

Article

# Transformation Strategies for the Operation and Management of Local Cultural Museums in Nantou County

Kuo-Wei Hsu<sup>1</sup> and Jen-Chih Chao<sup>2,\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Landscape and Urban Design, Chaoyang University of Technology, Taichung City 413, Taiwan; kwhsu@cyut.edu.tw

<sup>2</sup> PhD Program in Architecture and Urban Design, Department of Architecture, Chaoyang University of Technology, Taichung City 413, Taiwan

\* Correspondence: jenchihchao@gmail.com; Tel.: +886-4-2332-3000

Received: 7 September 2017; Accepted: 1 November 2017; Published: 3 November 2017

**Abstract:** Affected by economic recession, reductions in government subsidies, and changes in visitors' needs and contributions, museums in Taiwan have begun to strengthen their recreational and economic functions. Nantou, which has 13 museums that showcase local cultural industries, is the county most obviously affected by declining tourist numbers and reduced cultural consumption and cultural tourism. Through surveys and interviews, this study examines the current conditions of operational management of these venues and proposes feasible strategies for their future development. Specifically, it reveals that the operation and management of Nantou's local cultural museums are negatively impacted by the lack of (1) relevant management experience, (2) inter-museum coordination and integration, and (3) financing mechanisms. The recommended development strategies include the establishment of cross-disciplinary value-added platforms.

**Keywords:** local culture museums; management transformation

---

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Motivation

In 2002, Nantou County's government and private sector began to transform idle space into local cultural museums, taking account of the balance of urban and rural resources. The local cultural museums (including exhibition halls, performance halls, and other cultural centers) were organized around five themes: art, humanities, life, creativity, and learning. Since their formation, the subsidized museums have mostly been operated either by the Culture Bureau of Nantou County's government or local small and medium-sized cultural centers. Through community-initiated promotions and strategic alliances between different types of local cultural spaces, a comprehensive local-culture territory and cultural life circle was gradually created and has gained widespread public acceptance.

Nevertheless, each venue confronted its own special set of problems, including operational difficulties and funding and developmental constraints, and the problem of idle venues arose once again. Therefore, operation and management issues for these museums were comprehensively addressed in the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture's 2016–2021 General Museums and Local Cultural Museums Development Project. The project's key objective is to achieve operation management through the integration of general museums and local cultural museums, especially in terms of their operational mechanisms, collaboration platforms, and promotion projects. Nantou County's government signed up to the Ministry of Culture's plans and sought to establish a systematic approach that emphasized the benefits of networks and alliances on the way to achieving the broader goal of operational management.

This study mainly discusses the operational management of local cultural museums, in addition to central financial subsidies and the venues' own, often problematic, efforts to generate income.

### *1.2. Purpose*

This study identifies and explores a phenomenon whereby the local cultural museums of Nantou County can neither obtain subsidies from central government nor act independently, forcing them to cease operations and leaving space to fall into idleness. Most prior studies have focused on the quality of tours of local cultural museums and tourists' satisfaction, and promotion strategies, but have rarely touched on the perspectives of these venues' managers.

This study's case material includes all 13 venues that comprise Nantou County's local cultural museums, and its methods include site visits to venues and interviews with their operators to gain a clearer understanding of their current operational situations and management strategies.

This paper has two research purposes:

- (1) To review the current conditions of and challenges to the operation and management of the local cultural museums in Nantou County;
- (2) To better understand the recommended future development strategies for the operation and management of local cultural museums in Nantou County.

### *1.3. The Importance of Local Cultural Museums*

Local cultural museums have long been important tools for sustaining local culture and cultural transmission by providing people with cultural resources and opportunities to participate in artistic and cultural activities. Moreover, because they operate at the nexus of local cultural resources and local cultural industries, such museums often serve to coordinate and promote the overall development of cultural tourism.

Shi (2012) showed how local cultural museums' interpretations of local ways of life and the power of history could instill local residents with a sense of common experience. However, impacts are not limited to construction of local identity by residents: they also enable outsiders to know local communities more deeply [1]. Lin (2007) found that local museums have been catalysts for economic development and social mobility and have become important indicators of urban development [2]. Chiang (2006) reported that promoting the establishment of local cultural museums can enrich the cultural construction and integration of local cultural resources, and spark creativity; create local consensus and harmony; and stimulate local economies in general and local leisure cultures and local tourism in particular. In short, such museums can be conceived of as local cultural strongholds, the activities of which can have an extraordinary range of positive ramifications [3].

### *1.4. Scope of Research*

The scope of this study comprises the 13 local cultural museums in Nantou County, Taiwan, the names and locations of which are shown in detail in Figure 1.

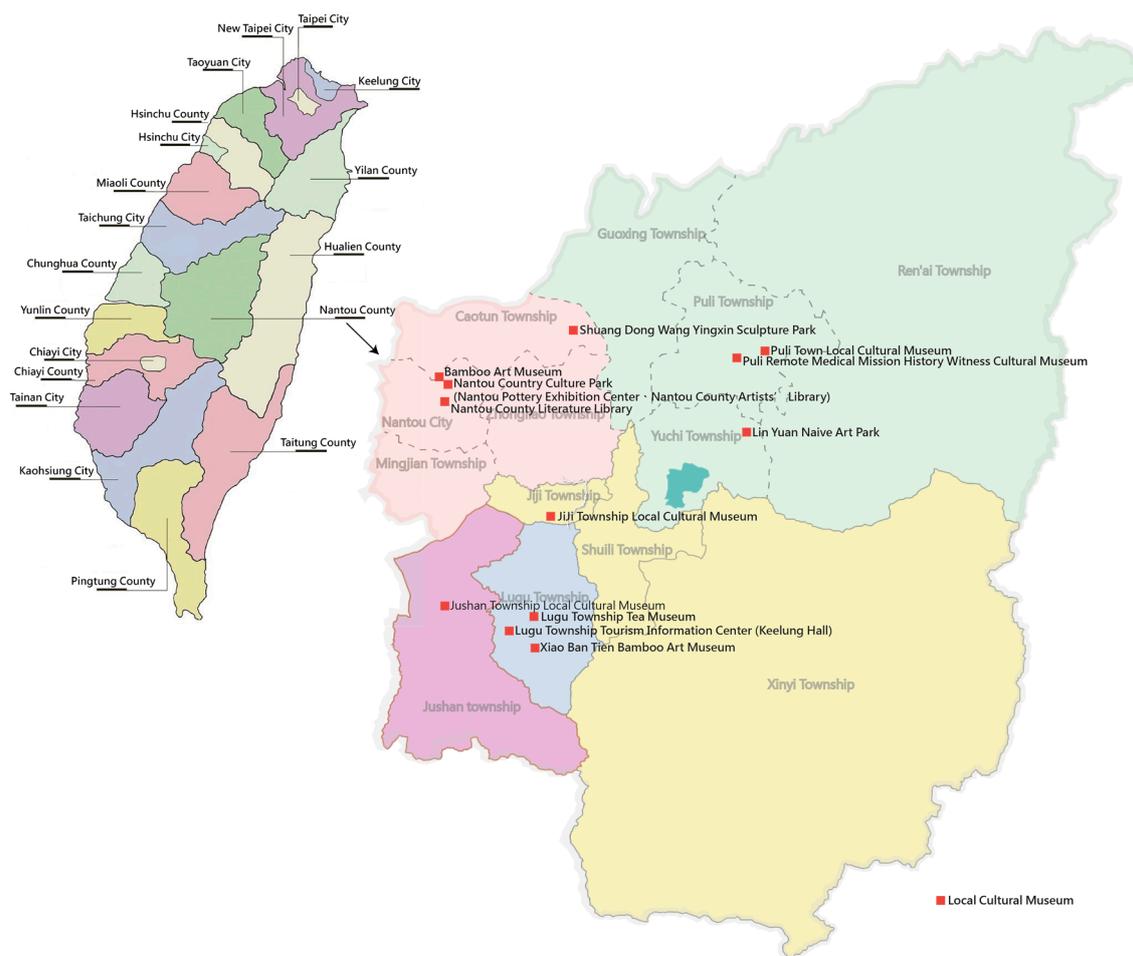


Figure 1. Local cultural museums of Nantou County, Taiwan. Produced by the authors, sources: [4].

## 2. Literature Review

In the context of the development of local cultural museums, this study explores the operations and management of local cultural museums. This study reviews the operational and managerial experiences of Nantou’s local museums in light of the relevant literature and makes recommendations for future development strategies to enhance their sustainability. Thus, this study is able to provide an analysis of these venues’ development issues and provide solutions to their operational and managerial problems and operational sustainability.

### 2.1. Definition of Museum Operational Management

Lord and Lord (1997) noted that the crucial functions of museum operational management are to inspire museum staff with a sense of mission, to communicate the mandate of the local cultural museums, to set goals and pursue their attainment, and to evaluate the fulfillment of museum functions [5]. For Lin (2006), meanwhile, the key success factors for managing local cultural museums were increasing revenue, strategic marketing, human-resources management, operational efficiency, and the exhibition environment [6]. However, Li and Fan (2000) observed that a theoretical adherence to market mechanisms by public officials placed government departments in danger of neglecting their public-welfare responsibilities [7].

## 2.2. Definition of Local Cultural Museums

In this study, the term “local cultural museum” is used to describe a venue approved by the Cultural Affairs Committee of the Executive Yuan, pursuant to its “Direct-controlled Municipality & County Promotion of Local Cultural Museums Application Guidelines” of 2002. The purposes of local cultural museums are to establish cultural bases in townships, facilitate a balanced approach to urban development and rural development, foster cultural vitality, utilize idle public spaces, highlight local cultural features, and emphasize creativity. The work and exhibits of local cultural museums should be rooted in local art, history, culture, folklore, crafts, landscape, ecology, industrial resources, and so forth, and promote artistic and cultural activities, cultivate artistic talent, and pass down traditional culture and art, according to the 2006 version of the “Direct-controlled Municipality & County Promotion of Local Cultural Museums Application Guidelines” [8].

## 2.3. Definition of Sustainable Management

WCED (1987) noted that in the face of social, economic, and environmental issues, human beings must be able to develop sustainably and meet actual needs, but should not endanger the well-being of the next generation [9]. Braat (1991) observed that the sustainable management of natural ecology and economic systems should modify organizations moderately, with a main goal of enhancing public welfare [10]. This study explores the existing operations and management challenges of local cultural museums and recommends the possibility of creating more sustainable operations by acquiring additional operating income through the features experiences and resources provided by these local cultural museums.

## 2.4. Local Cultural Museums Plan

Local cultural museums are of three general types: (1) state-run, (2) private, and (3) operate-transfer (OT). In the case of state-run venues, which are subsidized by the Executive Yuan Cultural Construction Committee, all applicants must be government agencies, all operators must be part of the public sector, and all applicants of state-run venues will be reviewed and approved by the local government’s Culture Bureau. Private venues may have private organizations among their applicants, operate as part of the private sector, but still receive subsidies from the Council for Cultural Affairs and are still subject to Culture Bureau review. Finally, OT venues are subject to all the same conditions as state-run venues, including that the applicants must be governmental agencies, but they are operated and managed by private organizations (Local Cultural Museum Operation Guidelines, 2006) [8].

According to the Executive Yuan Cultural Construction Committee, local cultural museums should first provide opportunities for the transformation of rural industries and the creation of a cultural and leisure industry of “ASRC type” (i.e., aesthetics + sensitivity + recreation + creativity). Second, they should be cultural bases, as well as local information centers for residents, tourism information centers, and exhibition venues for local features. Third, they should contribute to humane communities that display a wealth of natural resources, beautiful space and landscape, clean and comfortable living environments, abundant traditional culture, charming products and folk art, and extensive artistic activities. Finally, they should enable the current generation to realize the dream of creating a better living environment and quality of life for generations to come.

The implementation principles and strategies of local cultural museums, as set forth by the Executive Yuan Cultural Construction Committee, can be divided into four main categories. The first is integrated thinking, i.e., combining the planning resources of ministries, associations, and departments. The second is the creation of an operation management blueprint and carrying it out step by step. Third is pluralistic development that comprises the retention of local features, respect for multi-ethnic culture, the fostering of local distinctiveness, and the enrichment of cultural diversity by

and through industry. Fourth is the stimulation of creativity and imagination on both the township and individual levels.

The objectives for local cultural museums, as set by the Council for Cultural Affairs (2006), are to improve the cultural facilities and cultural vitality of towns, cities, and districts; to combine the strength of government, civil enterprises, township history and art associations, villages, and communities in the promotion of local cultural and artistic activities; and to promote domestic tourism by incorporating local cultural features into tourist offerings (The main points of operation of the local culture museum, 2006.) [8].

### 2.5. Local Cultural Museums' Operation and Management

A variety of entities have established and operated local cultural museums, and their efforts differ dramatically from parallel initiatives in the private sector due to their differing operational objectives: encouraging culture-related experiences, cultural activities, and the showcasing of local industries. This section reviews the literature relevant to the current conditions, operations, management, and development strategies of local cultural museums in Nantou County.

Wang (2004) found that local cultural museums aim to foster cultural tourism and cultural industries, and to preserve cultural assets [11]; and the planners of the eco-museum in Meinung cultural museum see it as a pinnacle of community consensus, and the summation of the area's cultural assets are planned for the eco-museum (Zeng, 1996) [12]. Hsu (2012) reported that such venues' ability to revitalize local economies is rooted in their straddling of the cultural and creative industries [13]. Chen (2016) noted that local cultural museums must develop a local business model, as this will not only magnify their importance as cultural assets, but also attract greater numbers of tourists [14].

The operations and management of local cultural museums involve a wide variety of factors, including local ordinances, the venues' own respective cultures, and their relationships and potential relationships with other venues and groups, including local residents.

## 3. Methods

This study, through a review of operations management literature related to local cultural museums, explores the framework of the interview issues, which is mainly conducted via in-depth interview, in order to understand the current situation of the management of the venues.

This study used in-depth interviews to collect data that cannot be obtained from secondary sources. While purposive qualitative research samples are not representative of a whole group, they are nevertheless the best source of abundant, in-depth, first-hand information about the real-world experiences of the members of a pluralistic society (Huang, 1999) [15].

Semi-structured interviews can also be applied to obtain detailed answers to similar questions. In this method, the interviewees respond using standardized words and in a standard order, facilitating rapid and straightforward organization, comparison, and analysis of all the respondents' answers (Huang, 1999; Wan, 2004) [15,16].

The local cultural museums are different in scale from general museums, and the theme space or idle space is under the background of the culture policy, which makes the local cultural museums operation management staff performs. This study, according to the proposed interview framework, focus on the local cultural museums in the operation of the management of the problem, in order to understand the difficulties and problems faced by the operation management staff.

### 3.1. Interview Protocol Development

Hsu (2013) [13], Huang (2013) [17], Hsieh (2017) [18], Yu (2015) [19], and Lin (2011) [20] all used verifications of in-depth interviews to obtain clear data on museums' actual operations. In these cases, the interviews allowed direct access to the respondents' ideas and to their museums' operations and management processes and the specific difficulties they faced.

Based on a review of the relevant literature, a preliminary interview framework and context was developed, and interviews were conducted. Based on the results of our pilot interviews, the structure and content of the interview protocol were revised slightly. Each interview conducted using the revised protocol lasted between 45 and 60 min. A flowchart of the research process is shown in Figure 2.

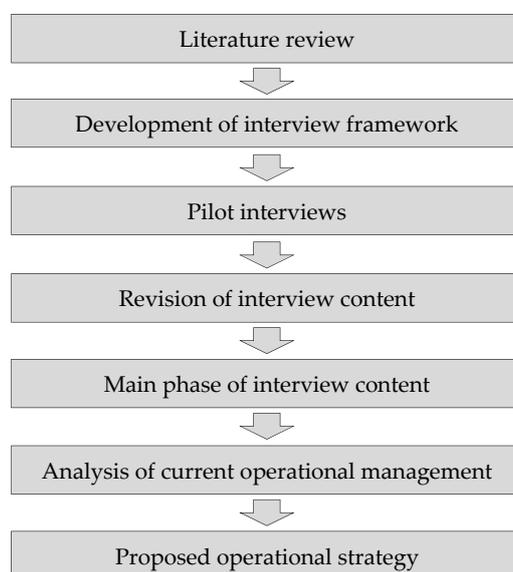


Figure 2. Research flowchart.

### 3.2. Interviewees and Interview Outline

Each of this study's 13 interviewees was the manager of one of the 13 local cultural museums in Nantou County and was interviewed twice. The second interviews are main phase of the context. The outline of the interview was established based on relevant literature data. The interview outline was themed around operational modes, resource features, and promotion models so that an in-depth understanding of the operation and management of each venue could be obtained. The outline of the interview and the details of the museums and individual respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview outline.

Facets		Questions	
A.	Current operational conditions	a.	How many staff, including volunteers, part-time employees and other service personnel does the venue have?
	(a) Human resources	b.	What is the main source of funding for the venue? Do you have operating income or source of funding?
	(b) Financial Management		
B.	Featured resources	a.	Do your exhibits ever change?? How often do they change? Why?
	(a) Exhibition content	b.	Are the exhibitions' contents relevant to the local culture? How? In what ways?
	(b) Local culture		
C.	Promotion strategy	a.	How is information about the exhibitions and activities disseminated?
	(a) Information Dissemination	b.	Does the venue cooperate with local community organizations, schools or professional groups? Explain.
	(b) Links with communities, schools and professional groups	c.	Does the venue participate in activities organized by other local cultural museums? Does it cooperate with such museums in any other way? If yes, in what way?
	(c) Horizontal and vertical strategic alliances		

## 4. Results and Discussion

This study explores operational management of the local cultural museums of Nantou County. From the interview results of management of individual venues, the paper investigates the development conditions of local cultural museums in Nantou County. Following is a description of the results of the interviews, and proposed development of operational management strategies.

### 4.1. Results

#### 4.1.1. Current Conditions of Operation and Management

All three of the general operational modes for local cultural museums occur in Nantou County: i.e., state-run ( $n = 8$ ), OT ( $n = 1$ ), and private ( $n = 4$ ). Each venue's mode of operation is set forth in Table 2. The operators include a range of township and municipal offices, local development associations, and private-sector entities. Some are reserved for management by local third-party departments or individuals, but require payment of rental fees by the third-party operators to local cultural museums or provide feedback about provision of cultural tours and cultural and educational activities.

**Table 2.** Museums, interviewees and operational mode.

Coding	Local Cultural Museum	Interviewee	Operational Mode
A1	Bamboo Art Museum	Office clerk, Art Section of Cultural Affairs Bureau, Nantou County	State-run
A2	Nantou Pottery Exhibition Center	Office clerk, Cultural Heritage Section of Cultural Affairs Bureau, Nantou County	State-run
A3	Nantou County Artists' Library	Office clerk, Art Section of Cultural Affairs Bureau, Nantou County	State-run
A4	Nantou County Literature Library	Office clerk, Library Section of Cultural Affairs Bureau, Nantou County	State-run
A5	Puli township Local Cultural Museum	Office clerk, Library Section, Puli township Office	State-run
A6	Puli Remote Medical Mission History Witness Cultural Center	Public relations secretary	Private
A7	Shuang Dong Wang Yingxin Sculpture Park	Director	Private
A8	Jushan Township Local Cultural Museum	Section chief, Culture and Tourism Section, Jushan Township Office	State-run
A9	Jiji Township Local Cultural Museum	Director, Culture Service Section, Jiji Township Office	State-run
A10	Lugu Township Tourism Information Center (Keelung Hall)	Office clerk, Tourism Service Section, Lugu Township Office	State-run
A11	Lugu Township Tea Museum	Office clerk, Promotion Section, Farmers' Association	Private
A12	Xiao Ban Tien Bamboo Art Museum	Board director, Xiao Ban Industry Promotion Association	OT
A13	Lin Yuan Naive Art Park	Director	Private

Through the interviews with the managers of the operation units in 13 venues, the study summarizes the interviews with the managers of the local cultural museums and describes their current operational conditions and dilemmas:

#### 4.1.2. Current Operational Conditions

- Human resources

Of the three-fifths of local cultural museums in Nantou County that are state-run, albeit with some outsourced functions, half are operated by the Bureau of Culture (A1, A2, A3, and A4), and the other half by individual townships (A5, A8, A9, and A10). The private venues (A6, A7, A11, A12, and A13) are all self-operated. The 13 respondents' responsibilities primarily included venue

maintenance, docent training, and artistic- and cultural-activity promotion (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A8, A9, and A11). The majority of the venues' personnel held other posts concurrently but were supported by volunteers of the Bamboo Art Museum and Nantou Pottery Exhibition Center. All reported human resources deficits.

- Financial management

The public venues' financing consisted of subsidies from their supervising agencies and the annual budget allocation from the Cultural Bureau. Private venues had to apply for government subsidies and raise any other funding they required on their own behalf; those that failed to obtain subsidies were likely to have difficulties with their operations. Local cultural museums do not have income from tickets, commodities or members. Participants do not need to pay any fee for the activities that are subsidized by the plan. Only one venue (A8) got its budget from the Township City Hall to maintain the local cultural museum operation and management.

#### 4.1.3. Featured Resources

- Exhibition content

Depending on the size of their spaces, resources and themes, some venues opted for permanent exhibits (A1, A2, A5, A6, A7, A8, A10, A11, and A13), while others changed them regularly (A3, A4, A9, A12, and A13). Most of the exhibition spaces showcased local culture or local industry (A1, A2, A4, A5, A8, A10, A11, and A13). However, the displays' themes and content did not present local features in ways that would attract visitors. Moreover, three of the sites (A1, A8, and A12) displayed some of the same types of objects as each other, reducing their individuality as venues. Some displays were lacking in narrative/information and in opportunities for participation in cultural experiences.

- Local culture

As noted above, the venues were expected to plan their exhibition spaces and content to highlight local cultural features and features. More than half incorporated aspects of local culture as the themes for their normal displays (A1, A2, A4, A5, A8, A10, A11, and A13). Two of exhibitions' content was conceived by venue staff (A3 and A9). They arranged exhibitions in cooperation with relevant cultural and artistic organizations or on the basis of applications from artists to use the space, as required by the terms of their annual subsidies. No mechanisms whereby local people could participate in exhibition planning could be identified.

#### 4.1.4. Promotion Strategies

- Information dissemination

Local cultural museums are advised by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Nantou County to display their collections and other details on its websites, in those of the township offices, or on self-built websites. Some of the examined venues cooperated with one another in the design and printing of publicity and promotional materials of Jiji Township Local Cultural Museum, Jiji Town Culture Exchange and Development Association, and Guangmingli community (A9). Most activities arranged by the venues were targeted exclusively at local Nantou County people. Information dissemination non-availability of cross-promotion information about local attractions and activities resulted in low speed, low quantity, and poor quality of information transmission.

- Building links with communities, schools, and professional organizations

Being generally dependent on the Ministry of Culture for project funding, only a few venues forged collaborative links with nearby community organizations when organizing cultural and artistic courses and other activities (A1, A2, A5, and A9). The others did not even go so far as to cooperate with schools or local arts associations.

- Horizontal and vertical strategic alliances

The venues did not work with other organizations or professional groups. Notable exceptions were the local cultural museums of Jiji township, which cooperated with nearby junior high schools in cultural-cooperation experience activities, and of Puli township, which cooperated with Puli winery to market cultural commodities.

#### 4.2. Discussion

Based on interviews with operators of the 13 venues, this paper summarizes and analyses Nantou County's local cultural museums' management conditions, including current operational conditions, featured resources, and promotional strategies. These are described in more detail below.

First, the local cultural museums in Nantou County are operated by three different types of management units. Arguably, this is an inefficient use of human resources for several reasons. Because some management personnel are assigned to multiple venues, temporary staff or volunteers are left in sole charge of some of the venues at certain times. Moreover, within the majority of these venues that are operated by an array of public-sector institutions, no management personnel are full-time, i.e., all are expected to concurrently perform other functions in local government. Additionally, writing subsidy applications takes up a disproportionate amount of the time available. In other words, public-sector museum management staff are expected to master their main jobs with the government and the ins and outs of subsidy-grant writing alongside the operation and resource integration of the museums themselves. This lack of focus/specialization negatively impacts these venues' operations and project implementation. Worse, these personnel's workloads seem to be slowly increasing, and this will inevitably produce an operational crisis unless dedicated operations-management personnel are hired. Notably, however, this human-resources problem is less severe in cases where a local cultural museum and a library are co-located at the same site. The human-resources allocations of private venues, in contrast, are determined by their development objectives. When a private venue undergoes a transformation into a local cultural museum, its managers' pre-existing professional competence tends to facilitate its successful acquisition of building-occupation permission, adequate fire-safety provision, and so forth.

Second, the exhibition spaces in Nantou County's local cultural museums vary widely in size and most lack performance spaces. There is no general practice with regard to the provision of permanent vs. rotating exhibits, and among those museums that opt for permanent exhibits, there is no consensus as to whether the displays should be static vs. dynamic/interactive. Additionally, funding shortages and lack of articles for exhibition in venues is a common problem. Some display areas are poorly designed, particularly with respect to space utilization, and need to be re-designed.

The association of museums with title features of local resources also leads to certain problems. Numerous cultural features are duplicated across multiple towns and townships in the county, making it difficult for local venues to celebrate micro-local features and styles in a way that is clearly distinct from neighboring museums. Moreover, some local cultural products are perishable and available only at certain times of year, which makes it difficult to display them on a regular basis; and some local cultural features are less attractive and attention-grabbing than others. The local cultural features need to avoid duplication or highlight different features.

Third, the resources and operational objectives of the 13 local cultural museums vary widely, depending on their geographic locations and modes of operation. In the case of state-run venues, policies set by their operational management units determine whether they are profit-oriented or chargeable; as such, some venues charge rental fees for partial spaces, while some organizations' venues can be used for learning courses, lectures and other activities free of charge. Most of the museums' experience-based educational activities are free of charge except for discretionary material costs. None of the venues has any income from merchandise sales or ticket sales, with the exception of the Lugu Tea Museum, which is run and managed by the Lugu Township Farmers' Association and sells tea-related merchandise. This general lack of income makes financial-sustainability planning

difficult to impossible. When Taiwanese public sector entities operate local cultural museums for income, they are required to set up employee cooperatives to deal with the income and expenditures, and these arrangements must be approved by the Department of Budgets, Accounting and Statistics. With city, county, and township authorities all competing for a limited pool of project funds, there is a high risk that promotional efforts or the museums' core activities themselves will be negatively impacted by centrally determined budgetary changes.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusions

The main operational objective of local cultural museums is to provide public services, mostly guided tours and educational enrichment. As such, their operation is currently sustained by government subsidies and local voluntarism. Taiwan's Ministry of Culture has mandated that local cultural museums re-examine their core values and positioning, both in terms of the nature of the individual venues and their interactions with the community.

In the specific case of Nantou County, the local cultural museums aim to transform both their existing and idle spaces into a local cultural resource comprising diverse local cultural venues of small and medium size. This study is syndicate that these small and medium-sized cultural venues have the potential to achieve this aim. However, in terms of their ability to meet the Ministry of Culture's requirement to create operating income and perform cross-disciplinary integration and operation management, Nantou Country's local cultural museums are significantly inferior to both metropolitan museums and larger local cultural museums in terms of their facilities, staffing, and operational effectiveness. Meanwhile, better opportunities for strategic alliances among local cultural museums must be sought, and strategies and operational mechanisms must be put forward to advance the development goals of "integration" and "added value."

### 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the foregoing review of the collective operational performance of the local cultural museums in Nantou County, the current section assesses these venues' operational advantages and potential paths to improvement. Specifically, the transformation strategies proposed as a result of provides this study are as follows:

Establishment of a cross-disciplinary value-added platform and establishment of operating income mechanisms: Nantou Country's local culture is characterized by the richness of its literature, calligraphy, and painting, as well as a long history of diverse local crafts that possess the dual qualities of beauty and practicality. The crafts scene has been assessed as the country's cultural industry having the greatest potential and output value.

Nantou County's steering group for cultural facilities operation, comprising government officials, third-sector representatives, and members of the public, combines expertise on local tourism, industries, and development, and maximizes external economic benefits in support of operations management and financial self-sufficiency. In terms of the platform's manner of operation, venues could cooperate with professional organizations in the development of cultural commodities, in-depth cultural experiences, and cultural courses that have potential to provide operating income for local cultural venues.

Through the establishment of a website for providing exhibitions, workshops, and a variety of activity-related information, a local cultural museum can leverage the consultation, promotion, and technical expertise offered by other nearby venues and build horizontal alliances based on mutual learning among the venues.

Local Cultural Museums should operate to achieve diffusion and transmission effects through derivative applications and cultural commodities consumption, such as the transformation of local artists after the development of cultural and creative commodities. Nantou County's government, museums, makers, and residents should spare no effort in developing Nantou crafts as a feature.

Reviews of the operation and management of each of these museums should carefully examine not only the repositioning of individual facilities in the face of operational conditions, or possible adjustments to their space allocations and equipment, but also their operational performance with reference to the development concept of the Nantou County cultural life. (as shown in Figure 3).

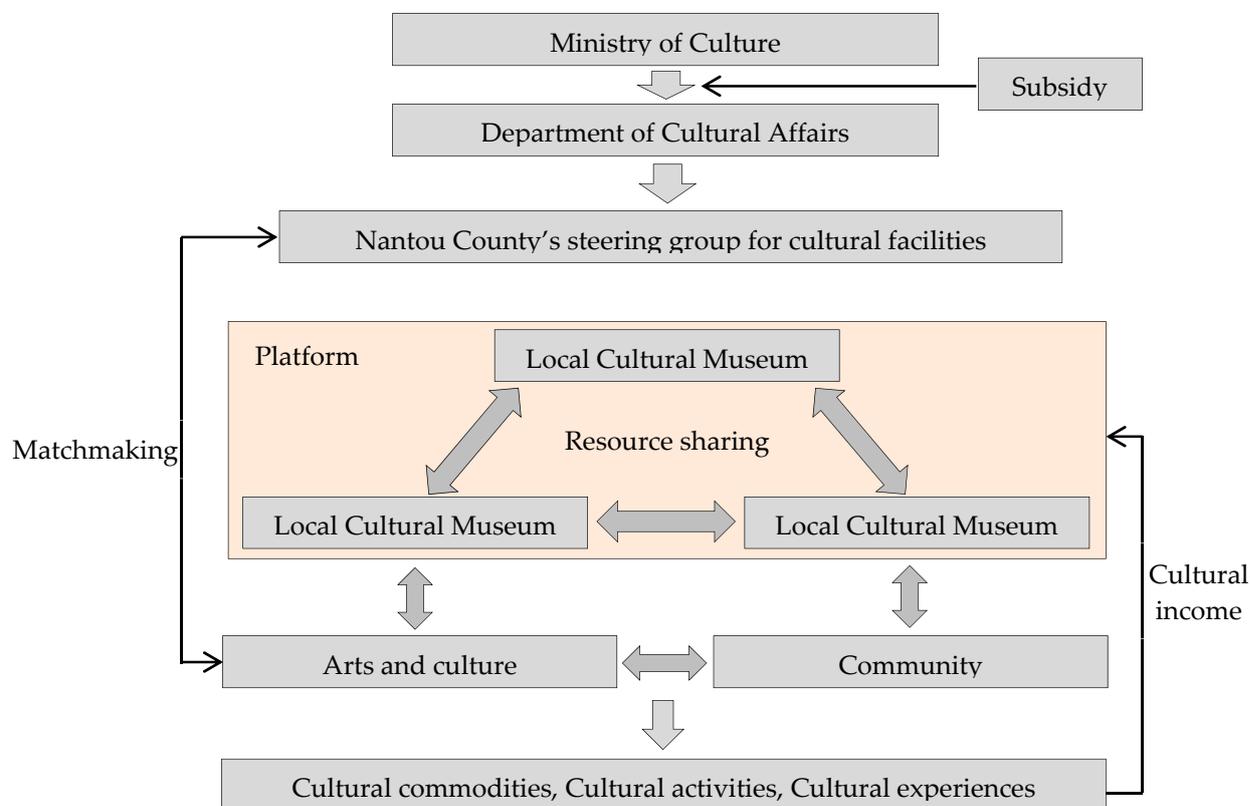


Figure 3. Local cultural museums platform cross-domain value-added model.

The local cultural museums apply for the planning content, from past exhibitions, we have begun to think about the theme and resources of the venues. Create profitable opportunities and work with schools, community or professional groups to develop cultural commodities or cultural experience courses, and Nantou County local culture centers to establish cooperation and link networks with each other. Nantou County will establish the cultural life of local cultural museums. For example, the Puli local cultural museum takes literature as its theme, works with neighboring Puli wineries to develop a combination of literature and wine, or a combination of literature and paper-making with Guang Hing paper. Through the arrangement of commodities trafficking and course activities, the energy of operating income of local cultural museums is gradually upgraded.

It is clear that, as a group, the venues would be strengthened if they had more similar themes and goals, both to each other and to cultural organizations and private cultural institutions located in the immediate area, and worked more closely with them to organize and coordinate cultural and artistic activities and training courses.

The objective of the local cultural museums in Nantou County is to achieve sustainable operations. The venues, through short and medium-term funding of the venues, explore the profitability of the direction and potential opportunities; through the long-term to create their own operating income modes, so that the venues can rely on operating income to maintain the venues. Finally, as the center of local communities, the cultural museums could link with local industry to establish a cultural living area.

In the future, in the face of revenue performance targets and creation to operating income, the local cultural museums in Nantou County will likely find that their greatest assets—apart from their exhibition and performance spaces themselves—are their programs of experience learning activities. With limited human resources, they must rely on the county's cross-disciplinary value-added development strategies and will increasingly require professional management support. Accordingly, this study proposes that a Nantou County local cultural development platform be established, and that a project-management approach derived from the private sector be applied to the museums' logistics and development mechanisms. Through the platform, promotion networks can be extended and resource-matching provided, with the overarching aim of promoting the consumption of cultural commodities having local features. The resulting income can then be used to organize more diverse interactive activities with the community. These, in turn, will create new opportunities for collaboration with other venues nearby, which can have a positive effect on both venue-rental and activity ticket-sales income.

**Acknowledgments:** We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions and feedback as well as the interviewed experts for their time and valuable insights.

**Author Contributions:** All authors contributed equally to this work. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Shih, C.-Y. How Can Museums Make Communities Work? A Case Study of the Jinguashi Area. *J. Mus. Sci.* **2012**, *26*, 29–39.
2. Lin, M.-M. The Museum as Urban Economic Catalyst: Example of Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. *J. Mus. Sci.* **2007**, *21*, 97–116.
3. Chiang, Y.-C. Community Cultural Museums and Local Cultural Industries: A case Study of the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum. *J. Mus. Sci.* **2006**, *20*, 81–98.
4. Taiwan Map ONLINE. Available online: <http://www.safetourbus.com> (accessed on 22 October 2017).
5. Lord, B.; Lord, G.D. *The Manual of Museum Management*; The Stationery Office: London, UK, 1997.
6. Lin, Y.-H. *A Study on Performance Assessment Indicators to Local Museums in Taiwan*; Feng Chia University Department of Land Management: Taipei, Taiwan, 2004.
7. Li, Z.; Fan, X. The Theory and Business Strategy of Signing Outsourcing. *Pers. Mon.* **2000**, *31*, 3–19.
8. Executive Yuan Cultural Construction Committee. *Executive Yuan Cultural Construction Committee Ninety Five Years to Subsidize the Municipality Directly under the Central Government and the County Government to Promote the "Local Cultural Museum Project" Operations Points*; Executive Yuan Cultural Construction Committee of Taiwan Government: Taipei City, Taiwan, 2006.
9. Report of World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). *Our Common Future*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1987.
10. Braat, L. *The Predictive Meaning of Sustainability Indicator, Search of Indicator of Sustainable Development*; Kluwea Academic Publishers: Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 1991; pp. 57–70.
11. Wang, S.-M. A Strategy Research of Local Cultural Museums Operation—A Case Study of Meinung Cultural Museum. Master's Thesis, Graduate Institute of Museum Studies, Tainan National University of the Arts, Tainan, Taiwan, 2004.
12. Zeng, X. The British Museum of Ecological Science—Iron Bridge Valley Museum. *J. Mus. Sci.* **1996**, *10*, 33–40.
13. Hsu, T.-K. A Research on Local Culture Museum within Experiential Economics Aspect: The Case Study of Cailiao Fossil Museum. Master's Thesis, Graduate Institute of Digital Content and Animation Design, Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taipei, Taiwan, 2012.
14. Chen, P.-W. Research Operate Patterns and Operational Issues for Local Cultural Museums in Taiwan. Master's Thesis, Graduate Institute of Cultural and Creative Industries, Tajen University, Yanpu Township, Pingtung County, Taiwan, 2016.
15. Huang, J.-Y. *Business Research Methods, National Institute for Compilation and Translation*; Tung Hua Book Co., Ltd.: Taipei City, Taiwan, 1999.

16. Wan, W.-L. The Application of Deep Interview in Qualitative Research. *Living Technol. Educ.* **2004**, *37*, 17–23.
17. Huang, I.-C. The Internal and External Network Governance of Ecomuseum in Taiwan and Japan—A Study of Local Museums in Yilan and Biwako. Master's Thesis, Graduate School of Design, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Douliu City, Taiwan, 2013.
18. Hsieh, M.-L. An Investigation of Economic Impact of Museum—Case Study of CHI MEI MUSEUM. Master's Thesis, Department of Fine Art, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan, 2017.
19. Yu, S.-H. Culture Governance and Operational Management of Dongshih Hakka Culture Park. Master's Thesis, Institute of Hakka Language and Communication, National United University, Miaoli City, Taiwan, 2015.
20. Lin, W.-H. A Study on the Revitalization Strategies for Aboriginal Cultural Museum—A Case Study on Pangcah Cultural Museum of Jian Township, Hualien County. Master's Thesis, Technology Department of Architecture, National Taipei University, Taipei, Taiwan, 2011.



© 2017 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).