

Aspects of Risk Factors in Two Digital Art Festivals

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Abstract

The present study aims to highlight some risk factors in staging two digital art festivals, from the perspective of the organizers and of the audience. We corroborated the results of two questionnaires that were used following the 2018 editions of the Electro Arts Festival, centred on organizing artistic events resulted from the alignment of technology with visual images, music and dance, and Clujotronic, which included experimental and interdisciplinary installations projects with electronic music, visual art and independent digital games. Statistical correlations were found in the different types of risks and their triggering factors; the results indicated the interdependence between the two perspectives in assessing the events in question.

Key words: risk, management, festival, audience

J.E.L. classification: Z11, Z19

1. Introduction

Market research can influence organizational decisions by providing useful information on the success parameters of a festival, identifying links between the objectives pursued and the potential of an event, by exposing the client's characteristics, motivations, preferences, promotional tools (Hvenegaard, 2011, pp.373- 386). The success in organizing cultural events is often uncontrollable, as artistic events are subject to risks that are strongly determined by the fluctuation of the public. Cultural institutions (operas, theatres, philharmonic orchestras) using professional tools for cultural management and marketing succeeded in forming a constant audience, streamlining, in many instances, the production of periodic events such as festivals.

The present research aims at responding to the necessities of identifying possible risks in the organization of two artistic events, which are held every year in Cluj-Napoca, emphasizing a direct relationship with the opinion of the consumers of digital art, through the assessment of the festival performances along multiple coordinates.

The *Elektro Arts* festival, dedicated to digital arts, brings together in Cluj numerous composers, choreographers, visual artists, dancers, directors, being organized by the Art and Design University, the Faculty of Theatre and Television of the Babes Bolyai University and the *Gheorghe Dima* Music Academy.

The festival is divided in three distinct parts:

- artistic competition (installation art and mixed media, digital photographic art, electroacoustic music);
- interdisciplinary creation (technology and dance, mixed music and video art performance, acousmatic music and interactive visual image);
- technological innovation (the 2018 edition employed computer software for gesture control).

This type of production is intended to develop the ability of the performer to interact on stage with the sound and visual image generated by a computer. Similarly, the dancer is given the opportunity to mould, through gestures, the digital audio-visual environment in real time.

The *Clujotronic* Digital Art Festival (organized mainly by the German Cultural Institute and the French Institute in Cluj-Napoca) presents experimental projects every year, among which we mention the innovative projects that generated a large audience participation: the *kinetic sculpture* consisting of robots which produced live electronic music on a combination of choreography and video mapping; two installations created by professors and students from the Art and Design University in Cluj that animated the inner courtyard of the festival's venue, through interactive sound and light mechanisms; video games, one of the most widespread environments where art combines with technology, propelling innovations and playing an essential role in modern culture and art.

2. Theoretical background

Festival management is an area of research which emerged only after the ninth decade of the last century, focusing on studies on feasibility, administration, design, marketing, operations and risks (Larson, 2002, pp. 119-143). In the opinion of Wilson J. et al., (2017, pp.195-213), there can be delineated five strands of research on festivals, namely: motivation, experience, location, impact and event management, in regard of which the authors argued for the need of an integrative approach to festival management, which should account for the factors underlying the initiation of festivals, their staging and management, their outcomes and the interaction among them (Getz et al., 2010, pp. 29-59). One must also have in view the broader context of the environment in which festivals operate (Edwards, 2012, pp.517-527), as using an integrated framework would allow the festival research to extend beyond management functions. Such an example would be the monitoring of the existing interactions between the extended community networks involved in planning and managing the festivals (Andersson et al., 2013, pp. 621-634). It is believed that in this way the festival management studies would be significantly improved as business operations are, in one way or another, carried out within social structures (Andersson et al., 2013, pp. 621 -634).

The organizations involved in the management of festivals may belong to different sectors: culture, arts universities, non-governmental organizations, various educational structures, cultural industries, the media, with the main task of creating unique artistic products; the cultural industries promote the reproductions thereof on the market, and the media sector facilitates their direct transmission to consumers. Although the mission of cultural institutions is predominantly social, being oriented towards obtaining an artistic product, cultural organizations are exposed to risk situations when organizing cultural events. The level of risk of a festival, for example, is unpredictable, since an artistic representation is in fact a non-material product with a frequently unexpected path of evolution, thus likely to generate unpredictable risks.

A prediction of the probability of success or failure as well as a feasibility study could provide simple estimates, and in the case of larger, higher risk events, a thorough research of operational and managerial features (Frost, Laing 2015, pp.1-20) would allow for effective decisions. The initial feasibility study usually takes into account two aspects: market research and an initial financial risk study. The most common is the financial risk, as well as the functionality and quality of the events presented.

3. Methodology of the research

A multidirectional survey was carried out for the two artistic events in our study, *Elektro Arts* and *Clujosonic*, which, in a comparative approach, was aimed at exploring the risks that may occur in organizing the two festivals from a double perspective, of organizers and consumers. The investigation was conducted on the basis of two questionnaires, one for measuring the potential risks (strategic, operational, financial, human, commercial, environmental, etc.), which was distributed to the organizers (managers, consultants, technical staff coordinators, authors of digital projects), cumulating a number of 31 respondents who completed the surveys.

The second survey was completed by the attendees, at the end of the events; 150 questionnaires were filled in. The investigation targeted the collection of data on audience segmentation, promotion of the two events, assessment of the artistic performances and of the way in which the activities were organized.

A descriptive statistic (frequencies, percentages) for certain questions in the risk questionnaire was drawn and subsequently correlations were made with separate questions from the audience questionnaire, thus trying to estimate the perception of the two categories on the type of risks which may incur as well as of the factors that trigger them.

4. Results

The results that indicated an identical or different perception of potential organizational and participatory risks with statistically significant data were obtained in the following coordinates:

a. Study on the risk of customer dependence

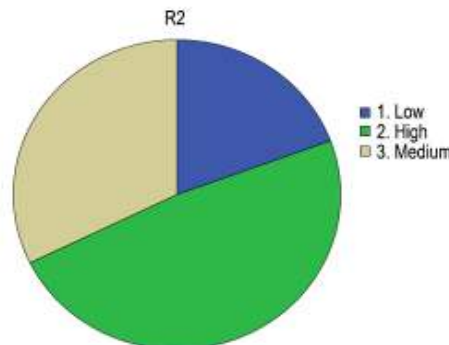
Table no. 1. The risk of customer dependence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	6	4.0	19.4	19.4
	2.00	15	10.0	48.4	67.7
	3.00	10	6.7	32.3	100.0
	Total	31	20.7	100.0	
Missing	System	119	79.3		
Total		150	100.0		

Source: own projection, using SPSS

In the opinion of the organizers, the level of this type of risk is medium to high, the success of a festival being conditioned by the attendance at the event:

Figure no. 1. The risk level of audience dependence



Source: made by author based on data from questionnaires

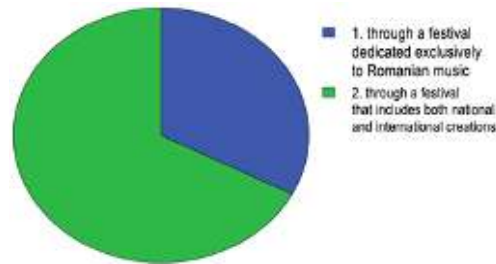
The attendee questions had in view the reasons which attract the public to this type of festivals. The question that realized the correlation with the mentioned risk factor was: *In your opinion, which of the following variants do you consider to be the best way to promote cultural values?*

Table no. 2. Respondents' opinion (frequencies)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	49	32.7	32.7	32.7
	2.00	101	67.3	67.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: own projection, using SPSS

Figure no. 2. Respondent response chart



Source: made by author based on data from questionnaires

Table no. 3. The correlation between the risk of customer dependence and their opinion on the type of activity

		RR2	B
R2	R	Pearson Correlation	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	-.488**
		N	.005
B	R	Pearson Correlation	-.488**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
		N	31

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: own projection, using SPSS

Source: own projection, using SPSS

The statistical analysis highlights a correlation between the risk of customer dependence and the attendees' desire for the promotion of both national and international creations, in the sense that if a small percentage of customers are unsatisfied (with the genre and quality of the repertoire), the risk of failure increases (this is the reason of the minus sign, thus of the inverse correlation between the variables). The result is statistically significant, as $p = 0.005 < 0.01$.

b. Study of existing correlations between different types of risks

Table no. 4. Correlation between the inappropriate planning and the risk of customer dependence

			Correlations	
			R1	R2
1	R	Pearson Correlation	1	.711**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	31	31
2	R	Pearson Correlation	.711**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	31	62

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: own projection, using SPSS

Source: own projection, using SPSS

The results indicate a very good correlation, $R = 71.1\%$, indicating that an inappropriate planning implies a strategic risk and will attract few customers to this type of events.

Table no. 5. Correlation between the strategic risk and the lack of technical capacity / reduced resources

			Correlations	
			R1	R3
1	R	Pearson Correlation	1	.620**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	31	31
3	R	Pearson Correlation	.620**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	31	31

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: own projection, using SPSS

Source: own projection, using SPSS

The strategic risk, manifested through an inadequate planning, can lead to an operational risk, as evidenced by the resulting data from the correlation of the two elements, where $R = 62\%$.

Table no. 6. Correlation between the risk of customer dependence and lack of technical capacity

		R3	R2
3	R	1	.726**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	31	31
2	R	.726**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	31	62

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

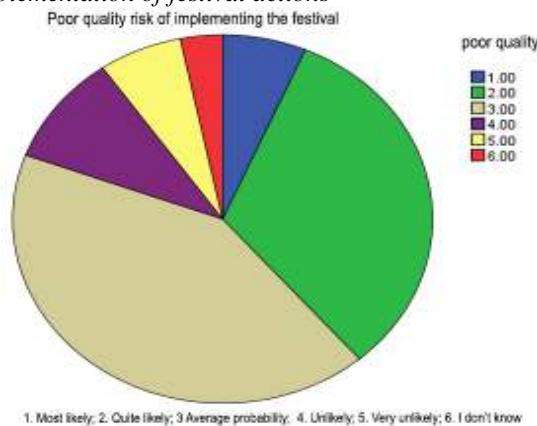
Source: own projection, using SPSS

The correlation is evident in the sense that the lack of resources may affect the organization of the event; the correlation coefficient is $R = 72.6\%$.

c. Study on the correlations between risks perceived by organizers and attendees

In the risk questionnaire addressed to the organizers, we tried to identify some actions that might influence the unfolding of the event; one of the parameters studied statistically was *the poor quality of event implementation*.

Figure no. 3. Level of implementation of festival actions



Source: made by author based on data from questionnaires

Table no. 7. Correlation between the poor quality of event implementation and the adequacy of the repertoire

		Poor quality	D2
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.845*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.034
	N	31	6
D2	Correlation Coefficient	-.845*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.
	N	6	6

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: own projection, using SPSS Source: own projection, using SPSS

The chart shows an obvious inverse correlation ($R = 84.5\%$), in the sense that if the repertoire is not suitable for the theme of the festival, the risk of affecting the unfolding of the event is very high.

Table no. 8. Correlation between the poor quality of event implementation and the artists' performance
Correlations

		Poor quality	D4
Spearman's rho	Poor quality	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.034
		N	31
D4		Correlation Coefficient	-.845*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.034
		N	6

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: own projection, using SPSS

The resulting correlation reveals a high inverse relationship (R = 84.5%), respectively, if the performance of the artists is considered unsatisfactory, the risk of affecting the unfolding of the event is the same, very high.

5. Conclusions

The present study realized a statistical correlation between the perception of the people involved in organizing the *Elektro Arts* and *Clujosonic* festivals and the attendees at the two artistic events. The results obtained revealed that the strategic risk (considered by the organizers as having a medium to high possibility to appear) can lead to an operational risk as well as the low public frequency at events.

The audience confirmed this finding, indicating that the quality of the repertoire, its suitability for the festival theme as well as the prestige and performance of artists, may generate a risk of impact and consequently the failure of the event. It is considered in this sense that the audience perception of the promotion of the two events is extremely useful for the festival management, as demonstrated by the fact that the organizers consider that the dependence on customers represents a major risk, the results proving the correlation between the two evaluations discussed.

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