

CULTURAL MANAGEMENT. THE CASE STUDY OF *THE RÂȘNOV FILM AND HISTORIES FESTIVAL*

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Abstract: *Cultural festivals are increasingly important in community development, combining artistic, educational, and identity dimensions. Yet, they face challenges similar to small and medium-sized enterprises, such as unstable financial resources, reduced teams, and strong competition in a diversified cultural market. This paper investigates the case of the Râșnov Film and Histories Festival (FFIR), organized by the Mioritics Association, using an integrated approach that combines classical management tools – SWOT, STEP, Porter's Five Forces, and the value chain – with data collected through a participant questionnaire. The findings show that the festival operates as a cultural micro-enterprise, generating value through symbolic capital, program diversity, and community involvement, while struggling with financial limitations, the absence of an extended team, and the lack of formalized procedures. The external analysis revealed both opportunities and risks, with high public interest but also intense competition. The questionnaire confirmed high satisfaction and loyalty among participants. The study concludes that applying management tools enhances the sustainability of cultural events and underlines symbolic capital and audience satisfaction as critical drivers of long-term success.*

Key words: *cultural management, festivals, strategy, cultural development, cultural events.*

1. Introduction

Culture is a key driver of contemporary societies, combining identity, educational, economic, and social dimensions. In recent decades, festivals have evolved beyond entertainment into platforms for community dialogue, cultural heritage promotion, and urban revitalization. Their organization requires managerial skills similar to those in economic enterprises.

In Romania, festivals have expanded significantly over the past two decades, reflecting both public demand and local identity needs. Yet, they face structural challenges such as

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scarce resources, audience retention, competition with other cultural products, and volatile funding. Success thus depends on integrating cultural and managerial approaches.

Specialists agree that cultural management is a growing field. Like small and medium enterprises, cultural organizations must plan resources, attract funding, build partnerships, communicate effectively, and remain relevant, while also adapting to specifics such as volunteer involvement, dependence on external financing, and the importance of symbolic capital.

While many Romanian festivals have gained visibility through diverse programs and audiences, they often lack long-term strategies, stable funding, and strong teams. These issues also characterize the Râşnov Film and Histories Festival (FFIR), noted for its interdisciplinarity, focus on history and society, and strong community involvement.

Although management literature provides numerous tools (SWOT, STEP, Porter's Five Forces, value chain), their application to festivals is insufficiently documented, and little is known about public perceptions or community impact. FFIR offers a relevant case, combining screenings, debates, concerts, and exhibitions, while also facing limited resources, competition, and funding volatility. This justifies the case study and the integrated analytical approach.

The research aims to show how management tools can be applied to cultural events through the FFIR case study, combining theory with empirical insights from a participant questionnaire to provide a comprehensive view of the festival's management and impact.

To guide the research, three working hypotheses were formulated:

- Hypothesis 1: Cultural festivals face similar challenges to small and medium-sized enterprises, and their sustainability depends on the application of modern management tools.
- Hypothesis 2: The Râşnov Film and Histories Festival has a significant impact on the image and cultural attractiveness of the city of Râşnov.
- Hypothesis 3: Public satisfaction is high, which supports the long-term sustainability of the festival.

By validating or invalidating these hypotheses, the research contributes to understanding the specifics of cultural management and formulating useful recommendations for organizers of similar events.

2. Literature review

Management, in the classical sense, is the process of coordinating resources to achieve established objectives. Henri Fayol (1916) was the first to systematize the fundamental functions of management, defining them as planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. These functions were later reinterpreted by various authors, but they remained reference points for management theory and practice. His concept was adopted and developed by numerous authors, including Griffin (2021), who presented management as an integrated process of coordinating resources, and Daft (2021), who emphasized the dynamic dimension of the managerial process, adaptable to environmental changes. Peter Drucker (1995) emphasized the pragmatic dimension of management, considering it a process of achieving results thru people, highlighting that

management is necessary in all modern organizations, but especially in non-profit ones, where the efficiency of limited resources becomes crucial.

The strategic dimension of management was analyzed by Henry Mintzberg (1973), who highlighted the complexity of managerial roles and proposed a classification of strategies, and by Michael Porter, who developed the five forces model and the value chain, useful tools for evaluating competitiveness and internal processes. These theoretical frameworks, although developed for the economic environment, prove to be adaptable to the cultural sector as well, offering a way to understand the dynamics of festivals and non-profit organizations.

Regarding cultural management, the literature emphasizes the specific nature of organizations operating in the artistic and educational fields. Sfetcu (2016) defines cultural management as the application of managerial principles to the organization of cultural activities, highlighting its role in leveraging symbolic resources and creating community impact.

Cultural management is defined as a branch of contemporary management, but also as part of culturology, starting from the idea that within a cultural system, conscious human activity plays the role of organizing, educating, and guiding spiritual development. The fundamental objective is to identify organizational solutions capable of maximizing the efficiency of cultural activities at both the social and economic levels. Specialized literature distinguishes two major dimensions: one analytical-descriptive, focused on researching and describing existing forms of organization, and one of design-modeling, oriented toward the development of new methods and tools for cultural management (Ikel, 2006).

At the macro level, research in the field suggests combining these two directions, which is also reflected in the present study, which combines a descriptive analysis of the organization and the festival with the proposal of models and tools aimed at optimizing cultural-economic activity.

Regarding event management, it is understood as the process of planning and implementing time-limited social occasions involving an audience and pursuing multiple objectives, influenced by various stakeholders involved. From this perspective, event management brings together the practical tools, resources, and expertise needed to coordinate the execution of activities and achieve the established objectives (Els, Reed, Mawer and Pielichaty, 2016).

Festivals, as complex cultural products, constitute a privileged ground for analyzing cultural management. They generate economic effects by attracting tourists and stimulating local consumption, social effects by bringing the community together and involving volunteers, and also symbolic effects by strengthening local identity and creating a positive image of the city. At the same time, festivals face significant risks, such as funding volatility, competition with other events, and the difficulty of measuring long-term impact.

In this context, the specialized literature proposes the use of established analysis tools, such as SWOT analysis, STEP analysis and Porter's Five Forces model. Also, tools like Gantt charts are used for planning and monitoring activities. These tools, although initially

developed for the economic sector, can be successfully adapted for cultural organizations and festivals, providing a useful analytical framework for improving management.

3. Methodology

The research is based on the case study method, applied to the Râșnov Film and Histories Festival, organized by the Mioritics Association. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth analysis of a concrete and complex phenomenon, offering the possibility to capture both the theoretical dimensions of cultural management and their practical applicability. Case studies are a frequently used method in social and economic sciences, especially when the research objective is to understand the specifics of an organization or event within a specific context.

Several established tools from the specialized literature were used for the research, adapted to the specific characteristics of the cultural field. The external environment analysis was conducted using the STEP model and Porter's Five Forces model. The internal environment assessment was conducted thru SWOT analysis, as well as thru the application of the value chain, which highlights the primary and support activities that generate value.

In parallel, the fundamental functions of management were analyzed from the perspective of their application in organizing the festival. This theoretical framework allowed for capturing how classic management processes are reflected in a cultural context characterized by specificities such as volunteer involvement, dependence on external funding, and the role of the community.

An additional element of the methodology was the application of a questionnaire addressed to the festival audience, which aimed to capture the participants' perceptions and experiences. The questionnaire had 40 respondents and was conducted online. It included questions about their socio-demographic profile, how they found out about the festival, their motivations for participating, their level of satisfaction, and their intention to return for future editions. This empirical component allowed for testing the hypothesis regarding the festival's impact on the image of the city of Râșnov and the hypothesis concerning the high level of audience satisfaction.

The data necessary for conducting the analysis were obtained from several sources: documentation of the activities of the Mioritics Association, a study of financial reports and projects undertaken, the application of the aforementioned management tools, and responses to the questionnaire. Additionally, observations from the organizers' direct experience and publicly available information were integrated, which allowed for the formation of an overall picture of the management process.

The objective of the methodology was to integrate established management tools with the empirical analysis of public perceptions into a coherent research study capable of highlighting the specific characteristics of a cultural festival and offering recommendations for improving its sustainability. In this regard, the adopted methodology combines quantitative elements, thru the analysis of questionnaire data and financial and structural indicators, with qualitative elements, thru the interpretation of organizational processes and relationships with the actors involved.

4. Case study: The Râşnov Film and Histories Festival and the Mioritics NGO

4.1. Râşnov Film and Histories Festival Overview

The Râşnov Film and Histories Festival is the most important cultural project of the Mioritics Association. Launched in 2009, the festival aims to promote documentary and art films, as well as stimulate public debate on topics of history, culture, and society. The event takes place annually for a minimum of ten days in locations such as the Râşnov Fortress or local cinemas, bringing together film screenings, debates with guests from academia and journalism, concerts, exhibitions, and educational workshops.

The festival stood out for its interdisciplinary approach and for creating a space for dialog between artists, historians, journalists, and the general public. Over time, FFIR has become a landmark in the Romanian cultural landscape, attracting participants from various regions and solidifying the image of the town of Râşnov as a cultural destination.

4.2. SWOT Analysis of the Râşnov Film and Histories Festival

In the case of the festival, the strengths are represented by its acquired reputation, program diversity, local community involvement, and the symbolic value associated with the event. The weaknesses refer to the lack of coherent external communication, the small team, and the absence of formalized management procedures. The opportunities are related to the potential for audience expansion, attracting additional sponsors, and developing cultural tourism in the area. Threats include competition with other similar festivals, funding volatility, and changing audience preferences.

The synthesis of these elements is presented in Table 1, which highlights both the strengths and opportunities, as well as the vulnerabilities of the festival.

SWOT Analysis of FFIR

Table 1

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The festival team • The specific focus/theme of the festival • The variety of components • Different target groups depending on the activity • Unique venues (e.g., the Râşnov Citadel garden) • Stable partnership with local and regional authorities • Trust and reliability demonstrated to partners and collaborators • Relaxed and friendly atmosphere • Involvement in community life • Cultural quality of the events offered to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a niche festival, attracting private funding is difficult • Lack of a person specialized in sponsor relations • Limited national-level communication • Festival location outside a major urban area • Insufficient promotion • Lack of specialized staff for certain positions • Distance from the audience at certain events (e.g., debates) • Absence of concrete procedures and action plans

<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changing consumption trends toward small and medium-sized events ● Funding from individual sponsors ● Râșnov's attractiveness as a tourist destination ● No other festivals encompass all the components of this event ● Large number of people within the target audience ● Possibility of new public and private partnerships ● The local audience (Brașov county) shows a high level of participation in events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fluctuating legislation that creates crises for companies with sponsorship potential ● Saturated local cultural environment ● Cultural events with free admission ● Apathy and panic generated by political, health, military, and economic crises ● A possible lockdown or restrictions on holding cultural events ● A “tired” audience preferring entertainment events over debates/lectures

4.3. External Environment Analysis: STEP and Porter

The STEP analysis reveals that the socio-cultural environment is favorable, with the public showing interest in cultural and educational events. From a technological perspective, digitalization offers opportunities for promoting and disseminating content, but it also requires rapid adaptation to new trends. The economic environment is marked by the volatility of financial resources, and the political environment influences the cultural sector thru funding policies and applicable regulations. The structuring of these factors is shown in Table 2, providing a comparative overview of the social, technological, economic, and political dimensions.

STEP Analysis of FFIR

Table 2

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Social factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acceleration of digital technology adoption as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic ● Increased public desire to return to cultural events after 2022 ● Cultural consumption practices influenced by education level and age (higher participation among 18–29-year-olds and those with higher education) ● Cities such as Cluj, Timișoara, Brașov, and Sibiu have populations oriented toward entertainment and social activities ● Lower participation in cinema and music events among audiences with lower education levels or older age groups 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Technological factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IT progress and digitalization → new opportunities for cultural communication and marketing ● Innovative technologies (VR, AR) with potential integration into cultural experiences ● Hardware innovation (sound, lighting, projection equipment) → improved audience experience ● The “pandemic” experience of 2020 demonstrated the usefulness of connecting audiences online to events
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Economic factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic crises and inflation reduce the willingness of audiences and sponsors to invest in culture 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Politic factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political instability and frequent changes in government create an unpredictable framework

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company sponsorships fluctuate depending on the economic context • Dependence on exchange rates (contracts negotiated in euros, paid in lei) • Culture is not a priority in budget allocation during times of crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative volatility → difficulties in the practical application of regulations • Direct impact of general legislation (labor, taxation, authorizations) and specific legislation (copyright) • Incoherence of certain regulations poses obstacles for cultural organizers
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Porter's Five Forces model indicates intense competition in the festival sector, with numerous similar events in Romania. Supplier bargaining power is moderate, while public bargaining power is high because they have access to a diverse cultural offering. The threat of substitute products is represented by other forms of entertainment, and barriers to entry into the sector are relatively low, which increases competitive pressure.

The relationships between actors and the intensity of competition are illustrated graphically in Figure 1, where Porter's model is specifically applied to the Râşnov Film and Histories Festival.

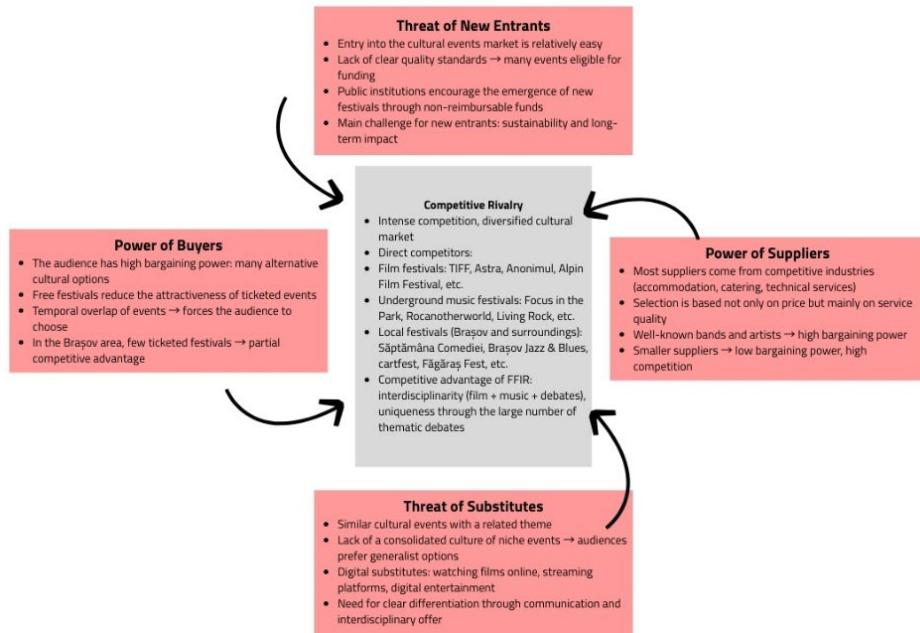


Fig. 1. Porter model for FFIR

(source: author's own researches)

4.4. Internal environment analysis: the value chain and management functions

Applying the value chain shows that the festival generates value thru its primary activities, such as film selection and screening, organizing debates and concerts, as well as thru support activities like marketing, logistics, and volunteer involvement. The entire activity is aimed at creating a complex cultural experience for participants, which enhances the festival's visibility and reputation.

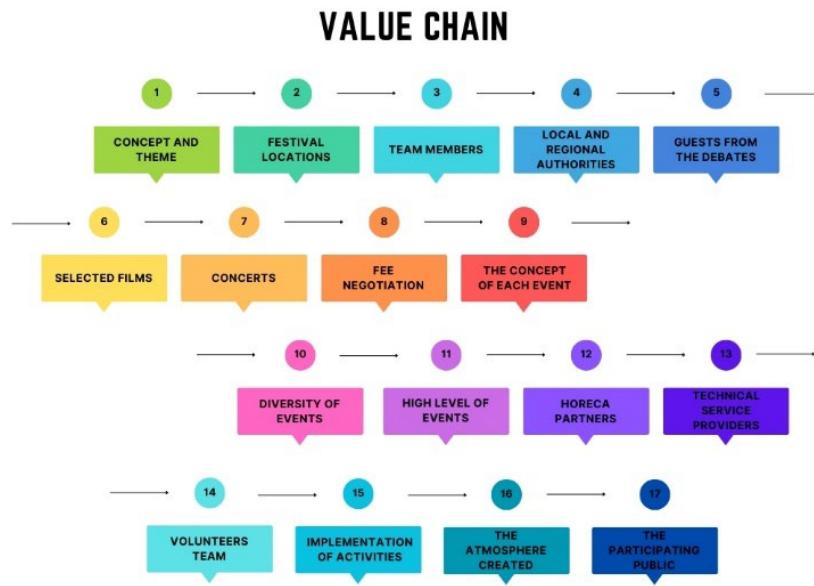


Fig. 2. FFIR's value chain analysis

Source: author's own researches

Management functions are explicitly found in the festival's activities. Planning is reflected in the development of the annual program and in attracting resources, organization is found in structuring the team and tasks, coordination is necessary for the simultaneous execution of activities, motivation plays an essential role in the involvement of volunteers and the core team, and control is achieved thru evaluating editions and adjusting strategies for future years.

4.5. Analysis based on questionnaire

In addition to the managerial analyzes, a questionnaire was administered to festival participants with the aim of capturing their socio-demographic profile, information sources, motivations for participation, experience evaluation, and intention to return. The collected data allows for the outlining of an aggregated picture of the audience and their perceptions of the event and the host city. In this section, the questionnaire is presented as a data source and methodologically delimited; descriptive values, distributions, and summary statistics are introduced and discussed in the "Results" chapter, in correlation with the hypotheses formulated in the Introduction.

5. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the Râșnov Film and Histories Festival (FFIR) and the Mioritics

Association illustrates how cultural management is translated into practice. The festival functions as a cultural micro-enterprise, applying planning, organizing, coordinating, motivating, and controlling processes, yet adapted to the non-profit environment and the limitations of scarce resources.

A first significant result concerns the festival's strong reputation and accumulated symbolic capital, which constitute its main intangible resources. These elements differentiate FFIR from other events, ensure national visibility, and attract a loyal audience, thus confirming Hypothesis 2 regarding the festival's contribution to the cultural image of Râşnov. At the same time, the analysis revealed important vulnerabilities: financial fragility, dependence on a small team of staff and volunteers, and difficulties in pursuing long-term strategic development. This situation, frequently described in the literature on cultural NGOs, validates Hypothesis 1 on the similarity between cultural festivals and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Another weakness refers to external communication. In a competitive cultural market, promotion and media presence are decisive for audience growth, yet FFIR lacks a coherent strategy in this area. The external environment analysis also pointed out both opportunities – such as increased demand for cultural events – and threats, including intense competition, funding volatility, and the high bargaining power of audiences who can easily choose substitutes.

Applying the value chain highlighted that FFIR generates value not only through its core activities – screenings, debates, concerts – but also through support functions, particularly volunteer involvement, which strengthens social capital and community engagement. Classical management functions are visible in practice, though unevenly developed: planning exists but lacks long-term vision, organization is flexible yet fragile, coordination is essential given the event's diversity, motivation depends on non-financial incentives, and control is limited to post-event evaluations without standardized monitoring tools.

The questionnaire results reinforce these conclusions. The audience is predominantly young and well-educated, motivated mainly by program diversity and the festival atmosphere. Most respondents evaluated their experience positively (scores of 4–5/5) and expressed both loyalty and willingness to recommend the event. Suggestions focused mainly on logistical aspects, rather than the cultural content, which confirms Hypothesis 3 regarding high satisfaction as a basis for sustainability.

Overall, the results confirm that the success of festivals depends on balancing artistic value with professional management. For FFIR, the artistic dimension is already strong, but the managerial one requires consolidation. Recommendations therefore include the professionalization of management through structured planning tools (e.g., Gantt charts), the development of a medium-term strategy, improved communication, and diversification of funding sources to ensure long-term stability.

6. Conclusions and Limitations

The case study on the Râșnov Film and Histories Festival confirms the relevance of applying management tools in the cultural field. The festival functions as a cultural micro-enterprise, adapting planning, organizing, coordinating, motivating, and controlling processes to non-profit constraints.

Key strengths include reputation, program diversity, and community involvement, which underpin its cultural and social success. Major vulnerabilities remain, however: unstable finances, a small team, and the absence of formalized procedures.

The questionnaire highlights a diverse, educated, and loyal audience with high satisfaction and willingness to return. Together with the managerial analyses, these findings validate the research hypotheses, showing both the structural challenges of cultural festivals and the positive impact of FFIR on its community.

Overall, the festival's sustainability depends on strengthening the managerial dimension through planning tools (e.g., Gantt chart), a medium-term strategy, coherent external communication, and diversified funding. The research confirms the applicability of classic management tools (SWOT, STEP, Porter, value chain) to cultural organizations and offers recommendations for NGOs seeking to enhance capacity and community impact.

Some limitations must be acknowledged: the study focuses on a single festival, the questionnaire sample is small and homogeneous, and the classic tools used do not fully capture artistic and creative complexity. Future research could compare multiple festivals and include qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups.

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