

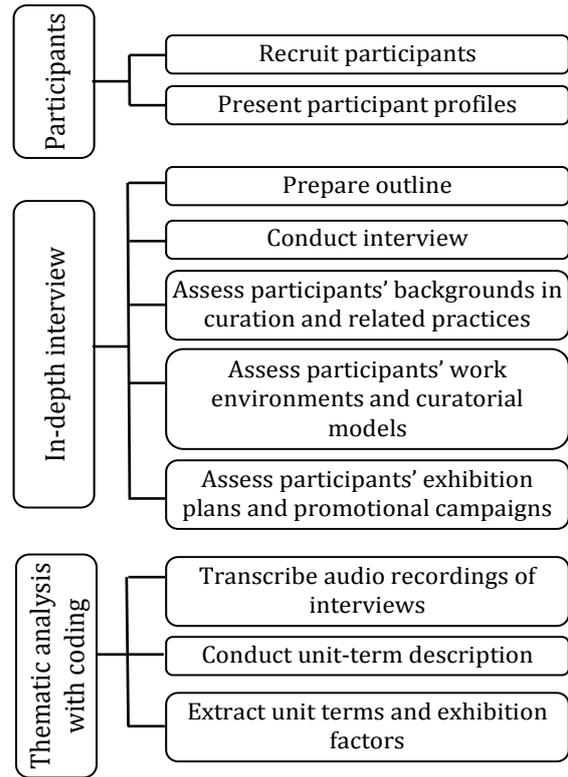


Figure 1. Research procedure

2.1 Participants

Independent (n = 4; Participants A–D) and in-house (n = 2; Participants E and F) curators with extensive experience in the curation of collections and contemporary art exhibitions were invited for interviews. The participants' profiles are given below.

- (1) Participant A. Experienced in theater, film, art criticism, and curation; co-founded VT Art-salon (an art studio based in Taipei); former chief curator at the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts; experience in liaison between Japanese and Taiwanese artists for exhibitions; enrolled in the artist-in-residence programs by the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, Location One, Tokyo Wonder Site, Openspace Bae, and the International Studio and Curatorial Program; current art director at Treasure Hill in Taipei.
- (2) Participant B. Curator since 2012 with experience of exhibition curation for cultural and

creative art and fine arts; current curator at the Pier-2 Art Center in Kaohsiung in charge of planning approximately 10 small exhibitions per year.

- (3) Participant C. Initially served as an executive planner of cultural and creative art exhibitions; curator since 2005 with experience of curation for cultural and creative art exhibitions at the Taiwan Design Expo, Kaohsiung Design Festival, various international design festivals, and art design seminars; currently is in charge of planning two large exhibitions per year.
- (4) Participant D. Initially served as a graphic designer and subsequently as an art designer at CommonWealth Magazine; founded a design firm in 1993 and currently runs the firm; has been planning exhibitions with a focus on local cultural and creative industries since 2011.
- (5) Participant E. Has experience in composing magazine articles, organizing forums and seminars, and curation; co-founded Outsiders Factory (a curation group based in Taipei); enrolled in an exchange program between Taiwanese and Vietnamese artists based in Germany called GlogauAIR and the Koganecho Artist-in-Residence Program in Japan; current chief curator at the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts.
- (6) Participant F. Began professional career at an event management firm in charge of educational communication and publication; experience working for the exhibition execution team at the New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum, eventually being promoted to the position of curator; current curator at Taipei Story House.

2.2 Interview Plan

Semi-structured in-depth interviews can be applied extensively in qualitative research and involve purposeful conversations (Burgess, 1984). For the interviews conducted in this study, an

outline composed of various themes was prepared and used as the basis for interview questions. The interviewer had some control over the interview but did not necessarily ask the questions in the predetermined order. Where necessary, the interviewer varied the order to encourage the interviewee to respond with further details.

2.3 Interview Outline

Because the role, life experiences, curatorial philosophy, and planning approach of a curator determine the success of an exhibition and the curator is responsible for developing the exhibition process in the early stages of an exhibition project, the interview outline (Table 1) was constructed based on the framework of the early stages of exhibition planning proposed by Han

Table 1. Interview outline

Sections	Topics
Curatorial experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many exhibitions does the schedule with your current affiliation involve? 2. What are some typical motivations for organizing an exhibition? How do these motivations relate to the research directions of your current affiliation? 3. When you begin planning an exhibition, how do you design the exhibition process?
Exhibition planning and promotion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which aspects of exhibition scheduling are influenced by funding amount? 2. How do you communicate with artists to ensure the creation of exhibits? 3. What is your major approach to promoting exhibitions?
Exhibition model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In your opinion, what constitutes a high-quality exhibition in terms of its levels of contribution and completeness? 2. Regarding the acquisition of exhibits, what are the differences between borrowing works from artists and cocreating works with artists according to an exhibition's theme? Do you feel that the current curatorial system in Taiwan is comprehensive? What drawbacks or limitations do you think the system has?

(2000). This framework outline comprises the following three sections: (1) curatorial experience (the participants were asked about their curation experience and responsibilities and the backgrounds and characteristics of their organizations); (2) exhibition planning and promotion (the participants were asked about exhibition planning to explore how exhibitions are promoted by various organizations); and (3) exhibition model (the participants were asked to share their opinions about the comprehensiveness of exhibition planning activities in Taiwan).

2.4 Data Analysis

In a qualitative study, researchers classify interviewee responses in accordance with the framework and theories adopted in the study. Interview data are normally transcribed verbatim before being analyzed (Lin, Yen, & Chen, 2005). All the participants in the present study were informed that their interviews were to be audio recorded for the preparation of verbatim transcripts. Only noticeable linguistic errors were eliminated from the transcripts and the accuracy of the transcripts was confirmed by the participants following transcription. Subsequently, a thematic analysis was conducted on the transcripts to identify exhibition factors in curatorial processes.

Unit-term description was applied for thematic analysis. This method uses chunks of unit terms to determine themes in relevant literature (Lin, 2007). After the transcripts had been reviewed several times, unit-term description was used to extract key points, events, and ideas from the transcripts and organize these segments into individual key statements. The statements were subsequently divided into relevant unit terms and the exhibition factors involved in curatorial processes were identified. Table 2 shows how coding was conducted based on unit-term description.

Table 2 shows that specific segments extracted from the transcript of Participant A's interview were organized into the following key statement:

Table 2. Example of coding based on unit-term description

Item	Coding result	
Transcript	...In our contemporary art community, young artists have created spaces of imagery in Shilin (a district of Taipei). These artists are mostly from National Taiwan University of Arts. Furthermore, student artist teams from Tainan National University of the Arts in southern Taiwan have followed suit, creating similar spaces in Tainan. In addition, young artists who manage old-fashioned mobile parks or VT Artsalon normally curate or conduct publication-related research simultaneously.	
Key statement	Operation units of young artists create works and curate or conduct publication-related research.	
Unit term	4. Operation unit	20. Cocreation
Exhibition factor	B. Exhibition mechanism	F. Exhibit creation

"Operation units of young artists create works and curate or conduct publication-related research." Two unit terms were extracted from this statement and classified under various exhibition factors to yield the code "a-4-20-BF-1," where "a" is Participant A, "4" and "20" are unit terms, "B" and "F" are the exhibition factors of "4" and "20," respectively, and "1" is the first sentence of the combination of "B" and "F."

Coding of all six participants' interview transcripts revealed 186 key statements, from which 319 unit terms were extracted. Subsequently, similar unit terms were combined to reduce this number to 41. The 41 unit terms were then classified under 10 exhibition factors. Table 3 tabulates unit terms based on exhibition factors.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses variations in exhibition planning procedures between in-house and independent curators based on the 10 exhibition factors, variations in the prioritization of the factors during exhibition planning, and interrelationships between the factors.

Table 3. Unit terms based on exhibition factors

No.	Unit term	Exhibition factor
1.	Number of exhibitions	A. Motivation for organizing an exhibition
2.	Responsibilities involved in exhibition planning	
3.	Public sector	B. Exhibition mechanism
4.	Operation unit	
5.	Art platform	
6.	Coherence	C. Exhibition content design
7.	Thematic meaning	
8.	Artistic context	
9.	Specific work categories	
10.	Neutrality	
11.	Purposeful control	
12.	Interactivity	D. Communication and interaction with artists
13.	Bridge	
14.	Creation through communication	
15.	Conversation initiation	
16.	Working with individuals from various profession fields	E. Exhibition plan formulation
17.	Organization	
18.	Connection with artists	
19.	Event staging	F. Exhibit creation methods
20.	Cocreation	
21.	Thematic exclusivity	
22.	Research value	G. Exhibition importance
23.	Helpfulness	
24.	Value	
25.	Ingenuity	
26.	Optimization of available resources	
27.	Artist-in-residence program	H. Exhibition exchange
28.	Artistic exchange	
29.	International exchange	
30.	Topicality	I. Connection with mass media
31.	Journalism	
32.	Art and culture magazines	
33.	Posters and promotional material	
34.	Promotional videos	
35.	Online communities	
36.	Fundraising	J. Funding
37.	Public or private sector organization	
38.	Resources at the team's disposal	
39.	Academic institutions	
40.	Partnership with private sector organizations	
41.	Original funding	

The success of an exhibition project depends on the plan developed in the project's early stage. The curator takes charge at this stage to determine how the exhibition is interpreted by consumers (Han, 2000). In the present study, the curatorial processes undertaken by in-house curators were compared based on Han's procedure for exhibition preparation (Figure 2).

Han's procedure (2000) for exhibition preparation is divided as follows: (1) motivation for organizing an exhibition; (2) early stage; (3) middle stage; and (4) late stage. The 10 exhibition factors were divided among these four stages.

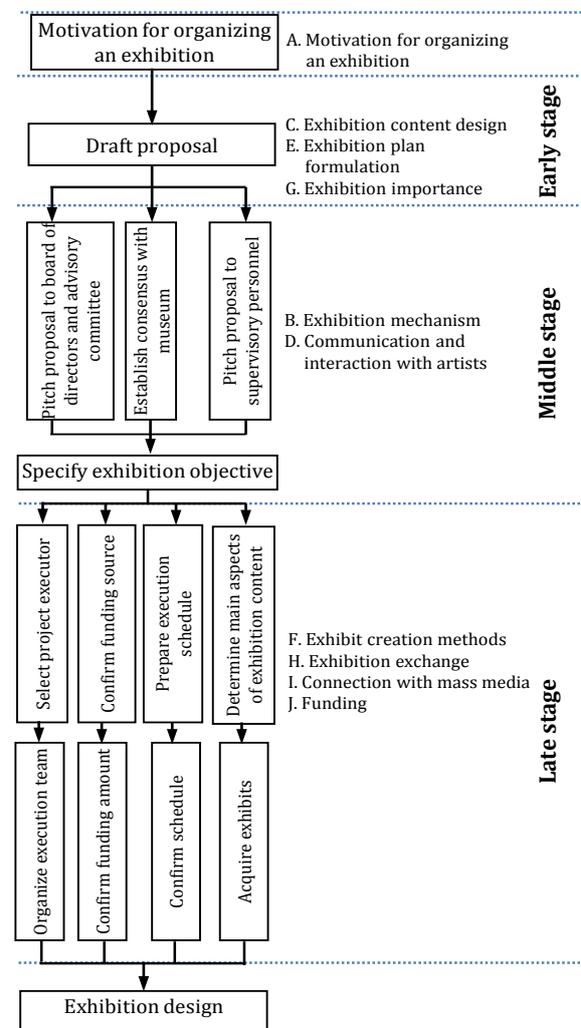


Figure 2. Exhibition preparation procedure and the factors involved (source: Han, 2000)

Exhibition Factor A (motivation for organizing an exhibition) was classified in the “motivation for organizing an exhibition” stage, which involves investigating the participants’ curatorial experience and responsibilities. The “early stage” involves drafting a proposal considering Exhibition Factors C (exhibition content design), E (exhibition plan formulation), and G (exhibition importance). The “middle stage” involves pitching the proposal to the boards of directors and supervisors (or advisory committee) and supervisory personnel for approval, thereby specifying the exhibition objective. Therefore, Exhibition Factor B (exhibition mechanism), which is related to the affairs of the institution responsible for the exhibition, was classified in the “middle stage.” In addition, Exhibition Factor D (communication and interaction with artists) was classified in the “middle stage” because it involves establishing a consensus within the museum, which enables the exhibition objective to be determined. Exhibition Factors F (style of exhibit creation), H (exhibition exchange), I (connection with mass media), and J (funding) were classified in the “late stage,” which involves designating an executor and organizing an execution team for an exhibition project, as well as determining the main aspects of the exhibition content, acquiring exhibits, preparing and confirming an execution schedule, and confirming the funding sources.

In the “motivation for organizing an exhibition” stage, the curatorial experience and responsibilities of the six participants (as detailed in Subsection 2.1) were discussed. All of the participants had over 5 years of professional experience in curation. One had worked as a curator for over 20 years. Participants A, B, and D curated 10–15 exhibitions per year, whereas Participants C and F curated fewer than five per year. Nevertheless, all the participants had solid professional curation backgrounds that validated their participation in this study.

Variations between in-house and independent curators in relation to Exhibition Factors B–J in the

early, middle, and late stages of the curatorial procedure are illustrated in the following subsection.

3.1. Variations in Individual Exhibition Factors between In-house and Independent Curators

The findings of thematic analysis suggested that some key statements were related to only one exhibition factor. Variations between in-house and independent curators in relation to individual exhibition factors in the curatorial procedure are discussed as follows.

(1) Exhibition content design (Exhibition Factor C) in the early stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curators consider it easier to start from a specific theme, adding that this approach may prevent artists from conceiving extremely unrealistic ideas and enable curators to collect works that correlate with the theme or discourse of the exhibition. Observed e-10-C-4, “Occasionally artists are excessively unrealistic, and this can wear others down during discussion.” and f-11-C-5, “We sometimes collect works before planning, but the works must be related to the exhibition in question.”

By contrast, independent curators focus on formulating a theme to provide a comprehensive meaning and context for an exhibition. b-11-C-1 said, “Curation denotes collecting works and planning exhibitions.” b-7-C-2, “Meaning matters to curators.” Similarly, d-6-C-3 stated, “Curation projects originate from demand.”

In summary, in-house curators initiate curation based on predetermined themes, whereas independent curators do so through theme creation.

(2) Exhibition importance (Exhibition Factor G) in the early stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curators emphasize the importance of ensuring whether exhibition content meets professional standards. For example, f-8-22-CG-5 said, “We must use art history as a yardstick to determine whether the content of an exhibition meets professional standards.”

Independent curators prioritize originality, fresh discourse and meaning, and cultural contribution. For example, a-8-24-CG- noted, “In artistic and creative terms, an exhibition lacking originality and fresh discourse and meaning is not productive”, and d-24-G-2 added, “A good exhibition influences Taiwan culturally.” This variation indicates that Exhibition Factor G strongly influences exhibition planning.

(3) Exhibition plan formulation (Exhibition Factor E) in the early stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curators align the creation of exhibits an exhibition’s theme. f-11-17-CE-5 observed, “We brainstorm ideas with artists based on specific themes” while f-8-18-CE-4 noted, “Being an independent curator enables you to work with specialists from various professional fields and create exhibitions comprising a variety of elements.”

However, independent curators collaborate with artists to brainstorm exhibits with a wider content scope. Stated b-10-16-CE-1, “If a curator collaborates with artists to decide on a theme and subsequently conducts curation, the relationship between exhibits and their content could be uncertain”, c-11-17-CE-3, “We collect old works and curate exhibitions in a manner that focuses on these works”, and c-7-17-CE-2, “Themes are created based on the main issue of the exhibition.”

Therefore, independent curators are more likely to work with specialists from various professional fields and develop more varied exhibition themes.

(4) Exhibition mechanism (Exhibition Factor B) in the middle stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curator’s affiliated organization varies the process of exhibition preparation depending on the type of exhibition to be held. For instance, e-3-B-9 stated, “Curation involves dealing with government organizations with various hierarchical structures” and e-3-B-4 observed, “Our curatorial processes are mostly completed on a case-by-case basis.”

By contrast, independent curators have fewer organizational resources but can structure exhibitions in more varied manners. Stated b-5-B-3, “Artists can request the rental of artistic spaces.”

Thus, in-house curators have more resources to ensure the comprehensiveness of their exhibitions. By contrast, independent curators seek cooperation with artists and perceive exhibitions as creation platforms. Therefore, artists may request the rental of artistic spaces.

(5) Communication and interaction with artists (Exhibition Factor D) in the middle stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curators request that artists create new exhibits in correlation with old ones. Collaboration between curators and artists focuses on the thematic aspects of exhibitions and involves arranging old exhibits that are thematically relevant to upcoming exhibitions for display. e-3-15-BD-3 described, “The Taipei Fine Arts Museum normally hires various artists to create new exhibits based on old ones.”

Moreover, they have more control over exhibition preparation than do artists and prefer conducting discussions with artists enable the determination of more specific themes, collection of thematically relevant works, and curation of exhibitions that accentuate the themes. f-3-14-BD-4 stated, “Communication still matters to us. If we only collected works and became familiar with our artists, our curatorial process would be extremely different.”

By contrast, independent curators focus on working with artists to create themes of greater scope and new works. a-4-14-BD-1 said that, “Our artistic spaces are used in a more flexible manner than those of museums and we work together like a team operating using shared resources”, while d-4-11-BC-5 observed, “If a work is displayed more than three times, audiences see it over and over again and it appears.”

In sum, independent curators prefer exhibitions to be planned in an unrestrained, flexible, and creative manner and consider exhibiting old works dull.

(6) Exhibit creation methods (Exhibition Factor F) in the late stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curators request that artists create works in correlation with exhibition themes. Described e-3-21-BF-4, "Our art museum is going to hold an exhibition next year and we have asked our artists to create new works."

In addition, they do not intervene in artists' creations. Such works are limited in extensibility and development and are selected according to their relevance to the exhibition theme. As e-3-21-BF-5 observed, "Not all works created by artists are accepted." By contrast, independent curators focus on working with artists from various fields to build artistic spaces and create exhibits, while engaged in exhibit concretion, curators undertake publication-related research. For example, a-4-20-BF-1 said, "Young artist teams build artistic spaces and curators conduct curation or publication-related research", and b-4-21-BF-2 noted, "When an art gallery holds an exhibition, the curator normally discusses which works should be involved in the exhibition with the artists."

(7) Exhibition exchange (Exhibition Factor H) in the late stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curators promote exhibition exchange or artist-in-residence programs in correlation with the existing development plans and resource availability of their affiliated institutions, which operate within the public sector system. e-29-H-2 described this process, "Similar to promoting international exchange, promoting artistic exchange requires governmental support."

By contrast, independent curators' artistic spaces, artist villages, or arts districts are sub-

ject to fewer restraints in terms of working with artists or international villages. Said a-2-H-2, "Artist villages offer seasonal residency schemes, where curators collaborate with resident artists to develop seasonal creative projects and conduct exhibition planning."

Therefore, regarding artistic exchange, independent curators' artist-in-residence programs have a higher turnover than do those of in-house curators.

(8) Connection with mass media (Exhibition Factor I) in the late stage of exhibition preparation

In-house and independent curators mainly promote exhibitions through social networking services and video content. Other methods of promotion include writing invitation letters, inviting journalists, advertising in art magazines, and creating marketing buzz. Participant F reported having hosted press conferences, placing advertisements, and creating Facebook fan pages.

(9) Funding (Exhibition Factor J) in the late stage of exhibition preparation

In-house curators have more resources than do independent curators as a result of working for public sector organizations. The availability of resources for an in-house curator depends on the size of his or her affiliated organizations. If funding is limited, fundraising is arranged. For instance, f-36-J-4 said, "Our organization provides adequate funding and it is the duty of us institutional curators to integrate the resources at our disposal", and e-36-J-3 noted, "Regarding the planning of large-scale exhibitions, we still need to raise funds on behalf of our museum."

By contrast, independent curators seek and obtain sponsorship from public or private organizations. As a-36-37-J-1 described, "I have sought many sponsors, including those from individuals and the National Culture and Arts Foundation." b-37-39-J-2 similarly stated, "I must seek potential sponsors in the private, public, and education sectors."

Depending on resource availability, the processes of exhibitions planned by independent curators affect the rights and obligations related to the curators and artists, works for the exhibitions, number of exhibits, and exhibition size. b-41-J-5 observed, “An exhibition’s process and sequence do not affect the amount of funding required. However, the rights and obligations of artists, number of exhibits, exhibition dates, and exhibition content are more likely to affect fundraising efforts.”

3.2. Variations in Exhibition Factor Pairs between In-house and Independent Curators

The findings of thematic analysis in this study indicated that some key statements contained pairs of exhibition factors. An analysis of the interrelationships between various exhibition factors involved in curation plans revealed how curators prioritize the tasks associated with exhibition planning. Therefore, variations in exhibition factor pairs of the curatorial procedure between in-house and independent curators are discussed in this subsection.

(1) Relationship between Exhibition Factors B (exhibition mechanism) and G (exhibition importance)

The key statements for various exhibition factor pairs in in-house and independent curatorial procedures were identified and variations

between the pairs in terms of the two curator types were discussed. Table 4 presents the analysis results for Exhibition Factors B (exhibition mechanism) and G (exhibition importance) as an example.

The key in-house curator statement in Table 4 coded “e-3-23-BG” (“a mission of museums is to stage exhibitions to promote artistic development in Taiwan”) is analyzed as follows: “e” refers to Participant E (an in-house curator); “3” refers to Unit Term No. 3 or “public sector” (the museum mentioned in the statement is a public organization); and “23” refers to Unit Term No. 23 or “helpful.” Unit terms 3 and 23 belong to Exhibition factors “B” and “G”, respectively. Based on this key statement, both factors were related to the in-house curatorial procedure, suggesting that the in-house curators assess exhibition importance based on the research directions and organizational objectives of their respective institutions.

Independent curators do so based on personal topics of interest, indicated by a-4-22-BG-1, “Nowadays, independent curators use art galleries or platforms to consistently plan exhibitions in correlation with their research interests.” Similarly, d-4-23-24-BG-2 stated, “Normally, we independently determine whether our exhibitions contribute to Taiwan.”

Table 4. Variations in the relationship between Exhibition Factors B (exhibition mechanism) and G (exhibition importance) between in-house and independent curators

Type	Key statements for Exhibition Factors B (exhibition mechanism) and G (exhibition importance)	Variations
In-house curator	e-3-23-BG: “A mission of museums is to stage exhibitions that promote artistic development in Taiwan.”	Exhibition importance is assessed based on the research directions and organizational objectives of museums.
Independent curator	a-4-22-BG-1: “Nowadays, independent curators use art galleries or platforms to consistently plan exhibitions in correlation with their research interests.” d-4-23-24-BG-2: “Normally, we independently determine whether our exhibitions contribute to Taiwan.”	Exhibitions are planned based on the curator’s own research interests and importance is assessed accordingly.

(2) Relationship between Exhibition Factors C (exhibition content design) and D (communication and interaction with artists)

In-house curators work collaborate with artists about predetermined exhibition themes, as indicated by f-8-12-CD, "How we interact with artists depends on the exhibition theme." However, Participant E (an in-house curator) stated that this may lead to excessive uniformity between exhibits, thereby affecting the likelihood of re-display. Said e-11-14-CD-5, "Initially, we discuss exhibition themes with artists. However, this can result in exhibits being excessively uniform, giving the impression that we have contributed only a single exhibition."

Independent curators focus on not only discussing exhibition themes with artists but also engaging audiences with exhibits. c-7-14-CD-1 described this process, "We determine the core issue of an exhibition, divide the issue into different themes, and discuss with artists how to present the exhibition" while c-8-15-CD-2 noted, "A good exhibition engages the curator in a conversation with artists, exhibits, exhibition spaces, and even with themselves." Therefore, independent curators determine exhibition importance based on personal topics of interest.

(3) Relationship between Exhibition Factors C (exhibition content design) and F (exhibit creation methods)

In-house curators request that artists create exhibits in correlation with exhibition themes determined by their institutions, as mentioned by f-7-21-CF-12, "We build exhibitions around specific themes and seek works that match the theme in question" and f-9-20-CF-11, "Discussing themes and exhibit creation methods with artists is a form of exclusive production".

Some in-house curators display previous exhibits renewed with fresh ideas. Said e-11-20-CF-8, "It is difficult to distinguish between various curatorial practices because we mix old and new

works". By contrast, independent curators plan exhibitions based on specific issues. Independent curators focus on working with artists to develop the exhibition themes and content based on specific issues. c-7-20-CF-3 stated, "We invited and cooperated with curators or artists of various fields for different themes." Similarly, b-7-20-CF-3 described, "We discussed and determined the theme with artists before curating; this is a challenge in contemporary curation".

(4) Relationship between Exhibition Factors D (communication and interaction with artists) and F (exhibit creation methods)

In-house curators borrow works from artists whose backgrounds are relevant to predetermined exhibition themes, as indicated by f-12-20-DF-5, "We borrow works from artists whose backgrounds are relevant to our themes" and f-12-20-DF-6, "To cocreate with artists, you must engage in frequent discussions with them. However, if you borrow their works for exhibitions, you may interact with them less frequently." Therefore, curators and artists engage in limited interaction. By contrast, independent curators and artists cocreate exhibits based on social issues and frequently interact with one another during the cocreation process. a-14-19-DF-3 observed, "We discuss social issues with artists and cocreate exhibits based on these issues" while d-14-20-DF-4 said, "We spend 4 months cocreating exhibits".

(5) Relationship between Exhibition Factors B (exhibition mechanism) and J (funding)

In-house curators use resources at the disposal of their organizations as described by f-3-36-BJ-25, "In-house curators may have more available resources than do independent curators but if they intend to refine their exhibitions, museums must raise funds" and f-3-41-BJ-21, "Smaller museums enjoy less funding and have fewer exhibition schedules over longer periods. In addition, they may have to seek external partnerships." However, organizations on tight budgets must

establish partnerships with external entities or raise funds. For example, Participant E reported that public organizations do not have complete control over their financial resources and receive limited support from their private sector-based counterparts. As e-3-37-BJ-17 said, “State funding is insufficient and no private businesses in Taiwan sponsor museums.”

Independent curators scout for resources and sponsorship. Moreover, the size of the curatorial budget, which comprises donations from the private and public sectors, affects the planning for and level of participation in an exhibition. Described d-4-36-BJ-8, “We must find sponsors for our artists such as foundations”, a-3-41-BJ-1, “If you work for an institution, you have adequate

resources and more funding”, and c-5-36-BJ-5, “We seek sponsors to obtain a curatorial budget.”

Thus, the curatorial budget at the disposal of independent curators, which comprises public and private sector donations, affects exhibition planning and the degree of artist participation in the exhibition.

3.3 Curatorial Procedure: In-house Curators versus Independent Curators

In summary, variations in individual exhibition factors between in-house and independent curators are presented in Table 5, whereas those between the two curator types in relation to the various pairs of exhibition factors are shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Variations in individual exhibition factors between in-house and independent curators

Factor	Variations	
	In-house curator	Independent curator
C. Exhibition content design	Curation is initiated based on a predetermined theme	Curation is initiated by creating themes
E. Exhibition plan formulation	Curators ensure that exhibits are created based on the exhibition theme	Curators connect and brainstorm with artists to facilitate the expansion and creation of exhibition content
G. Exhibition importance	Curators ensure whether the content of an exhibition meets professional standards	Curators prioritize originality, fresh discourse and meaning, and contribution
B. Exhibition mechanism	Curators have more institutional resources to ensure the comprehensiveness of exhibitions	Curators can vary the exhibition structure and use different creation platforms
D. Communication with artists	Curators emphasize the thematic aspects of exhibitions and have more control over exhibition preparation than do artists	Curators work with artists to create exhibition themes in a more flexible and creative manner
F. Exhibit creation methods	Curators request that artists create exhibits according to specific themes without intervening in the creation of exhibits	Curators and artists cocreate exhibits
H. Exhibition exchange	Public sector organizations promote exhibition exchange in based on existing developmental plans and resource availability	A higher turnover exists for artist-in-residence programs
J. Funding	Sufficient resources are available but fundraising is required on a limited budget	Curators seek sponsorship from public or private organizations
I. Connection with mass media	Curators mainly promote exhibitions through social networking services, video content, and other means of promotion such as writing invitation letters, inviting journalists, advertising in art magazines, and creating marketing buzz	Independent curatorial methods are similar to those of in-house curators

Table 6. Variations in exhibition factor pairs between in-house and independent curators

Exhibition factor pair	Variation	
	In-house curator	Independent curator
B (exhibition mechanism) + G (exhibition importance)	Curators assess exhibition importance based on the research directions and organizational objectives of their affiliated museums	Curators plan exhibitions based on personal research interests and assess exhibition importance accordingly
C (exhibition content design) + D (communication and interaction with artists)	Curators work with artists to create exhibits based on exhibition themes	Curators plan exhibitions based on personal research interests and assess exhibition importance accordingly
C (exhibition content design) + F (exhibit creation methods)	Curators collaborate with artists on specific themes	Curators work with artists to develop exhibition themes and content
D (communication and interaction with artists) + F (exhibit creation methods)	Curators borrowing works from artists and engage in limited interaction with them	Curators and artists cocreate exhibits and engage in frequent interaction
B (exhibition mechanism) + J (funding)	Curators use internal resources and raise funds when institutional funding is insufficient	Curators seek resources and sponsorship

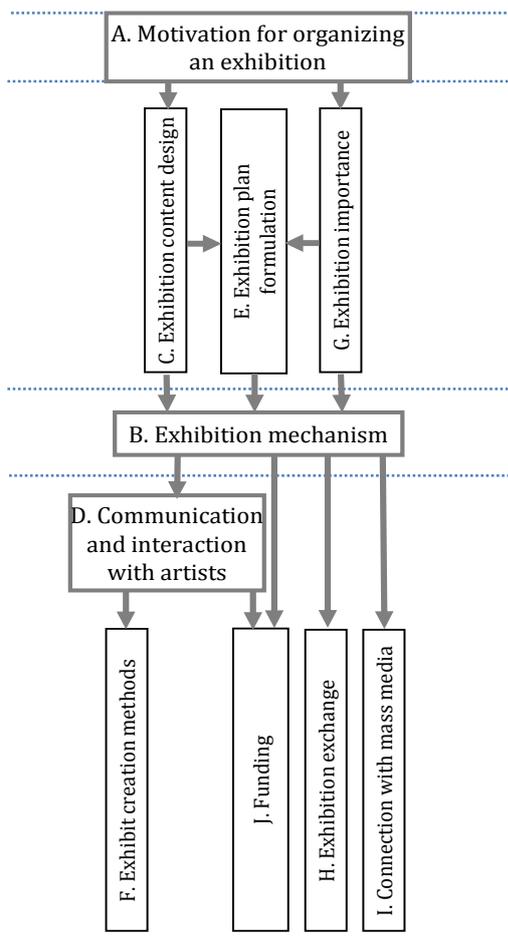


Figure 3. In-house curatorial procedure

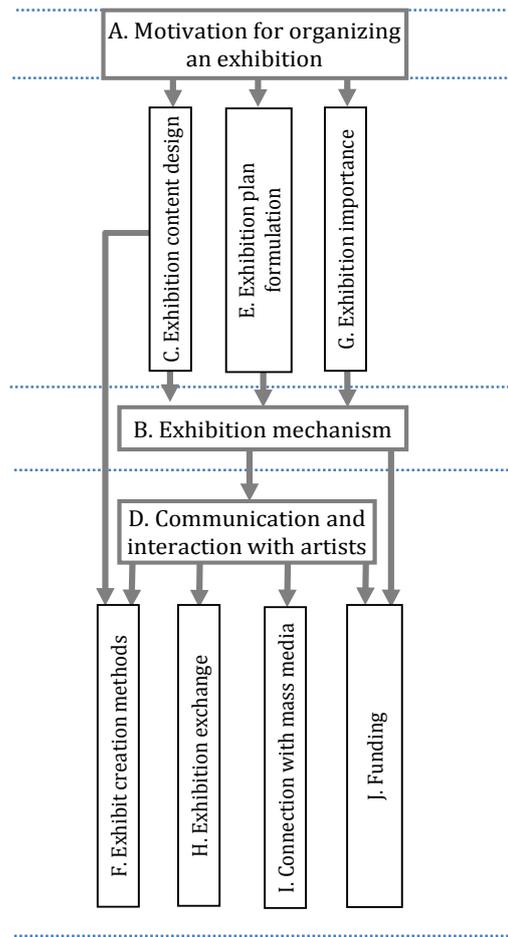


Figure 4. Independent curatorial procedure

In-house curators (Figure 3) adopt their affiliated museums' predetermined themes (exhibition content design) as well as research directions and organizational objectives (exhibition importance) as primary motivations for holding an exhibition and the relevance of an exhibition project to those themes (exhibition plan formulation) as the secondary motivation. After confirming a project's content, the project curator discusses the project with artists based on the museums' requirements regarding exhibition scheduling, and requests that the artists work in correlation with the requirements of the museums. With administrative and financial resources at their disposal from the institution, in-house curators can focus exclusively on exhibition planning, thereby enabling them to adhere to specific aspects of curation. After confirming the exhibition content, curators use institutional financial resources and media services to promote the event or work with overseas art organizations to enrich and diversify its content.

Independent curators (Figure 4) use social issues or personal research interests as motivations for organizing exhibitions and cocreating exhibits with artists to fulfill social responsibility. The independent curatorial plan considers exhibition content, planning, and overall importance. Moreover, independent curators work closely with artists to discuss exhibition planning and create exhibits. Thus, they provide flexible art platforms and emphasize flexibility during exhibit creation. In addition, they prefer working with artists to develop themes and content for exhibitions based on specific issues. While curating, independent curators undertake administrative tasks, particularly fundraising. In summary, through fundraising, cooperation with overseas artists, and integration of media resources for independent promotion, independent curators adopt a more flexible and productive method to planning exhibitions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study conducted in-depth interviews with two in-house curators and four independent curators to compare their respective curatorial processes. Unit-term description was used to identify key statements from the interview transcripts, resulting in the extraction of 41 unit terms from the transcripts and summarization of these terms into 10 exhibition factors. Variations between in-house and independent curators in relation to individual exhibition factors and various exhibition factor pairs in the curatorial procedure were discussed.

This study reported notable variations between the curatorial procedures of in-house and independent curators. In-house curators work for public art organizations and take charge of fulfilling the objectives of their respective organizations. With administrative and financial support from these organizations, in-house curators focus exclusively on curation. They plan exhibitions according to the characteristics and research directions of their organizations and instruct artists to create works based on predetermined exhibition themes. Therefore, in-house curators specialize in specific curation fields.

Independent curators work for various organizations and plan exhibitions based on personal motivations without the need to satisfy institutional requirements. They develop exhibition themes and content based on social issues or personal research interests, work closely with artists from various fields to create exhibits, and ensure flexibility and originality in exhibit creation. Moreover, through fundraising, cooperation with overseas artists, and integration of media resources for independent promotion, independent curators adopt a more flexible and productive method to planning exhibitions.

In-house and independent curators prioritize exhibition factors differently. Similar to Han's procedure (2000) for exhibition preparation, the in-house curatorial procedure spans the early, middle, and late stages of development. In the early stage of the independent curatorial procedure, independent curators determine an exhibition's content, plan, and overall importance and collaborate with artists to determine how exhibits should be created. In the middle stage, they establish the exhibition mechanism, prepare exhibits with artists, and acquire financial resources. Although independent curators have limited funding, they apply much ingenuity and flexibility to exhibition planning.

In-house and independent curators both have strengths in presenting exhibitions to convey artistic knowledge, illustrate artistic contexts and discourses, and fulfill their social responsibilities. Curation involves connecting art organizations, artists, and audiences. The findings of this study may help curators to develop curatorial plans and procedures that better suit their professional requirements.

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