

**ASPECTS OF CULTURAL MANAGEMENT.
CASE STUDIES REGARDING
ARTISTIC FESTIVALS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

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Key words

Management, festival, Cluj area, competencies, competitiveness, risk, preferences

A considerable number of festivals are organized in Cluj County, the area benefiting from a rich cultural potential, managed by public institutions or non-governmental organizations. A summative look at the festivals organized in the area, which are over 50 (according to data provided by the Cluj-Napoca City Hall) demonstrates the public's attractiveness to this type of events, but also the image benefits in promoting the area and the financial benefits they bring to the local community. Success in organizing cultural events is often difficult to control, except for professional cultural institutions (operas, theatres, philharmonics) that have formed a constant audience by using valid and complex tools of cultural management and marketing.

Research on organizing cultural events has become a necessary topic due to the findings of the institutions under which such events take place: the high professional and artistic level of most events organized in Cluj (reported by the participating audience), poor organization and promotion as well as the shortcomings related to the financing of these artistic events require the professionalization of the field of cultural management, and also the need for specialists in fundraising, marketing and management.

In the present thesis, the applied research with emphasis on the quantitative approach brings an added value to the approached topic, by obtaining and interpreting useful data for the management of cultural organizations, which were then compared with the organizational management of a German festival. The methodology of the analyses, quantitative and qualitative, was based on surveys based on questionnaires and interviews; a total of 1500 questionnaires were administered, 1159 were processed, the rest being considered invalid due to their omissions. Following the collection of information, data was processed using statistical programs. The interpretation of the data, following their collection and statistical processing was achieved by applying inductive, deductive and comparative methods.

The research was conducted between 2016-2021, aiming to make a dynamic foray, the purpose of the surveys being to collect as much information as possible about the organization of festivals in Cluj, to analyse the hypotheses, as well as to study the proposed objectives.

A significant contribution of the research is the approach of the determining relationship between the use of management methods and techniques and the monitoring of the participants'

feedback. We consider that the judicious use of managerial tools provided by the science of management creates the premises for improving the organizational performance of cultural entities, while developing competitive advantages in the life of festivals. The interdisciplinary nature of this research is conferred by the use of methods, techniques and tools specific to other sciences (statistics, sociology, psychology) to study of phenomena in the field of management.

The management of festivals in the Cluj area was researched from various perspectives over six chapters, the paper presenting a structure that sought to investigate the following aspects:

- the need for managerial intervention in relation to the perception of the public participating in the events;
- the need to train cultural managers in relation to the competencies required in organizing such events;
- the level of expertise and specialization in the field of accessing financing;
- perception of the type of risk to which the institutions organizing festivals are exposed;
- the levels of intervention in increasing the performance of organizations (managerial tools, human resources);
- customising the specifics of the Cluj area in relation to the consumer profile.

In the **Introduction** of the paper there are briefly presented: the motivation for choosing the research topic as well as its importance and relevance, both from a theoretical and practical perspective. The purpose and objectives of the research, the major coordinates of the methodological and informational support as well as the expected scientific results are then stated. The introductory chapter concludes with a brief presentation of the general structure of the paper and the main content elements of the five subsequent chapters.

Chapter I, **Conceptual notions on art festivals** is aimed at the knowledge and understanding the concepts and notions related to cultural management, the organization of festivals and their monitoring practices in terms of existing publications in research in recent years. Articles published in international journals were consulted (e.g.: *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, *International Journal of Arts Management*, *Journal of Cultural Economics*, *Tourism Management*, *Entrepreneur Theory and Practice*, *Leisure Sciences*), contained in databases and quoted on international level.

Data collection was a preliminary phase of research of festivals through which the principles of approaching festival management were systematized, based on criteria used in recent studies (Wilson, Shaw, Pret, Arshed, 2017). The stages covered: data summary; creating criteria for systematizing information, future tools for analysing the festivals that are to be surveyed; generating conclusions with applicability for the thesis.

Chapter II. *The artistic manager: competencies and assumed roles* proposed, in a first section, the inventory and evaluation of the competencies that an artistic manager should have. All this was pursued from a double perspective, both of the managers, in order to outline the self-perception of the competencies and the self-configuration of the professional field in relation to this self-perception, as well as of the represented artists, both to validate the concrete exercise of these competencies, as well as to provide feedback with a corrective role to managerial activity.

The survey was conducted during 2017-2020, by online co-optation, based on a virtual posted questionnaire, to which 173 respondents answered, who took part in a number of 8 local artistic events:

- International Festival of Contemporary Ceramics *Caolin*
- *Cluj Modern* Contemporary Music Festival
- *Trio Transilvan* Festival
- *Elektro Arts* Electronic Art Festival
- *Clujotronic* Festival
- *Transylvania International Film Festival*
- *Imago Days* National Student Theatre Festival
- *Untold* Festival

Numerous classifications of managerial are present in the literature, it has been studied that the skills belonging to emotional, social and cognitive intelligence ensure an efficiency of organizational processes (Boyatzis, 2015). The results of the study mentioned that both managers and artists must adapt to the evolutionary dynamics of the professional environment, that in the current conditions the competencies of the manager are a requisite in order to develop the mental resilience of employees. In relation to the data collected from the questionnaire to identify managerial competencies, it was considered necessary to detail, through a dedicated questionnaire, the *Aspects in accessing funds to support art festivals*, based on a comparison between the experience gained in public institutions and non-

governmental organizations. By using the SPSS program, a statistical analysis was conducted, based on the responses of two samples of 30 respondents each.

In accordance with the answers of the festival organizers, we concluded that training and involvement of organizations in the field of accessing funding is required, as well as increasing the organization's capacity to inform and support the development of funds at the time of implementation.

Chapter III, *Comparative evaluation of the organizational perception in successive editions of two festivals that promote local music* focuses on the multidimensional assessment of two music festivals that promote music and local culture through different genres (cultivated music and traditional folklore) in Cluj County, addressing relevant categories (attendees, specialists, organizers, sponsors) and drawing a multifactorial diagnosis of the management and marketing of the two events based on the comparative evaluation of three editions of the *Trio Transilvan* festival and two editions of the *Cluj Modern* festival, including a section with suggestions for future editions of the festivals. During the documentation period we contacted the organizers of the two artistic events (Cluj County Culture Centre and the "Gheorghe Dima" National Academy of Music), in order to outline the hypotheses of the study and design the research tools.

Through the data collection techniques (questionnaire and semi-structured interview) and analysis used (qualitative, interpreting the information collected through the interview and quantitative, analysing the data collected using SPSS) an evaluation was carried out on the coordinates proposed in the research objectives: identifying solutions effective organizational structures that determine the success of cultural activities; capturing innovative managerial aspects in organizing festivals.

The methods used: the opinion poll, a species of sociological survey, to capture in a quantitative way the public opinion of the two events and the semi-structured interview, as a qualitative way to access the opinion of specialists, organizers and other stakeholders. The qualitative-quantitative mix is one that allows, on the one hand, the investigation of significant-motivational levels and, on the other hand, to be able to obtain a representative sample of data on the audience's perspective and its characteristics.

A separate section was devoted to a comparative organizational analysis between *the Cluj Modern* festival and the *Junger Künstler Bayreuth* Festival in Bavaria, starting from the diagnostic analysis carried out at the Bayreuth festival, through my participation as a volunteer, in which I organized interviews with the festival managers and I applied questionnaires to the organizing team.

Chapter IV aimed to carry out an *Analysis of the risk involved in the Cluj Modern and Trio Transilvan festivals*, following the initiation of a theoretical approach in which hypostases in risk management research were captured. The results indicated that compared to those responsible for the *Trio Transilvan* festival, the organizers of *Cluj Modern* recognize the possibility of facing major risks, caused by: insufficient or incompetent human resources, insufficient funds, dependence on public participation, insufficiently controlled locations or dependent on weather conditions. The application of a management focused on the design and implementation of measures based on the identification of possible risks, based on risk analyses, contributes to limiting their effects.

Chapter V proposes a *Comparative study on the preferences of the audience*, aiming at the analysis of the options that the public participating in the festivals in Cluj has in comparison with the participants in events organized in other regions, at national level. The answers obtained from the attendees of the festivals were used: *Cluj Modern*, 2017 and 2019 editions; *Trio Transilvan*, 2019 edition; *Elektro Arts* and *Clujotronic*, 2019 edition. These were related to data from the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training within the Romanian Ministry of Culture within the Cultural Consumption Barometer for 2018 (*Cultural Consumption Barometer 2018. An x-ray of cultural consumer practices* www.culturdata.ro).

The data were analysed in the following directions: preference for certain musical genres, frequency of the audience of hearing certain genres, audience categories, human genders and age categories, level of education.

Chapter VI, *Perspectives for increasing competitiveness in the cultural sector* analysed comparatively, for two years (2018-2019), the evolution of the performance level of the mentioned festivals, with the preliminary presentation of a set of meanings on competitiveness, managerial tools and the role resources in cultural organizations. In this chapter, the two plans in which the research process presented in the previous chapters took place (analysis of managerial competencies and the level of management perception of several festivals) are brought together, taking the next step by investigating possible causal relationships between them. Regarding the increase of the performance (competitiveness) of the institutions engaged in the organization of festival events, some recommendations can be made which are supported by the results obtained and by the interpretation of the data from the questionnaires:

- diversification of management methods;
- encouraging and supporting employees to acquire new skills / develop existing ones;
- involvement of employees in the decision-making process to a greater extent.

In order to streamline the application of financial and “budgeted” management methods, it is necessary to encourage the participation of managers and employees in training courses in the field of accessing funding, a conclusion that emerged from the answers given by respondents to the funding questionnaire by validating hypothesis H1 in the study on growing the competitiveness of cultural institutions: “Management through projects and budgets is the main system of organization used in coordinating events.”

The paper ends with a chapter dedicated to the final considerations, in which the main *Conclusions* of the paper are presented, highlighting the extent to which the results are consistent with the research objectives. Also in this chapter reference is made to the relevant personal contributions (both theoretical and empirical), mentioning the ways of disseminating research results and possible directions for future approaches.

Through the results obtained in the surveys conducted at the eight festivals in the Cluj area, based on predefined questionnaires or created by interviewing experts in the field, we expect that in the future there will be an evolution in their organizational decisions, multidirectional approaches of stakeholders to:

- employing professionals in organizing festival events;
- approaching a repertoire (artistic genre) with addressability to a more varied audience;
- organizing events in locations that add value to festivals, expanding performances in non-conventional spaces;
- adapting organizations to the opportunities created by digitization and multimedia arts;
- supporting employees for professional development;
- media coverage of events in larger geographical areas and through various channels (radio, online media, social networks);
- a better orientation of the promotion, knowing better the socio-demographic features, the musical and information preferences of the public.

The relevance of this research consists, on the one hand, in the rigorous study of the specialized literature, especially in the international literature, and on the other hand, in the applied research undertaken. Thus, through the theoretical foray, a set of current information on festival management, their evaluation tools and knowledge of the need to improve management is presented synthetically, these being aspects of particular importance in establishing the criteria for analysing festivals in the Cluj area. The applied approach led to the formulation of suggestions for improving the competitiveness or the organizational

performance based on the development of managerial competencies specific to the cultural field, as well as in relation to the requirements of the public attending events such as festivals.