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**EVENT-ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT IN THE YOUTH SOCIO-
CULTURAL SPACE OF A CITY**

Specialty: 5.4.7. “Sociology of Management”

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of
candidate of sociological sciences

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Relevance of the research topic. Mass cultural events have accompanied the social life since time immemorial. Nowadays this is an integral part of socio-cultural space of any city. But the research attention mainly focuses at its entertainment, recreational or tourist potential. However, the recent years highlights the importance of its value-communication agent and social development directing roles. In particular, a number of significant documents were approved in 2022-2024, outlining the prospects and problems in this field: Strategy of State Cultural Policy, Decree "On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2030 and for the Perspective up to 2036", State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values.

These documents highlight the priority of considering culture as a guarantee of harmonious social development, education and enlightenment of youth, formation of a harmoniously developed personality in accordance to traditional Russian values. The importance of creating conditions for harmoniously developed, patriotic and socially responsible individual and increasing role of creative industries are also included. Various areas, including all types of cultural activity (mass socio-cultural events in particular), are involved in implementation.

However, practical development in these areas is complicated by a number of problems. These tasks are nationally established to overcome it: stimulation and encouragement of value-communicative cultural activities, implementation of educational and value-oriented work among young people, and, which is important to us, involving mass culture in implementing state cultural policy processes and forming new models and systems of managing cultural processes.

All of the above is of particular relevance in relation to young people as the most active socio-demographic group, whose life imperatives and behavior are in formation under the influence of various sources: from traditional institutions to everyday social practices and digital field.

Therefore, it is extremely important to consider socio-cultural events not only for achieving short-term commercial success, but also as a way of interaction,

communication and influence on social groups. But implemented without critical reflection, development and control of involved social and communication mechanisms, the communicated ideas, values, and behavioral patterns may become differ from those planned. This risk is higher when such functions are assigned to popular event formats. In particular: developing an event focused exclusively on visitor preferences, valuable communication tools and processes remain outside the management's attention. And vice versa, developing the communicative aspect directly, there is a high risk of encountering visitor disapproval, prejudice and low interest in visiting.

These circumstances require a critical analysis of existing management approaches and actualizes the search for management decisions that would allow for harmonious consideration of both aspects.

A number of factors complicate the situation, namely: delayed adaptation of existed approaches to changing social conditions, actors' bilateral interaction and mutual influence, temporal extent features of the socio-communicative process. The analysis and search for relevant management models are also problematized by shortcomings in the conceptual development. To current times, despite the presence of various directions of event-activities analysis and management approaches, there are still no systematizing conceptual developments that generalize and specify the features of these approaches, nuances of implementation, criteria of applicability in various situations and in relation to different social groups. In addition, we also have to mention the uncertainty risks in outcome of social value communication, which increases in case of the need to comply with a number of popular culture templates influences the composition and content of event activity elements – so those may attract an audience, but in no way contribute to the social-communicative function or, contrariwise, distort it.

The age factor plays no less a role. Thus, according to WCIOM and some others research, existing formats of public celebrations and events are of little interest to young people between ages 18-35, although there is a general interest to such things. Thus, the form of event realization and the structure of event-activities

management depend on the characteristics of youth preferences and visitor intentions, which form certain characteristics of event-activities management in relation to the youth audience.

The above-mentioned problems determine the relevance of a comprehensive analysis of existing event-management approaches as well as it actualizes the need to develop a model that would combine the focus on socio-cultural goal-setting with corresponding the socio-cultural special event format to the visitors' preferences, and would also take into account the implementation of socio-communicative and engaging mechanisms while maintaining an entertainment format.

The object of dissertation research is event-activity in socio-cultural space of the city.

The subject of dissertation research is the management of socio-communicative processes in event-activity targeted on the youth attendees.

The aim of the study is to determine the specifics of event-activity management in the socio-cultural space of the city based on a comprehensive analysis of socio-communicative processes and features of young people' social representations of event-activities.

The tasks of the study:

1. To determine the content of event-activity management process in accordance to characteristics of the city's socio-cultural space.
2. To analyze the qualitative characteristics that allow to define a socio-cultural event as a socio-cultural special event, and a certain set of accompanying processes as an event-activity.
3. To reveal the content of event-activity management system in terms of involved actors (composition of managing and managed subsystems) and procedures (composition of organizational-managerial and social-communicative processes) structure.
4. To identify the perceived features of special event elements and event-activities elements by city residents and urban youth especially.

5. To analyze the perceiving features of socio-cultural special event elements and event-activities elements by urban youth from the point of view of its consideration in management.

6. To develop an event-activity management model able to work with young people based on the empirical research results, theoretical analysis results and comparison with existing management practices.

Research methodology is determined by the complex and interdisciplinary nature of the research subject and includes systematic, activity and socio-cultural approaches. Systematic approach was used to establish managing and managed subsystems composition, to reveal the composition and interrelation between event management processes, to analyze the elements of event-activities. Activity approach was used to reveal the specifics of event-activity management for young people from the motivational point of view and the role of social technologies in this process. Socio-cultural approach was used to reveal the event-activity management totality and interrelation of processes and technologies in accordance with the communicative levels of socio-cultural space, to analyze their compliance and to develop a relevant model.

The empirical basis of the research consisted of:

1. A questionnaire survey of city residents interested in attending city socio-cultural events (2023, stratified sample, representative by gender and age, N=540, Sverdlovsk region).

2. A questionnaire survey of young people in the age groups 18-24 and 25-34 years (N=440), a target sample representative of gender and age, Yekaterinburg.

3. Semi-formalized (structured) expert interview (N=22, 2023), the experts were organizers of open city events.

4. Involved observations at socio-cultural city events (small and large cities, of the Sverdlovsk region, mega-city, during the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Yekaterinburg (10 events, 2023).

5. Digital data of official web resources (social networks) of city events, using the methodology for calculating the indicators of Engagement Rate (34 official web pages of city events in social media in 2022 and 30 in 2023).

Scientific novelty:

1. The sociological interpretation of the term "special event" is presented as a qualitative characteristic of a socio-cultural event, which is expressed in a set of features (identifiers): main elements purpose-rationality; informational dominance among target groups; specific interest in visiting. At the level of the managing subsystem the set of specified features serves as operational indicators of socio-cultural special event as a phenomenon, at the level of the managed subsystem — as conditions for functioning of socio-communicative processes in event-activities. Based on the presented identifiers, the author's classification of socio-cultural special events was developed. This position removes a number of conceptual contradictions of existing approaches that consider an “socio-cultural special event” as an uncommon, exceptional or unique type of event.

A set of processes that constitute event-activity in subject-subject interactions with a managed subsystem is defined as following: processes of multichannel artifact-symbolical communication with the audience and visitors, processes of subject-subject informational interaction with the audience, and processes of subject-subject social interaction between organizers and visitors, visitors interpersonal, visitors and secondary audiences. This set represents the structure of city's socio-cultural space, includes a social component in the system and structures event-activity processes depending on the predominant source of influence, which is a distinctive feature of our purpose.

2. The essence of event-activity management in city's socio-cultural space is defined as the process of organizing two-way communication connection and interaction between managing and managed subsystems, realized during event-activities and inside the socio-cultural special event place on three communicative levels (informational, artifact-symbolical, social-interpersonal) which represent three-level structure of socio-cultural space.

Event-activity management is considered as purpose-oriented planning, direction, control and coordination of event-activity processes and special event infrastructure elements so that this set contributes to creation of conditions which allow to translate the target values. This position differs from existing ones due to focusing manager's attention on the socio-communicative rationality of processes and tools.

3. The actor structure of event-activity management system in the city's socio-cultural space is substantiated. Managing subsystem consists of government structures as goal-setting subject, event organizers or event-managers as direct event-activity management subject. Managed subsystem consists of potential visitors (the audience) and factual visitors whose self-organizing properties are taken into account in terms of their contribution to achieving the purpose. This structure considers the self-organization factor of the audience and visitors, which allows to interpret the management system in a broader view than it may be implemented in existing approaches concentrated on different aspects of hierarchical interaction of managing subsystem actors.

The process structure of event-activity management system is substantiated as consisted of two groups of functionally and timely interconnected processes which are the following. The first group consists of organizational-managerial processes: artifact-symbolic infrastructure management, informational-communicative management, management of social processes. The second group consists of socio-communicative processes: impressions forming, experience forming, role model demonstrating. In the proposed system organizational and communicative aspect are interconnected in management field which were earlier considered separately.

4. A comprehensive description of city visitors' and urban youth' social representations about socio-cultural special events and event-activity is given according to empirical research results, namely: social representations about elements contributed to forming the qualitative characteristic "special event", qualitative features of these elements' perception, the probability of differences'

determination by key socio-demographic factors in accordance with three organizational-management processes of event-activities management.

The results demonstrated how socio-cultural space of the city impacts on the social representations of socio-cultural special event and event-activity which in turn take part in determination of qualitative characteristic "special event" and manifest itself: in ranking a similar set of elements from basic to specific ones, in the differences of information dominance nature from media-driven to socially-driven, in the differences of main elements target orientation from attraction to socio-communicative impact depending on the event activity stage.

5. The features of event-activity management are highlighted, due to the qualitative differences in young citizens' social perceptions about socio-cultural special events and event-activities, as well as the need of tripartite reconcile of interests. General organizational features include: consideration of specific social representations of young people as event-activity subjects in order to stimulate their attendance and developing a set of relevant social-communicative and engaging methods for socio-cultural purposes. Infrastructure features include socio-communicative impact implementation based on the elements of two types: the main ones, clearly expressed in the young people' social representations and being the leading tools of artifact-symbolic communication, and the specific ones, expressed indirectly in their social representations and serving as tools of involvement, coordination and focusing on target areas. The information-communicational features include the providing ensuring the integrative continuity and consistency of communication process at all stages of event-activity, including the material and information space, and with the unity of artifact-symbolic and information interaction. The socio-technological features include the implementation of engaging and coordinative social technologies based on a significant referent example and orienting social practices. The obtained results characterize the qualitative features of event-activity management targeted at youth audience.

6. An original integrated model for event-activity management was developed. The model realizes three-stage and three-component event-activity management. The interrelations between the stages before, during and after the socio-cultural special event, as well as the unity of three components of organizational-managerial and socio-communicative processes are realized in the model. The model is oriented at creating specific conditions and forming a network of socio-communicative elements accompanying the audience and visitors through all stages of the event-activity and consistently forming target meanings at each one. The model is founded on the principles of a long-term orientation, comprehensiveness, integrative unity. It also takes into account the impact of managed subsystem on the process and the result, and includes social technologies as well as communicative ones in management system, which is its distinctive feature in comparison to existed models.

The theoretical significance of obtained results is determined by the following. A method for overcoming the substantive uncertainty of “special event” category is proposed by interpreting it as a qualitative characteristic. The content of event-activities in managing processes for the purpose of providing targeted impact is disclosed. The evolution of event-management approaches is chronologically systematized, its specificity in terms of interaction between the managing and managed subsystems is highlighted. The composition, content and interrelation of elements and processes of organizational-managerial and socio-communicative group of processes, the mechanism for implementing the target impact are proposed and substantiated, including the correlations of their components on the different stages. A comprehensive multi-aspect approach to the study of event-activities, structured according to its components, was realized. A management model was developed based on the principle of integrational components and of including elements of social technologies in management process.

The practical significance of obtained results is determined by the following. The obtained results characterize the perception features, behavioral intentions, expectations and concerns of city residents – audience of city events –

and urban youth of various types in three key components of event-activity. The empirical and conceptual results are of interest to specialists in various fields related to socio-cultural events, youth policy, socio-cultural work with citizens. The proposed management model is ready to be implemented in practice of event-activities management by cultural institutions and other organizations associated with the implementation of state strategic development goals.

The practical significance for the management sphere, expressed in the conceptualization of the event-activity management system in the youth socio-cultural space and the development of a relevant management model, is being supplemented by its significance for scientific community. This is correlate with the event-activities management approaches systematization, with the disclosure of visitor preferences and visitor characteristics of young people at mass socio-cultural events. This complements sociological knowledge in the field of leisure activities of citizens and youth. This also opens up wide opportunities for using this material in various fields of knowledge, including both the humanities (sociology of youth, sociology of culture, sociology of management, cultural studies, communicology) and economics (management and marketing, regional and sectoral economics).

Compliance with the provisions of the Scientific Specialty Passport. The research and research results corresponds with the framework of scientific specialty 5.4.7. Sociology of Management, namely: no. 3 “The problem of interaction between management subjects and objects”; no. 4 “Management principles and methods in modern conditions”; no. 5. “Social administration. Social management. Social policy.”; no. 6. “Mechanisms of social regulation: institutional, social-stratification, socio-cultural, social-organizational”; no. 12 “Social technologies in management system”; no. 20 “Sociological methods of information and analytical support of the management process”.

Research approbation. Main and intermediate results of the research were presented at scientific conferences of various levels (including 11 international conferences, 6 at national conferences), and also presented at two International

competitions of scientific research papers (achieved the Diplomas of the 1st and 2nd degrees). The main results were presented in 28 publications, including:

- in 16 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals included in the list of High Attestation Commission;

- in 5 publications in scientific journals included the database RISC;

- in 8 publications in in conference proceedings included the database RISC.

The structure of the dissertation consists of introduction, two main chapters, conclusion, references section (234 sources) and appendices (5 appendices).