

Exploring Inconvenient Silence: A Comparative Analysis of Setting up a Physical and Virtual Exhibition

Shari Eunice T. San Pablo
stsanpablo@up.edu.ph
University of the Philippines Open University, Philippines

Abstract: *Inconvenient Silence*, a virtual exhibit on mental illnesses, is a creative work that aims to educate and raise awareness about various mental health conditions using Frame. The exhibit explores the experiences of individuals living with mental illnesses through a collection of photographs that are interpretations of their experiences. The virtual exhibit takes visitors on a journey through the complexities of the mind and the challenges faced by those living with mental illnesses. Visitors are invited to share their struggles with mental health, including the challenges and stigma they have faced in seeking help and support. Through these stories, the exhibit aims to shed light on the often-invisible struggles of those living with mental illness and to encourage understanding and acceptance among visitors. It seeks to break the silence surrounding mental illness and to promote a more inclusive and supportive society for all. This creative work is an extension of the original physical exhibit wherein participants were also encouraged to share their inconvenient silences. "Inconvenient Silence" aims to break down stigma and promote mental wellness for all by bringing attention to the realities of mental health struggles and promoting understanding and compassion.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Mental Health Awareness, Comparative Analysis, Virtual Exhibition

INTRODUCTION

The Origin

During its debut in the National Commission for Culture and the Arts Gallery, the artist/researcher received great feedback on her works. Some people also reached out to me and told me about their stories and how the works have made an impact on them. The gallery walls were filled with their inconvenient silences— stories they might not have told anybody else but the safe space within the four corners of the gallery. One of the goals of the participatory exhibition was to address the indifference or dismissal of issues on mental health that need to be shattered to shed light on psychological afflictions that silently cripple a significant portion of the human population. Another goal is to open the discussion on factors through the freedom wall such as social stigma and social inequality that prevent people from getting access to proper medical treatment which has now been proclaimed as a basic human right (Republic Act No. 11036 or otherwise known as The Mental Health Act).

As an artist, the researcher expresses herself and communicates messages through art. This virtual exhibit allows visitors to experience the exhibit from the comfort of their homes or at a location of their choosing. They can use VR headsets, their computer, and even their mobile phones to explore the exhibit and interact with the content in a virtual environment. This new version was designed specifically for use in a virtual reality environment, allowing visitors to experience the exhibit in a completely immersive and interactive way.

This project started when the artist/researcher decided to become a mental health advocate because of the artist/researcher's best friend. It was circa 2016 when she was still trying to decide what she wants to do for her undergraduate thesis when one day, the thought just came to her. In her circle of friends, they do not talk about mental health aside from the occasional "kumusta ka?" (How are you?) The situation also got her thinking that there might be others in the same shoes who are also clueless about what their loved ones are experiencing, but they want to help.

Her involvement with the project is personal. It was more than just a partial fulfillment of a degree, but rather something that the artist/researcher hoped helped, and continues to help, other people even in a minuscule way.

Stigmatizing views about mental illness are not limited to uniformed members of the public; even well-trained professionals from most mental health disciplines believe in or agree with stereotypes about mental illnesses (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). Not only that, but stigma also comes from our families. In the Philippines, it has become deeply embedded in our culture that some people still use degrading names even those without mental illnesses.

The Virtual Twin

Virtual exhibits are becoming an increasingly popular way for museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions to engage with audiences around the world. Virtual exhibits allow for the creation of immersive, interactive, and accessible experiences that can reach a broader audience than physical exhibits alone. In a study by Cheong et al. (2019), virtual exhibits were found to have a positive impact on visitor satisfaction and learning outcomes. Similarly, in a study by Drotner and Dziekan (2019), virtual exhibits were found to offer new possibilities for engaging visitors and providing context and interpretation of cultural heritage. In Lin, Chen, & Lin's (2020) paper, they explored the efficacy of virtual reality (VR) in enhancing visitors' appreciation of painting art exhibitions. The study compared the experiences of participants who viewed a VR painting exhibition with those who viewed a traditional painting exhibition. The results showed that VR was more effective in enhancing visitors' sense of immersion and engagement, but there was no significant difference in appreciation of the artwork. The study suggests that VR can enhance the visitor experience in painting art exhibitions and offers a promising approach for exhibition designers to create more immersive and engaging experiences for visitors. Other studies have highlighted the potential for virtual exhibits to provide a more inclusive and diverse representation of cultural heritage (Jung et al., 2019; Johnson, 2020). Overall, the application of virtual exhibits is a promising approach for cultural institutions to engage with audiences and provide access to cultural heritage in new and innovative ways.

Research Purpose

In this context, Virtual Reality exhibits can offer a unique opportunity to create immersive and interactive experiences that are more inclusive and accessible to a wider range of visitors. For example, Virtual Reality exhibits can allow visitors to explore a virtual museum or exhibition space without having to navigate stairs or other physical barriers. The research study will explore how the experience of setting up a Virtual Reality exhibit can be used to enhance accessibility and inclusivity for different types of visitors with physical or other barriers, such as visitors with mobility impairments, autism spectrum disorder, or cognitive disabilities. It will explore the use of different design features and elements in creating a more inclusive and accessible experience, such as the use of sound, graphics, and interactive elements, and identify best practices and guidelines for designing and implementing effective Virtual Reality exhibits based on the experience.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS

The artist/researcher used a comparative analysis research design to explore the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a physical exhibit versus setting up a virtual exhibit. The sample will consist of personal reflections, observations, and informal interviews with visitors who have experienced the physical and/or virtual exhibit runs of Inconvenient Silence and who are also the participants of this research. The data collection process involved a combination of personal reflections, observations, and informal interviews, resulting in qualitative data on the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. The data will be analyzed using a comparative analysis approach, in which similarities and differences between physical and virtual exhibits will be identified and compared across the different sources of data.

This approach will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the unique advantages and disadvantages of each type of exhibit, as well as how they are perceived by different audiences. The study aims to contribute to the field of art, education, and VR by providing insights into how physical and virtual exhibits can be designed and implemented to effectively engage and educate visitors.

DISCLOSURE

The data provided is based on the article's author's experience and findings from the "Inconvenient Silence" exhibit. The effectiveness of a physical or virtual exhibit can vary depending on the specific exhibit and its design and implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

THE INFORMAL INTERVIEWS

The artist/researcher, who was known to some of the visitors but not to others, observed that people spent long periods carefully observing each piece. In one interview, a visitor said that reading the entries on the freedom wall (the participatory part of the exhibit) made her feel both heavy and comforted, seeing that she was not alone. Other visitors interviewed by the artist/researcher expressed similar sentiments, saying that the exhibit captured their feelings, the pictures spoke to them on a different level, and they felt seen.

There was some overlap in the reactions of visitors to the physical and virtual exhibits. However, some visitors who had experienced both versions said that there was still something different about being in physical space. They felt that the physical exhibit allowed them to connect with the art more viscerally and that the participatory element of the freedom wall was particularly impactful when experienced in person.

The artist/researcher was pleased with the overall reaction to the exhibit and felt that it had achieved one of its goals of creating a space for people to share their experiences and connect with each other. The way that the exhibit helped people to feel seen and understood is noteworthy. The artist/researcher felt that this was a valuable outcome and that it demonstrated the power of art to connect people on a deeper level no matter the version they encounter.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Creating a virtual twin of a physical exhibit can bring several benefits to both exhibitors and visitors. Firstly, it can increase accessibility to the exhibit, reaching a broader audience, including those who are unable to physically attend. The exhibit became an extension of the physical exhibit in the sense that whenever the artist/researcher gives talks about this project, new people can immerse themselves in the exhibit, providing a unique and engaging experience for visitors.

Secondly, it can allow for a more immersive experience, providing visitors with the opportunity to explore the exhibit uniquely and interactively. The virtual exhibit gives chances to people to access the exhibit no matter where they are. It includes all the same elements as the physical exhibit, including interactive displays, educational materials, and multimedia elements. The twin exhibit has been a great success, attracting a wide range of visitors and receiving positive feedback from those who have experienced it.

However, several challenges must be addressed when creating a virtual twin of a physical exhibit. Firstly, there is the challenge of recreating the exhibit with accuracy and authenticity. The virtual twin must accurately represent the physical space, exhibits, and artworks in a way that is visually and emotionally engaging. Secondly, there is the challenge of creating a seamless user experience that is intuitive and easy to navigate. The virtual exhibit should offer a user-friendly interface that is accessible to all visitors, regardless of their technical abilities.

Developing a virtual twin requires specialized software and hardware, which can be costly and time-consuming to develop and maintain. The artist/researcher used FRAME to create the virtual exhibit. Frame is a beta product from Virbela which allows users to make a metaverse, communicate as well as collaborate within that metaverse right from the web browser for free. (Frame, n.d.).

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

To better understand the advantages and disadvantages of physical and virtual exhibits, a comparative analysis was conducted. The analysis involved collecting data from personal reflections, observations, and informal interviews with visitors. The results of the analysis highlight the opportunities and challenges of creating a virtual twin of a physical exhibit.

Cost

In terms of cost, it is worth considering which option is more expensive to set up and maintain - a physical exhibit or a virtual one. Based on personal experience, it was found that the physical exhibit is generally more costly to set up, with expenses including venue rental, display materials, and labor costs. However, a grant from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in the Philippines was given to the artist/researcher to cover the expenses of the physical exhibit's first run in the NCCA Gallery in Intramuros, Manila. After that, the artist/researcher incurred expenses to transfer the physical exhibit to different schools. The virtual exhibit proved to be cost-effective as the artist/ did not pay for a virtual space, labor costs, or display materials. The virtual exhibit did not require any monetary expenses aside from the time invested in making the VR exhibit. There may be hidden costs associated with either option, which should also be considered when deciding which type of exhibit to pursue.

Educational Value

The educational value of an exhibit is an important consideration when deciding between a physical or virtual format. Both formats can provide unique opportunities for learning and engaging with the exhibit content. In the case of Inconvenient Silence, the goal is to break down stigma and promote mental wellness for all. Both physical and virtual exhibits can effectively achieve this goal, but they offer different opportunities for learning and engagement.

A physical exhibit allows visitors to experience the exhibit content in person, which can be a powerful way to engage with the artwork and learn about mental health issues. For visitors who are located near the physical exhibit, it can be a convenient and accessible way to learn about the topic. Additionally, physical exhibits can offer interactive features such as guided tours, workshops, or talks, which can enhance the learning experience and provide opportunities for discussion and engagement.

On the other hand, virtual exhibits can reach a global audience and provide an accessible way for visitors to engage with the exhibit content regardless of their location. Virtual exhibits can offer interactive features such as videos, audio tours, or 360-degree tours, which can provide a unique learning experience for visitors. Additionally, virtual exhibits can be accessed at any time, providing visitors with the flexibility to engage with the content at their own pace and on their schedule.

Overall, both physical and virtual exhibits can provide an effective learning experience for visitors, depending on their location and individual preferences. By offering a combination of physical and virtual exhibits, it is possible to reach a wider audience and provide an accessible and engaging educational experience that promotes mental wellness and understanding.

Audience Engagement

Audience engagement is an important factor to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of an exhibit. In this case, the question arises as to whether visitors are more engaged with a physical exhibit or a virtual one. It should be noted that in the present study, there were more visitors to the physical exhibit as compared to the virtual one. It is important to consider that there was little publicity for the virtual exhibit. Therefore, it can be argued that the level of engagement may have been influenced by the degree of promotion and the number of attendees, rather than by the inherent nature of the two exhibit formats. Further research may be required to establish whether there are any significant differences in audience engagement between physical and virtual exhibits, and how these differences may be attributed to various factors such as the mode of interaction and the level of interactivity.

Interactivity & Visitor Engagement

In terms of interactivity, physical exhibits offer hands-on participatory experiences for visitors, allowing them to physically interact with the displays. On the other hand, virtual exhibits offer an immersive experience, allowing visitors to explore the exhibits in a 360-degree view and providing them with additional information through text, images, and videos. While physical exhibits may provide a more tactile and sensory experience, virtual exhibits can provide a more in-depth and informative experience. However, the level of interactivity ultimately depends on the design and implementation of each exhibit, and both options can be engaging if executed well. For the descriptions of each piece, the artist/researcher strived to give the same level of personalization by using handwritten font instead of modern fonts or serif fonts. As for the virtual

As for visitor engagement, the physical exhibit had an estimated 300 responses from people who participated in writing on the wall by going to the designated area and expressing their thoughts. On the other hand, the virtual exhibit had less visitor engagement, with only a few people submitting entries on the virtual Freedom Wall. The

process for the virtual exhibit involved scanning a QR code or clicking on a link to submit their entries. Out of the 70 participants (60 students, and 10 symposium attendees), only 14 people submitted entries for the virtual freedom wall. However, during the artist/researcher’s talk to two classes at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, 18 out of 22 participants engaged in the Slido question and answer portion (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) for Class #1 while 17 out of 21 participants engaged in the Slido question and answer portion for Class #2 (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). This suggests that the physical exhibit was more successful in engaging visitors despite having the same participatory activity; the virtual exhibit needs more publicity and nudge so visitor engagement could be improved.

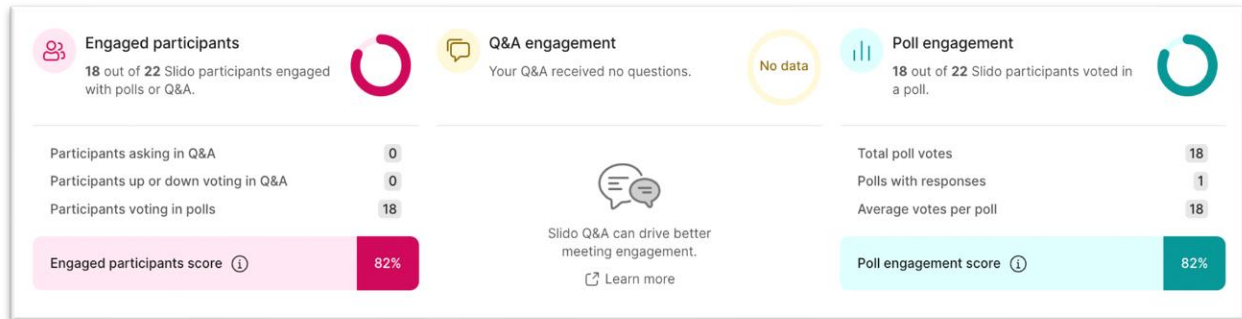


Figure 1. Slido Infographic (Class #1)

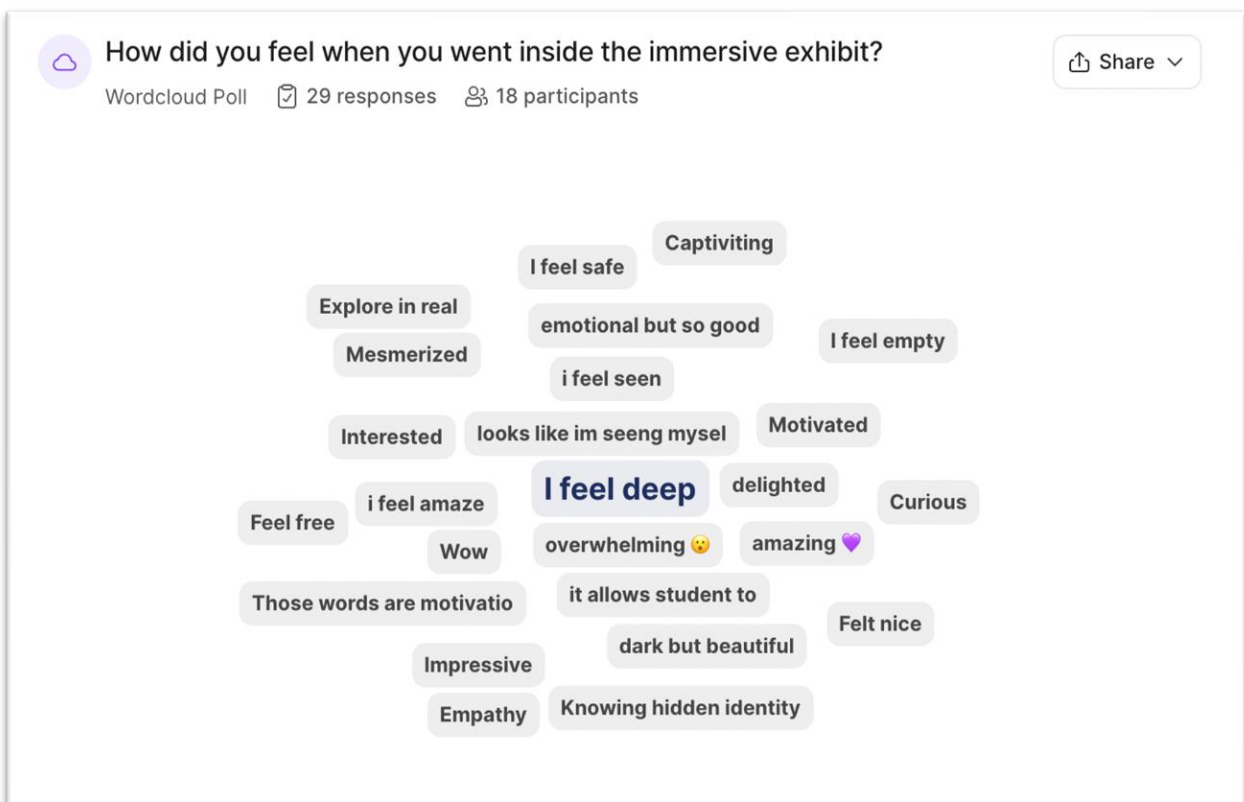


Figure 2. Word Cloud of Students’ Responses (Class # 1)

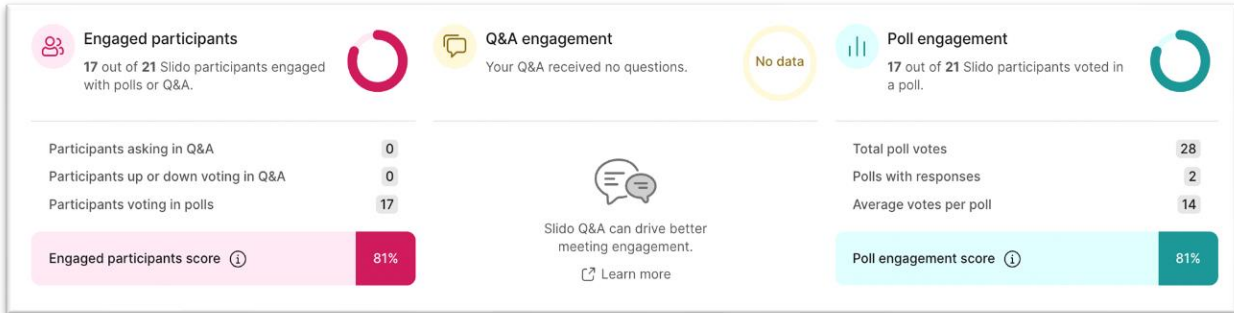


Figure 3. Slido Infographic (Class #2)



Figure 4. Word Cloud of Students' Responses (Class #2)

Accessibility

Accessibility is the idea of whether a product or service can be used by everyone—however, they encounter it. Although accessibility laws exist to help those with disabilities, designers should still make every effort to accommodate all potential users in a variety of contexts of use because doing so has clear advantages, most notably better designs for all (The Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.). When comparing a physical option to a virtual one, the virtual option is often more accessible to a wider range of visitors, including those with disabilities or limited mobility. This is because virtual experiences can be designed to accommodate a variety of needs and preferences, such

as providing alternative text descriptions of images for individuals with visual impairments or closed captions for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Additionally, virtual experiences can be accessed from any location with an internet connection, eliminating the need for physical transportation to a specific location. This can be especially beneficial for individuals with limited mobility or those who live in remote or rural areas. Overall, designing virtual experiences with accessibility in mind can make them more inclusive and accommodating to a wider range of visitors, including those with disabilities or limited mobility.

Technical Issues

FRAME is a cloud-based virtual exhibit platform that allows users to create and host virtual exhibitions online. It provides a variety of features, such as customizable templates, multimedia integration, and interactive elements, to create an immersive and engaging experience for visitors.

When using a new platform like FRAME, there can be a learning curve to understand its features and functionalities. However, in this case, the learning curve did not result in any significant technical problems during the setup process of the virtual exhibit.

Testing the virtual exhibit thoroughly before launch is a critical step in identifying and addressing any potential technical issues that may arise. It was found that since the virtual exhibit contains photos of large file sizes, the loading time is significantly slower both on laptops and mobile phones. It is essential to ensure that the exhibit works smoothly across different devices and web browsers and that the multimedia components are optimized for different internet speeds. By testing the virtual exhibit beforehand, any bugs or glitches can be addressed to minimize potential issues during the exhibition.

Having a stable and strong internet connection is also crucial when setting up a virtual exhibit. Poor internet connectivity can lead to slow loading times, buffering, and other technical issues that can hinder the visitor's experience. This potentially limits the participants to those with good internet connections, which may be an issue for some depending on the goals of the artists.

It is worth noting that even though the process of setting up a virtual exhibit went smoothly in the artist's case, it is important to be prepared to address any technical issues that may arise during the exhibition. Having technical support available and monitoring the exhibit regularly can help identify and address any issues quickly, ensuring that visitors have a positive experience.

Meanwhile, setting up a physical exhibit can present a wide range of technical issues and challenges. Some of the common technical issues that can arise during the setup of a physical exhibit include:

1. Space and layout

One of the most significant technical challenges when setting up a physical exhibit is ensuring that the space and layout are suitable for the exhibit. This includes ensuring that the exhibit fits into the space available and that visitors can navigate the exhibit comfortably.

2. Lighting and electrical issues

Exhibits often require specialized lighting and electrical requirements, which can be challenging to set up. For instance, some spaces do not have spotlights which may affect the overall appearance and experience for the audience.

3. Audiovisual and multimedia

Exhibits that include multimedia components such as audio or video require specialized equipment and setup to ensure that they are functional and provide an optimal experience for visitors.

Exhibiting work in different physical galleries can also present challenges beyond technical issues. It can be challenging to coordinate exhibitions across multiple locations, particularly if they involve different galleries or organizations. In some cases, there may be disagreements or arguments with the people involved in the different galleries regarding the exhibition's logistics, such as installation, scheduling, and fees. This can lead to delays or even cancellations, which can be frustrating for artists and visitors alike. Furthermore, exhibiting work in different locations often involves shipping or transporting the artwork, which can be costly and requires careful planning to ensure the

pieces arrive safely and on time. Depending on the size, weight, and fragility of the artwork, it may also require specialized packing and transportation, adding to the logistical challenges.

Overall, exhibiting work in multiple physical galleries can be a rewarding experience, but it requires significant effort and coordination to ensure a successful exhibition. By contrast, virtual exhibitions can offer a more streamlined and accessible experience for both artists and visitors, with fewer logistical challenges to navigate.

Aesthetic Quality

One of the key considerations when creating a virtual exhibit is whether it accurately and authentically represents the physical exhibit in terms of aesthetics and visual appeal. Visitors to the virtual exhibit should have a similar experience to those visiting the physical exhibit, in terms of the visual presentation and overall ambiance. In this case, the virtual exhibit has been deemed to represent the physical exhibit accurately and authentically in terms of aesthetics and visual appeal. This means that the virtual exhibit has successfully captured the essence of the physical exhibit, including the artwork's lighting, placement, and visual presentation. Creating an aesthetically pleasing virtual exhibit requires careful attention to detail and a thoughtful approach to the virtual exhibit's design. For example, using high-quality images and videos can help to showcase the artwork's details and textures. By accurately representing the physical exhibit's aesthetics and visual appeal, the virtual exhibit can provide an engaging and compelling experience for visitors who may not have had the opportunity to visit the physical exhibit. This can help to broaden the exhibit's reach and impact, potentially attracting new audiences.

Emotional connection

Creating an emotional connection between visitors and the artwork is an essential aspect of any exhibit, whether physical or virtual. The emotional connection can help visitors to engage with the artwork on a deeper level, fostering a sense of empathy and understanding that can enhance the overall exhibit experience.

While virtual exhibits can provide a compelling and engaging experience, there is a possibility that visitors may not form the same emotional connection with the artwork as they would with a physical exhibit. This is because physical exhibits offer a sensory experience that engages multiple senses, including sight, touch, and sometimes even smell or sound. Visitors can see the artwork up close, appreciate the textures and details, and often view the artwork from different angles. These elements can all contribute to forming an emotional connection with the artwork.

In contrast, virtual exhibits may not offer the same sensory experience, and visitors may only be able to view the artwork on a screen. While virtual exhibits can provide other interactive features such as videos, audio tours, or 360-degree tours, these may not be able to replicate the same sensory experience as a physical exhibit. It was evident when some of the students the artist/ spoke to during her talks when asked if they could still go to the physical exhibit. The informal interviews with those who experienced both the physical and virtual exhibits suggest that the physical exhibit was more effective in forming emotional connections than the virtual one. This highlights the importance of considering the emotional impact of the exhibit when choosing between physical and virtual exhibition formats.

However, virtual exhibits can still be a valuable and engaging format for showcasing artwork and connecting with audiences, particularly in situations where physical exhibitions are not feasible or accessible. By incorporating interactive features and high-quality visuals, virtual exhibits can still provide a compelling and engaging experience that can foster a sense of emotional connection with the artwork.

Publicity and Promotion

Publicity and promotion are crucial aspects of any exhibit, whether physical or virtual. It is important to ensure that the exhibit is well-publicized to attract a broad audience and increase awareness of the exhibit's content and purpose.

In terms of promoting the physical exhibit, there were various ways to generate interest and attract visitors. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) provided full support in terms of printed publicity materials, such as posters and flyers, as well as social media exposure through their official accounts. Additionally, the exhibit organizers reached out to relevant organizations, such as mental health advocacy groups, universities, and art communities, to spread the word about the exhibit.

As for the virtual exhibit, it is essential to have a strong online presence to promote the exhibit effectively. This can be achieved through social media campaigns, email marketing, search engine optimization, and online advertisements. However, it is also important to consider the potential limitations and challenges associated with promoting a virtual exhibit, such as the need for a strong online following and the competition for attention in the

online space. Since the virtual exhibit was a passion project of the artist/researcher, there may have been limited resources and time available for publicizing and promoting it. As a result, the virtual exhibit may not have received as much exposure or marketing as the physical exhibit, which was fully supported by the NCCA. However, the artist/researcher may have utilized her speaking engagements as an opportunity to promote the virtual exhibit and generate some interest.

Promoting a virtual exhibit may require different strategies. Since virtual exhibits are accessible through the internet, promoting them online is a critical aspect of generating interest and attracting visitors. This can include advertising on social media platforms, utilizing email marketing campaigns, creating a dedicated website for the exhibit, and partnering with relevant organizations or groups to increase visibility. Additionally, it may be possible to generate media coverage by pitching the exhibit to online publications or bloggers.

However, there may be limitations or challenges associated with promoting either option. For physical exhibits, limitations can include the cost of advertising and the challenge of reaching a broad audience, particularly if the exhibit is in a remote location or is not well-known. For virtual exhibits, challenges can include the competition for attention in the online space and the challenge of standing out in a crowded market.

Overall, promoting and publicizing an exhibit is crucial to its success, regardless of the format. While there may be limitations or challenges associated with promoting either a physical or virtual exhibit, using a combination of strategies and platforms can increase visibility and generate interest in the exhibit.

Longevity

When considering longevity or durability over time, a virtual exhibit generally has the advantage over a physical exhibit. A physical exhibit may deteriorate over time due to environmental factors such as light exposure, temperature fluctuations, and humidity, which can damage the materials used to create the exhibit. Additionally, physical exhibits require maintenance, repairs, and updates to keep them in good condition. On the other hand, a virtual exhibit can be accessed and preserved indefinitely if it is properly stored and maintained on a server. This means that it can be updated and modified easily to reflect new information or research.

In terms of longevity, a virtual exhibit has the potential to have a longer lifespan and be more durable over time than a physical exhibit. However, technological advancements can make virtual exhibits obsolete over time, requiring updates and upgrades to keep up with changes in technology.

To summarize the findings, a table of the advantages and disadvantages of physical and virtual exhibits is presented below:

Table 1

Advantages and Disadvantages of The Physical Exhibit Versus Virtual Exhibit

Considerations	Physical Exhibit	Virtual Exhibit
Cost	More expensive to set up, but may have hidden costs	Cost-effective, but may have hidden costs
Educational Value	Visitors can experience the exhibit in person	Can reach a global audience, accessible at any time, can offer interactive features, such as videos or audio tours
Audience Engagement	More attendees, but could have been influenced by promotion	Less engagement, and fewer attendees, but this may have been due to a lack of promotion
Interactivity	Hands-on participatory experience for visitors	The immersive experience, 360-degree view, provides additional information through text, images, and videos

Accessibility	May have limited accessibility for those with disabilities	Designed to accommodate a variety of needs and preferences, including those with disabilities
Setup	Technical challenges: space/layout, lighting, audiovisual/multimedia, coordination across galleries, shipping/transportation of artworks	Easy setup, no significant technical issues
Technical	Specialized lighting and electrical requirements need for specialized equipment for multimedia components	The learning curve for the new platform, loading time issues due to large file sizes, and stable internet connection required
Aesthetic	Engages multiple senses (sight, touch, smell, sound) and offers a sensory experience that engages visitors with the artwork	Accurately and authentically represents physical exhibit
Emotional	Offers a sensory experience that engages multiple senses and can foster a deeper emotional connection with the artwork	May not offer the same sensory experience and emotional connection with the artwork as a physical exhibit

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the exhibition industry, which has prompted the need to bring museums, exhibition centers, and art galleries online to revive it. These findings suggest that both physical and virtual exhibits have their unique advantages and disadvantages. It is important for exhibit creators to carefully consider these factors when deciding which format to use. By understanding the opportunities and challenges of each format, exhibitors can create exhibits that are engaging, accessible, and informative for a wide range of visitors.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has explored the benefits and challenges of exhibiting artwork through both physical and virtual exhibits. Through the analysis of the data collected, it has been found that virtual exhibits offer several advantages over physical exhibits, including accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and broader reach. Virtual exhibits also present some unique challenges, such as technical issues and potential limitations on the emotional connection of people with the artwork. Kim (2018) argues that virtual exhibitions have the potential to offer distinctive and engaging experiences for viewers, but it is important to pay attention to the communication factors that make them successful.

On the other hand, physical exhibits offer a sensory experience that can be challenging to replicate in a virtual setting. The physical exhibit presents its own set of challenges, including logistical issues related to space, lighting, and multimedia, as well as coordination between different galleries and organizations.

Overall, both physical and virtual exhibits have their strengths and weaknesses, and the choice between the two depends on several factors, including the exhibit's goals, audience, and resources. By understanding the benefits and challenges of each type of exhibit, artists, and organizers can make an informed decision about which approach best suits their needs. Users can be captivated, engaged, and even contribute to the ongoing updating of the exhibition through well-designed virtual exhibitions, which are significant extensions to physical exhibitions and offer discovery, learning, and other opportunities beyond what the physical exhibitions can provide (Foo, 2008b).

This research suggests that virtual exhibits are a viable and valuable option for exhibiting artwork, particularly in the current global context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ability to showcase artwork through virtual exhibits offers a unique opportunity to reach a wider audience, connect with viewers from different geographic locations, and explore new ways of presenting and experiencing art. As virtual exhibition technology continues to

advance, the potential for creating immersive and engaging virtual exhibit experiences for visitors will only continue to grow.

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