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Increasing Resilience of Non-Profit Arts Organisations in the Context of Crises

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The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of organisational resilience, particularly for non-profit arts organisations, which were among the most affected sectors. This study aims to develop an empirically grounded model for strengthening the resilience of non-profit arts organisations. The research analyses theoretical aspects of organisational resilience, formulates a theoretical model, and empirically tests it. The study is based on a review of scientific literature and qualitative research methods, including semi-structured expert interviews and document analysis. The results indicate that both external factors and internal organisational characteristics play a significant role in strengthening resilience during crises. Non-profit arts organisations are influenced by political, economic, social, and cultural environments, as well as by relationships with stakeholders and audiences. The findings show that resilience is supported by empowering leadership, organisational agility, continuous learning, environmental monitoring, a clearly articulated mission, balanced organisational structures, effective communication, and employee motivation.

Keywords: improvisation, management, cultural organisation, employee, training.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the global order, posing unprecedented challenges across multiple sectors. Quarantine measures significantly impacted cultural and arts organisations, with the sector experiencing a 21 per cent decline in global Gross Value Added (GVA) from 2019 to 2020.[1] The stabilisation of pandemic challenges led to a rise in energy prices—exacerbated by the Russia-Ukraine conflict—further straining the sector, as state attention shifted from cultural support to broader crisis management. Amid these crises, organisational resilience has become increasingly crucial. However, research on the resilience of non-profit arts organisations remains notably limited.

The concept of resilience originated in ecological studies in the second half of the twentieth century. Over time, it became associated with human ecology, psychology, and sociology, and began to be investigated at the individual and community levels.[2] This evolution subsequently gave rise to the study of organisational resilience. A range of theoretical models of organisational resilience has been developed to explore the characteristics, management approaches, and organisational structures that contribute to resilience.[3] Scholarly debates have addressed the main goals of a resilient

1 OECD, *The Cultural and Creative Sectors Can Support the Recovery Despite Being amongst Worst Hit by the COVID-19 Crisis* (Paris: OECD, 2022), accessed September 27, 2022, https://web-archive.oecd.org/2022-06-03/633459-notetojournalists-culture-english.htm.

2 Fran H. Norris, Susan P. Stevens, Betty Pfefferbaum, Karen F. Wyche, and Rose L. Pfefferbaum, "Community Resilience as a Metaphor, Theory, Set of Capacities, and Strategy for Disaster Readiness," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 41, nos. 1–2 (2008): 127–150, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9156-6.

3 Timothy J. Vogus and Karl E. Sutcliffe, "Organizational Resilience: Towards a Theory and Research Agenda," in *2007 IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man and Cybernetics* (2007), 3418–22; Karl E. Sutcliffe and Timothy J. Vogus, "Organizing for Resilience," in *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline*, ed. Kim S. Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003), 94–110; David E. Alexander, "Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction: An Etymological Journey," *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences* 13, no. 11 (2013): 2707–16; Lin Xiao and He Cao, "Organizational Resilience: The Theoretical Model and Research Implication," *Journal of Risk Research* 20, no. 8 (2017): 1117–34; Steven Van de Walle, "Building Resilience in Public Organizations: The Role of Waste and Bricolage," *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal* 19, no. 2 (2014): article 6; Debra G. Morgan et al., "Evolution of a Community-Based Participatory Approach in a Rural and Remote Dementia Care Research Program," *Progress in Community Health Partnerships* 8, no. 3 (2014): 337–45.

organisation, including minimising the impact of crises,[4] accelerating recovery,[5] and the capacity to capitalise on disruptive situations.[6] However, significantly less attention has been paid to the resilience of non-governmental organisations,[7] and research on non-profit arts organisations remains scarce. This study seeks to address this gap by developing an empirically grounded model for enhancing resilience in non-profit arts organisations. The objectives are as follows:

1. To analyse the characteristics of non-profit arts organisations;

2. To examine the theoretical aspects of organisational resilience;

3. To formulate a theoretical model for enhancing resilience in non-profit arts organisations;

4. To empirically test the formulated theoretical model.

The study began with a theoretical exploration based on a review of scientific literature addressing both the characteristics of non-profit arts

4 Antonio Carvalho, Ivano Ribeiro, Claudia Cirani, and Renato Cintra, "Organizational Resilience: A Comparative Study between Innovative and Non-Innovative Companies Based on the Financial Performance Analysis," *International Journal of Innovation* 4, no. 1 (2016), http://dx.doi.org/10.5585/iji.v4i1.73.

5 Norazah Abdullah, Noor N. Noor, and Ezanee M. Ibrahim, "Resilient Organization: Modelling the Capacity for Resilience," in *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Research and Innovation in Information Systems* (2013); John F. Horne, "The Coming of Age of Organizational Resilience," Business Forum 22 (1997): 24–28; John F. Horne and John E. Orr, "Assessing Behaviors That Create Resilient Organizations," *Employment Relations Today* 24 (1998): 29–39; Benoît Robert, *Organizational Resilience—Concepts and Evaluation Method* (Montréal: Presses de l'École Polytechnique de Montréal, 2010).

6 Susanne Duchek, "Organizational Resilience: A Capability-Based Conceptualization," *Business Research* 13, no. 1 (2020): 215–46; David Robb, "Building Resilient Organizations," *OD Practitioner* 32 (2000): 27–32; Cynthia A. Lengnick-Hall and Tammy E. Beck, "Adaptive Fit versus Robust Transformation: How Organizations Respond to Environmental Change," *Journal of Management* 31 (2005): 738–57; Cynthia A. Lengnick-Hall, Tammy E. Beck, and Mark L. Lengnick-Hall, "Developing a Capacity for Organizational Resilience through Strategic Human Resource Management," *Human Resource Management Review* 21 (2011): 243–55.

7 Heidi Witmer and Margaret S. Mellinger, "Organizational Resilience: Nonprofit Organizations' Response to Change," *Work* 54 (2016): 255–65; Jurgita Gečienė and Asta G. Raišienė, "Socialinės globos organizacijų atsparumo stiprinimo veiksniai" [Factors Strengthening the Resilience of Social Care Organisations], *Socialinė teorija, empirija, politika ir praktika* 19 (2019): 71–86; Lina Liukinevičienė and Jurgita Blažienė, "Ligoninių atsparumo diskursas teoriniame organizacijos atsparumo sampratos, bruožų ir veiksnių kontekste" [The Discourse of Hospital Resilience in the Context of the Concept, Features and Factors of Organisational Resilience], *Socialiniai tyrimai* 45, no. 1 (2022): 8–35.

organisations and organisational resilience. By applying the principles of organisational resilience to the context of arts organisations, a theoretical model was developed. The subsequent empirical phase involved testing this model using qualitative research methods, including semi-structured expert interviews and document analysis. The collected data were analysed using content analysis with the support of NVivo software.

The Characteristics of Non-Profit Arts Organisations

The non-profit sector, often referred to as the "third sector," encompasses all organisations whose aim is to create social value for society rather than to generate profit for shareholders.[8] This distinguishes this sector, as its organisations explicitly articulate values and goals unrelated to financial gain. Such organisations engage in public education, civic development, and the dissemination of culture. Within this sector, art organisations focus on the promotion and accessibility of culture and the arts, fostering diversity, educating society, and encouraging creativity.[9]

A non-profit organisation functions as a central hub of relationships, both directly and indirectly related to the achievement of its goals.[10] Some of these relationships involve stakeholders who enable the organisation to pursue its objectives. Goals are set in response to specific social needs and issues,[11] and their successful implementation becomes an indicator of the organisation's effectiveness, ensuring ongoing support. Thus, an art organisation operates as a centre that connects and influences a network of relationships. In summary, six key characteristics of non-profit art organisations can be identified: 1) environmental dependence; 2) stakeholder environment; 3) political landscape; 4) mission; 5) leadership; and 6) support of social relationships.

8 Emanuele Lettieri, Fabrizio Borga, and Alessandra Savoldelli, "Knowledge Management in Non-Profit Organizations," *Journal of Knowledge Management* 8, no. 6 (2004): 16–30.

9 Liz Hill, Catherine O'Sullivan, and Terry O'Sullivan, *Creative Arts Marketing* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

10 Vanya Kraleva, "Application of the Concepts of Relationship Marketing and Stakeholder Management to the Non-Profit Sector," in *Economy and Politics in the Post-Crisis World: Proceedings of the International Conference Dedicated to the 25th Anniversary of the Speciality International Economic Relations*, University of Economics–Varna, October 16–17, 2015, https://ssrn.com/abstract=289611.

11 Lettieri, Borga, and Savoldelli, "Knowledge Management in Non-Profit Organizations."

Non-profit art organisations exhibit a strong dependence on their external environment. Due to the sector's specificity, external conditions often determine the availability of resources, making changes outside the organisation potentially more impactful than internal processes. To secure external support, the organisation must continually demonstrate the value it creates. Therefore, maintaining ongoing relationships with stakeholders is crucial. Government institutions frequently serve as the primary financial supporters of the cultural sector, while also regulating the sector and providing support packages for art organisations.

The mission and accessibility of an art organisation are key indicators of its performance and value. Additionally, they hold particular significance within the organisation. The organisation's mission allows its members to identify with its purpose, thereby enhancing commitment, responsibility, and motivation. In art organisations, the diversity of processes and competencies often leads to a distribution of responsibilities and dual leadership structures. Typically, these organisations have both an organisational leader and an artistic leader. Leaders must manage internal processes, safeguard the organisation's external image, justify its value, and reconcile the differing expectations and demands of stakeholders.[12] Art organisations rely on their audiences to achieve their goals. Their product is based on people's experiences and collaboration. Therefore, sustaining strong relationships with audiences is essential for implementing socially valuable missions.[13]

Aspects of Resilience in a Non-Profit Organisation

The concept of resilience is derived from the Latin terms *resiliere* or *resilio*, meaning "to rebound."[14] A fundamental assumption of resilience is that it is triggered by unexpected events,[15] which may be caused by external

12 Žilvinas Petrikas, Lyderystės raiška nevyriausybinėse organizacijose [The Expression of Leadership in Non-Governmental Organisations] (Vilnius, 2015).

13 Kraleva, "Application of the Concepts of Relationship Marketing"; Pavlovaitė and Griesienė, "Meno organizacijos auditorijų plėtra"; Ugnė Pavlovaitė and Ingrida Griesienė, "Meno organizacijos auditorijų plėtra santykių rinkodaros požiūriu" [Audience Development of Art Organisations from the Perspective of Relationship Marketing], *Informacijos mokslai* 86 (2019): 98–115.

14 Alexander, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction, 2707.

15 Lengnick-Hall, Beck, and Lengnick-Hall, "Developing a Capacity for Organizational Resilience," 245.

factors—such as economic downturns, natural disasters, or competitive environment—or internal sources, such as reorganisations or downsizing.[16] An organisation's ability to survive and respond to such events depends on the specific form of resilience it embodies. This includes its preparedness for shocks, internal order models, structural adaptability, employee motivation, the capacity to react and adapt rapidly. In general terms, resilience can be described as an organisation's preparedness for and capacity to act in the face of unexpected challenges. Research on organisational resilience can be grouped according to specific resilience attributes.

Organisational resilience refers to *the ability to withstand unforeseen changes*.[17] Scholars in this area investigate an organisation's readiness to maintain stability, analysing mechanisms, structures, and other factors that enable continued functionality. The main goal is to minimise disruption during a shock, facilitating a smoother recovery period once the crisis subsides. Attention is often focused on the organisation's coping strategies, which allow it to quickly navigate changes and restore expected levels of activity.[18]

Another perspective views organisational resilience as *the capacity to recover from crises*. While closely related to the previous perspective, this approach recognises that disruptions may exceed an organisation's immediate coping range. If the organisation is strong enough to remain unaffected by unforeseen environmental changes, it can recover from an impact that exceeds its coping range.[19] In such cases, an organisation's resilience is demonstrated by its ability to quickly recover within a reasonable period.[20] Therefore, the focus shifts from mechanisms that maintain unchanged activity to factors that enable the rapid restoration of organisational operations. Acknowledging that unexpected events cannot be predicted with precision, resources are directed toward building and improving systems that enable quick adaptation and recovery, rather than solely maintaining the status quo. From this viewpoint, resilience is understood not only as the capacity

16 Abdullah, Noor, and Ibrahim, *Resilient Organization*, 52.

17 Carvalho et al., "Organizational Resilience."

18 Lengnick-Hall, Beck, and Lengnick-Hall, "Developing a Capacity for Organizational Resilience," 245.

19 Duchek, "Organizational Resilience."

20 Abdullah, Noor, and Ibrahim, *Resilient Organization*, 52.

to withstand shocks but also as the ability to adapt and move forward in the aftermath of crisis.[21]

Organisational resilience also involves *improving organisational processes and capabilities*.[22] Unlike perspectives focused solely on maintaining or restoring operations, this approach emphasises positive adaptation to challenging conditions, enabling the organisation to emerge stronger and more innovative.[23] Therefore, resilient organisations prioritise emerging opportunities rather than merely responding to immediate challenges.

Periods of crisis can reveal new business niches, create favourable conditions for restructuring, and lead to other positive changes. Tension can serve as a catalyst for reviewing internal systems, mechanisms, resource optimisation, and human resource strategies. This perspective extends beyond merely returning to established standards or previous routines. In this view, organisational resilience is a crucial factor that enables a company to utilise its resources and opportunities not only to address current dilemmas but also to capitalise on opportunities and build a successful future.[24]

Therefore, resilient organisations aim to prepare for shocks through continuous monitoring, environmental analysis, and, where possible, the simulation of potential unexpected events. While it is impossible to predict all crises or fully prepare for their impacts, ongoing preparedness strengthens organisational systems.[25] Scientific literature identifies various factors that support resilience; this article focuses on those directly related to the unique characteristics of non-profit organisations: empowering leadership, collaboration, mission, flexibility, and innovation.

Empowering leadership is a fundamental prerequisite for organisational resilience. It encompasses a broad range of strategies. In general, effective leadership is characterised by collaboration rather than hierarchy. Psychological safety for employees is essential, allowing them to take risks and act decisively in rapidly changing conditions.[26] Transparency, active employee

21 Danutė Paliokaitė, *Įmonių atsparumo strategijų formavimo prielaidos reklamos agentūrose COVID-19 pandemijos metu* [Assumptions for the Formation of Business Resilience Strategies in Advertising Agencies during the COVID-19 Pandemic] (2021).

22 Duchek, "Organizational Resilience."

23 Sutcliffe and Vogus, "Organizing for Resilience."

24 Lengnick-Hall, Beck, and Lengnick-Hall, "Developing a Capacity for Organizational Resilience," 245.

25 Liukinevičienė and Blažienė, *Ligoninių atsparumo diskursas*.

26 Gečienė and Raišienė, "Socialinės globos organizacijų atsparumo stiprinimo veiksniai."

engagement, and effective decision-making are also critical. By cultivating cooperative relationships, organisations can enhance motivation, facilitate adaptation, increase optimism, and encourage more efficient work.[27]

Collaboration. Resilient organisations leverage connections with suppliers and strategic partners to secure necessary resources needed for adaptation initiatives. Partners contribute resources, knowledge, and commitment, fostering innovation and enabling faster adaptation to changing conditions.[28] Stronger external relationships support successful partnerships, providing valuable information and facilitating efficient operations and recovery during unforeseen events.[29]

Mission. It allows employees to identify with the organisation both personally and professionally. It motivates members to invest additional effort to address challenges more effectively.[30] Therefore, it is crucial that the organisation's mission is clearly grounded and understood by all members.

Flexibility. Flexibility creates conditions within routine organisational operations that support creativity, quick decision-making, adaptation, and improvisation. Organisational improvisation is defined as the ability to leverage existing resources by adapting them to changing conditions.[31] Through organisational agility, flexibility, and improvisation, organisations can develop creative solutions that adjust their activities to meet evolving demands.

Innovation. Innovative organisations can identify and exploit new opportunities. As a result, when an unexpected event occurs, these organisations are better equipped to adapt to new conditions by modifying their activities.[32]

27 Lengnick-Hall, Beck, and Lengnick-Hall, "Developing a Capacity for Organizational Resilience, "245.

28 Witmer and Mellinger, "Organizational Resilience."

29 Lengnick-Hall, Beck, and Lengnick-Hall, *Developing a Capacity for Organizational Resilience*, 245; Justina Telksnytė, *Įmonių atsparumo veiksniai COVID-19 pandemijos kontekste: drabužių gamybos sektoriaus atvejis* [Factors of Business Resilience in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Case of the Clothing Manufacturing Sector] (Master's thesis, Kaunas, 2022).

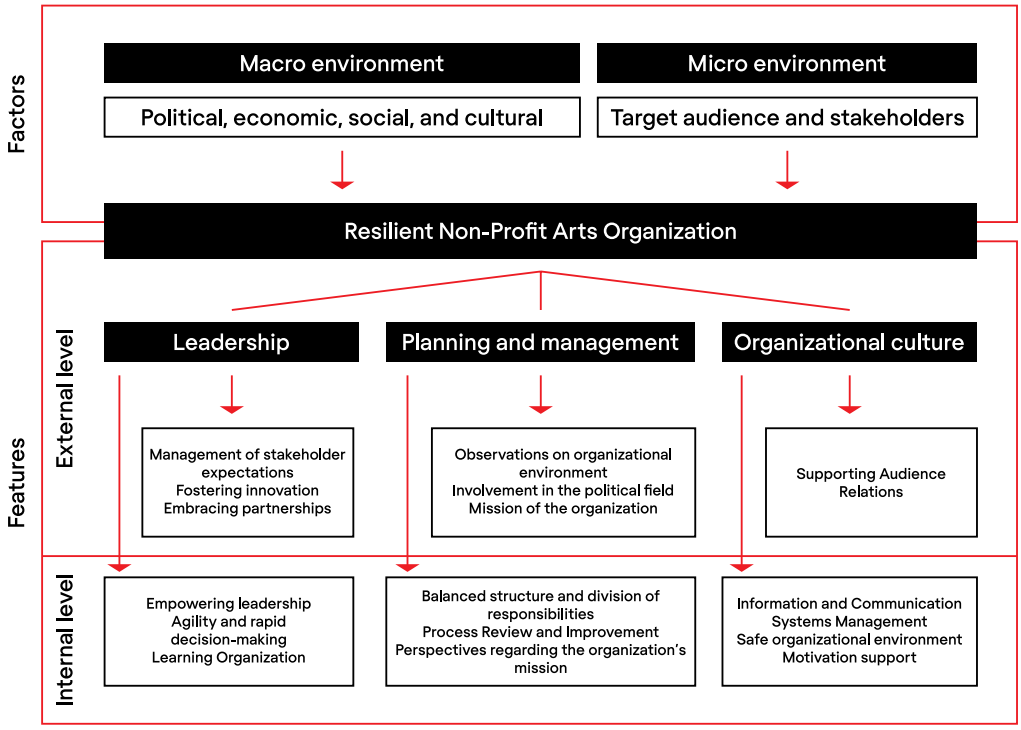
30 Morgan et al., "Evolution of a Community-Based Participatory Approach."

31 Jurgita Gečienė, Asta G. Raišienė, and Vincenzo Rapuano, "Organizational Resilience: How Does It Fit with the Principles of a Learning Organization?" *Organizacijų vadyba: sisteminiai tyrimai* 84 (2020).

32 Telksnytė, "Įmonių atsparumo veiksniai."

Theoretical Model of Resilient Non-Profit Arts Organisations

Based on an analysis of Lithuanian and international scholarly literature, this study synthesised the key theoretical aspects of organisational resilience and non-profit arts organisations into a cohesive framework. From this synthesis, a model for resilient non-profit arts organisations was developed. This model provides a foundation for enhancing the resilience of arts organisations during times of crisis [Fig. 1].



2. The Model of Resilient Non-Profit Arts Organizations, compiled by the authors

Atsparių pelno nesiekiančių meno organizacijų modelis, sudarė autoriai

This model focuses on two main aspects: factors influencing the resilience of art organisations and their defining organisational characteristics. Non-profit art organisations are highly dependent on their environment, which can be categorised into primary macro-environmental domains

involving four processes that affect the group. Scholars emphasise the importance of recognising this dependency, as well as the need to identify, predict, and evaluate environmental processes to facilitate smoother adaptation. Four macro-environments—political, economic, social, and cultural—impact art organisations. The political environment regulates laws and procedures, serving as a financial supporter. Economic conditions affect financial activities and consumer behaviour, thereby influencing patterns of art expenditure. Social considerations guide the organisation's mission to achieve socially valuable impacts, requiring continuous monitoring. Finally, the cultural environment determines the relevance of artistic products and sector-specific values.

In micro-environments, also known as special environments, audiences and stakeholders exert a significant influence on organisations. Continuous engagement with audiences is essential for achieving organisational goals and evaluating social impact. Stakeholders who provide resources directly influence the organisation's strategic direction.

The model highlights key characteristics that ensure resilience, grouped into *leadership*, *planning and management*, and *organisational culture*.

Leadership. Externally, resilient organisations focus on meeting stakeholder expectations, maintaining their status, fostering innovation, and embracing partnerships. Internally, empowering leadership, adaptability, and rapid decision-making are crucial.

Planning and management. External monitoring is vital for understanding the broader environment and guiding organisational actions, particularly within the political sphere. Understanding sector-specific processes allows better alignment with organisational goals. The organisation's mission serves as a core guiding principle, requiring perceived value in the external environment. Internally, a balanced structure and responsibility sharing ensure clear accountability. Continuous review of processes and procedures strengthens preparedness for crises.

Organisational culture. Externally, maintaining strong relationships with audiences helps organisations understand needs and adapt activities accordingly. Consistent engagement, soliciting feedback, and cultivating an

open, transparent organisational image are crucial. Internally, effective management of information and communication systems is essential during periods of change. Communication, collective action, and conflict management are significant. A safe environment encourages risk-taking, which is particularly important in crisis situations. Finally, motivating and supporting team members significantly enhances adaptability, problem-solving, and the capacity to generate innovative solutions.

Non-Profit Arts Organisations: Empirical Study on Enhancing Resilience in Crisis Contexts

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to evaluate the resilience of art organisations in Lithuania, identifying key factors for enhancing their resilience. Research Question: *How is resilience enhanced in Lithuanian non-profit art organisations during crises*? A qualitative research approach was employed, using a collective case analysis strategy.

Case Selection. According to data from the NVO Atlas,[33] there are 1,158 registered non-governmental cultural and leisure organisations in Lithuania, including 454 public institutions, 678 associations, and 26 charitable foundations. This study focused on cultural and leisure organisations, emphasising the need for a resilience model. Certain entities were excluded to maintain relevance: amateur arts groups, individual practitioners, and artist collectives; organisations from creative and cultural industries that do not meet non-profit criteria; and associations, foundations, and federations whose role is primarily to unite and represent artists rather than present art to audiences. The study included organisations with legal public institution status, aligning with legal definitions of entities serving the public interest through cultural or other socially beneficial activities.

An additional selection criterion was the number of employees. Given that organisational resilience depends on contributions from all members during unexpected events, only organisations with five or more employees were included. This ensured that each case involved sufficient

33 *NVO Atlasas*, accessed September 27, 2022, https://nvoatlasas.lt/filtravimas.

personnel to influence operations and adaptation. Applying these criteria narrowed the list to twelve organisations.

All twelve were invited to participate in the study. However, due to scheduling constraints and workload pressures, several declined, leaving four participating organisations: Menų spaustuvė (Arts Printing House), Klaipėdos lėlių teatras (Klaipėda Puppet Theatre), OKT/Vilnius City Theatre, and Vilnius City Dance Theatre Low Air.

Data were collected from November 28 to December 6, 2022, using qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured expert interviews and document analysis. The collected data were analysed through content analysis using NVivo software.

RESULTS

The analysis of the collected data confirmed the influence of four main macro-environments influencing non-profit art organisations—political, economic, social, and cultural—as well as micro-environmental elements such as audiences and stakeholders. Additionally, insights from representatives of OKT Theatre highlight that, *"in extreme cases, cultural sector funding is often the first to be reduced."* This observation supports the theoretical assumption that art is not considered an essential commodity, leading both individuals and the state to allocate fewer resources to this sector during times of crisis [Table 1].

Table 1.
Categories and their respective subcategories formulated through the data analysis, compiled by the authors

Kategorijos ir jų atitinkamos subkategorijos, suformuluotos remiantis duomenų analize, sudarė autoriai

CATEGORY:	SUBCATEGORIES:
Fulfillment of stakeholder's expectations	1) Mutual orientation; 2) Customer orientation 3) Funder orientation; 4) Financial sustainability orientation
Innovation and improvisation	1) Resilience as survival ; 2) Resilience as recovery 3) Resilience as the ability to leverage circumstances
Cultivating partnerships	1) Partnerships with other sectors; 2) Partnerships with cultural organizations; 3) Positive competition
Empowering leadership	1) Collective decision-making; 2) Distribution of responsibilities
Mobility and decision-making speed	1) Decision speed in organizations everyday life; 2) Creative adaptation

Learning Organization	1) Learning and Growth ; 2) Learning through product creation 3) Learning through practice
Observations on organizational environment	1) Social field observations; 2) Economic field observations 3) Cultural field observations; 4) Political field observations
Involvement in the political field	1) Observers; 2) Activists ; 3) Influencers
The valuable mission of the organization	1) Impact; 2) Activity; 3) Artistic
Perspectives regarding the organization's mission	1) Speakers; 2) Believers; 3) Reminders
Balanced structure and division of responsibilities	1) Narrower; 2) Broader
Process Review and Improvement	1) Continuous Communication; 2) Annual processes; 3) Work sessions
Supporting Audience Relations	1) Inclusion; 2) Preparation; 3) Loss
Information and Communication Systems Management	1) Speed and Regularity
Safe organizational environment	1) Communication and openness; 2) The importance of values
Motivation support	1) Waiting; 2) Speaking

Fulfilment of Stakeholders' Expectations. Analysis highlighted the importance of revenue from sales, encompassing all income from tickets, services, educational activities, and other sources. This category, directly affected by unexpected events, reflects the impact on organisations' primary activities. Comparisons of all organisations' schedules revealed a clear decline in sales revenue in 2020 due to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis.[34] The Vilnius City Dance Theatre Low Air effectively adapted its products to the changed conditions, experiencing only a 13.09 per cent decrease in sales revenue. In contrast, other organisations, including Menų spaustuvė, OKT Theatre, and Klaipėda Puppet Theatre, suffered larger declines, prompting them to explore additional funding sources.

The data shows that strategies focused on maintaining audience relationships and diversifying income streams were effective in mitigating financial losses and supporting organisational resilience during the crisis.

34 OECD, *The Cultural and Creative Sectors*, 2022.

Innovation and improvisation. Findings revealed varying approaches to leadership practices and innovation. Menų spaustuvė and Low Air emphasised continuous innovation and a willingness to propose new ideas. Other organisations, such as Klaipėdos lėlių teatras and OKT Theatre, exhibited a more cautious attitude toward innovation in live theatre. During the crisis, some organisations maintained continuity by shifting to online formats, while others initiated new projects and engaged actively in networking. Low Air pursued international collaborations, introducing additional projects, while Menų spaustuvė adapted to restrictions by performing outdoors. Notably, none of the organisations had a clearly defined resilience strategy, suggesting that resilience emerged as a balance between recovery and adaptation to environmental changes.

Cultivating partnerships. The study revealed that organisations foster partnerships by sharing knowledge, expressing official positions, and seeking solutions. All participating organisations endorsed this collaborative approach, differing only in their methods, scope, and evaluation practices. Some emphasised collaboration not only with arts entities but also with other non-profits, engaging in networking to share knowledge, resources, and jointly address challenges.

A unique form of collaboration identified in the study is positive competition, in which organisations compete in a constructive manner, encouraging one another and motivating ongoing activity. Collaboration with governmental institutions, especially during challenging times, was also emphasised for its importance in addressing shared concerns. The unity of cultural organisations has increased their visibility in the political arena, leading to more informed decisions. The study affirmed the value of knowledge-sharing among cultural organisations, contributing to the creation of support packages during the pandemic. Intensive collaboration, including resource sharing, demonstrated that unity not only generates greater overall value but also enhances organisational resilience.

Empowering leadership. A common characteristic across the studied cases is a horizontal or flat organisational structure, which fosters member inclusion in decision-making while maintaining functional distributions.

For example, OKT Theatre exemplifies a democratic approach, making key decisions collectively during informal tea or coffee gatherings. Similarly, Klaipėda Puppet Theatre stresses shared responsibility in decision-making. Regular team meetings, typically held weekly, further enhance collaboration. In conclusion, these strategies empower members, ensure efficient operations, and promote adaptability, thereby contributing to the resilience of non-profit arts organisations.

Mobility and decision-making speed. Assessing organisational agility and the speed of decision-making, all participating organisations affirmed their ability respond flexibly and effectively to changing conditions. Some emphasised the importance of rapid decision-making in their daily operations. For example, the director of Low Air stated, "We are very flexible and find possible solutions." Theatres like OKT also demonstrated environments conducive to fast decision-making, supporting organisational agility. Other organisations highlighted the ability to swiftly adapt to unforeseen circumstances. The leader of Menų spaustuvė noted their organisation's rapid redirection during a crisis, showcasing the importance of creativity in adaptation. Across all cases, no impediments hindered decision speed or agility, allowing organisations to respond to changes promptly and flexibly, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. These findings highlight the crucial role of creative resources within non-profit arts organisations in enhancing resilience, underscoring the importance of organisational agility and rapid decision-making.

Learning organisation. The director of Low Air emphasised the perceived importance of continuous learning and improvement for the organisation's growth. As a small theatre, Low Air prioritises experimentation and innovation. The commitment to learning enables the organisation to develop creative solutions both during crises and for ongoing strategic decisions. These practices align well with the theoretical perspective that continuously learning organisations accumulate competencies, which not only improve daily activities but also support effective decision-making during crises.

In the subcategory highlighting the importance of learning through product creation, organisations enhance their competencies not only

internally but also through their actual activities. For example, Klaipėda Puppet Theatre regularly organises open training sessions with external lecturers, fostering learning for both staff and participants. Similarly, OKT Theatre leverages its performances as educational opportunities for audiences, which in turn enhances the organisation's own expertise. Education, therefore, benefits both the audience and the organisation by providing additional expert knowledge relevant to its activities.

Lastly, in the subcategory emphasising the continuous elevation of competencies through ongoing activities, Menų spaustuvė highlights the importance of practice in organisational development. According to its leader, experience gained from carrying out daily activities is the primary source of competency growth. Thus, through continuous engagement in organisational processes, the institution continuously improves, learns, and raises its competencies.

In summary, organisations pursue competency enhancement in different ways: some through continuous improvement, others via educational activities for their audience, and others through ongoing activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that continuously learning organisations increase their resilience.

Observations on organisational environment. Regarding environmental monitoring, distinct priorities emerge. OKT Theatre focuses on the social sphere, using audience feedback to adapt to societal changes. Klaipėda Puppet Theatre prioritises economic monitoring to anticipate challenges influenced by economic conditions. *Menų spaustuvė* emphasises cultural trends, conducting studies to maintain relevance, while *Low Air* focuses on political awareness to ensure smooth organisational functioning. Overall, resilient arts organisations monitor the environment in their perceived crucial fields—social, economic, cultural, and political. This awareness strengthens their ability to navigate changes, minimise losses, and enhance resilience.

Involvement in the political field. Analysing the engagement of the studied arts organisations in the political field reveals a tendency to maintain distance from direct political identification. Most organisations position themselves as observers, adapting to existing political conditions and

expressing an official stance only when necessary. This cautious approach aims to preserve independence from politics, which can potentially conflict with the values of arts organisations. A second subcategory involves organisations that adopt an activist role, raising awareness of broader issues without directly influencing political decision-making. For instance, OKT Theatre often expresses its views on specific political matters ahead of wider public discussions, demonstrating a commitment to public advocacy and issue awareness.

The third subcategory includes organisations whose leaders actively engage in political processes. Theoretical considerations suggest that politically active leaders contribute to organisational resilience by understanding the dynamics of interest groups and facilitating coalition-building. The leaders of Low Air and Menų spaustuvė actively participate in various working groups and associations, aiming to enhance cultural awareness at the national level and influence relevant ministries. Such proactive involvement improves organisational conditions and, consequently, enhances resilience. In summary, engagement in the political field—particularly through active leadership participation—enhances arts organisations' understanding of political processes and increases their influence, directly contributing to organisational resilience.

The valuable mission of the organisation. Website analysis of the studied organisations identified three main mission categories: impact, activity, and artistic. Klaipėda Puppet Theatre and Low Air pursue impact-oriented missions, aiming to shape societal values and address social issues. Menų spaustuvė focuses on activities, emphasising support for non-governmental performing arts organisations. OKT Theatre centres on artistic value, prioritising continuous creation alongside positive societal impact. Notably, impact-oriented missions appear particularly effective in motivating staff and demonstrating organisational value through continuous reassessment.

Arts organisations approach the communication of their mission through *three strategies*: speakers, believers, and reminders. The *speakers* approach, used by Klaipėda Puppet Theatre and Low Air, involves ongoing internal communication of mission and shared goals. The *believers* strategy,

exemplified by OKT Theatre, emphasises deep commitment to understanding fundamental objectives, with a focus on high-quality artistic output. The *reminders* approach, employed by Menų Spaustuvė, involves periodic reinforcement of the mission during strategic sessions conducted every few years. Organisations prioritising positive social impact tend to focus on informing members consistently and fostering identification with their mission.

Balanced structure and division of responsibilities. Analysis of organisational structures and responsibility allocation revealed two key strategies: a narrower approach observed in OKT and Klaipėda Puppet Theatres, where responsibilities align with specific functions, and a broader approach exemplified by Menų spaustuvė and Low Air, where decisions are made collectively while enabling designated individuals to make decisions in their respective areas. In the first strategy, responsibilities are function-based, creating flexibility, while in the second, a clearer and broader distribution ensures effective management and inclusive decision-making.

Process review and improvement. Regarding process review and improvement, three strategies emerged. This first is continuous communication, as seen in OKT Theatre and Low Air, where informal, ongoing communication allows issues to be identified and resolved. While beneficial, this approach lacks a formal system for process improvement, prioritising immediate concerns over long-term systemic improvements. Organisations employing the second strategy, annual strategic review, exemplified by Klaipėda Puppet Theatre, conduct yearly sessions to identify key issues. These reviews are integrated into organisational routines, supporting ongoing development. The third strategy includes irregular, periodic reviews every few years, as observed in Menų spaustuvė. Decisions are made to improve activities without a regular review schedule. Across all organisations, process review is closely linked to the organisational mission, addressing challenges related to expression, inquiry, and social relevance. However, the study suggests that while process review contributes to operation, it has a limited impact on resilience of non-profit arts organisations.

Supporting audience relations. In the inclusion subcategory, organisations that allocate about half of their budget to sales revenue, such as the

OKT Theatre and Low Air, managed to maintain their revenues. The initiation of new activities tailored to the online space—such as recorded performances, play readings, and online premieres—contributed to increased audience engagement. The primary goal was to engage and retain audiences, which was achieved through information sharing and the provision of free services, thereby fostering ongoing communication and enhancing organisational vitality. In the second subcategory, the importance of preparedness is highlighted. Organisations employing this strategy focus on preparing for stable conditions rather than maintaining continuous audience engagement in the face of unforeseen circumstances. Menų spaustuvė, which conducted audience research during the crisis, exemplifies this approach, enabling a better understanding of audience needs and preparation for future challenges. The third subcategory addresses audience loss and includes organisations that were unable to identify suitable means of maintaining relationships, resulting in a perceived loss of their audience. For instance, Klaipėda Puppet Theatre faced challenges in retaining part of its audience due to limited possibilities for live interaction. Financial reports indicate a significant 55.81 per cent decrease in sales revenue. Consequently, failure to sustain audience relationships leads directly to audience loss, emphasising the causal link between audience relations and retention. By contrast, organisations that underscored innovative approaches to audience engagement succeeded in retaining most of their audiences, highlighting the critical role of audience support in enhancing the resilience of non-profit arts organisations during crises.

Information and communication systems management. All participating organisations in the study use similar information and communication systems. The main criteria guiding the choice of communication and information dissemination tools are speed and regularity. To ensure rapid information flow, organisations employ social media and digital tools, including "Messenger groups, Instagram groups, remote meetings via Zoom," as noted by the director of Low Air. The use of these platforms enables faster communication and ensures that information reaches all members of the organisation. To maintain regularity, all organisations hold team meetings

at least once a week. According to a representative of OKT Theatre, communication within the organisation is intensive, informal, and close, ensuring effective information sharing and coordination among members and thereby enhancing organisational resilience.

Safe organisational environment. Studying how safe environments are fostered in organisations highlights the critical role of unity and cohesion. Organisations create conditions for unity through two main subcategories: communication and openness, as well as the significance of shared values. In the first case, the emphasis is placed on involving members and valuing their opinions.

Additionally, Menų spaustuvė promotes openness through an open-door policy, emphasising the importance of sharing employees' opinions. The second subcategory stresses the role of values in aligning employees with the organisation's cultural attitudes and principles. While openness and the appreciation of opinions are evident across organisations, a value-based approach allows for a clearer recognition of the importance of employees, more effective problem identification, and more constructive solution-finding. At Low Air, addressing problems is grounded in organisational values. In conclusion, a value-based safe environment enhances unity and resilience in non-profit arts organisations.

Motivational support. The analysis of motivation support strategies during crisis periods revealed a key distinction between professional and personal challenges. In the first case, organisations identified obstacles that hindered regular activities. Both OKT Theatre and Menų Spaustuvė faced challenges in adapting to remote work, while financial stability and professional growth were highlighted as major concerns at Klaipėda Puppet Theatre. These challenges were perceived as barriers to collective activities, leading organisations to adopt a waiting strategy, which postponed active motivational measures. In the second case, employees emphasised their individual experiences during the crisis. The director of Low Air highlighted a decline in motivation and emotional fatigue among team members. Acknowledging these issues prompted the adoption of a talking strategy, involving weekly conversations and meetings aimed at fostering a sense of community and

mutual support. Identifying and supporting individual motivation is crucial, as people represent the most valuable resource in arts organisations. Individuals seek recognition and engagement within their professional community, and understanding their goals and career expectations is vital for enhancing resilience during crises. Accordingly, non-profit arts organisations should address employees' primary challenges and support their motivation in order to enhance resilience during crisis situations.

The qualitative research results reveal the key factors contributing to the enhancement of resilience in non-profit arts organisations under crisis conditions. The collected data illustrate how the components of the theoretical model for enhancing organisational resilience, developed on the basis of scientific literature, are applied in practice.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that resilience in non-profit arts organisations is shaped by the interplay between external environments and internal organisational characteristics. Political, economic, social, and cultural contexts exert a strong influence on these organisations, while relationships with audiences and stakeholders determine their capacity to sustain activity during crises. The findings confirm that resilience should be understood as a systemic capacity rather than a set of isolated measures.

Leadership emerged as a critical factor, particularly when characterised by participation, transparency, and shared responsibility. Such approaches supported organisational agility, innovation, and rapid decision-making, enabling adaptation during crises. These insights align with resilience theory, which emphasises collaborative and empowering leadership as a precondition for effective organisational responses to uncertainty.

Organisational culture is equally significant. Maintaining close ties with audiences and fostering member motivation proved essential for stability and recovery. Organisations that adopted innovative approaches to audience engagement—whether digital, outdoor, or collaborative—were more successful in sustaining their activities. Similarly, embedding learning and knowledge sharing into daily practice enhanced adaptability,

highlighting the importance of continuous organisational development and partnerships. At the same time, several challenges were evident. Limited systems for process review constrained the institutionalisation of resilience strategies, while hesitancy to engage politically left some organisations vulnerable in shaping cultural policy and securing resources. These findings suggest that resilience in the arts should be understood not merely as survival or recovery, but as a transformative capacity that enables organisations to innovate and enhance their social value.

Although the study is based on a small sample of Lithuanian cases, it reveals patterns that are relevant to the wider sector. Future research should expand the scope and adopt comparative perspectives to better understand how non-profit arts organisations can balance external dependencies with internal resilience-building strategies.

Conclusions

This article examined the theoretical aspects of organisational resilience and developed a theoretical model for enhancing the resilience of non-profit arts organisations. The model assesses environmental impact by distinguishing between macro- and micro-environmental factors. The empirical study confirms that political, economic, social, and cultural environments significantly influence the activities of non-profit arts organisations, although the nature and intensity of these influences vary, shaping organisational priorities and sources of financial support.

The political environment regulates the scope of operations and defines the significance of the arts organisation at the national level. Economic conditions influence audience behaviour and financial capacity, while the social environment directly impacts the products created. The cultural environment, in turn, fosters competition and innovation. The study also emphasises the significance of micro-environmental players—stakeholders and audiences—in sustaining continuous, mutually beneficial relationships.

The main resilience characteristics of non-profit arts organisations are categorised into three groups: leadership, planning, and management,

and organisational culture. Each group is further divided into external and internal fields that require targeted implementation of distinct areas:

1. Leadership strategies. Externally, organisations must respond to the expectations of stakeholders, ensuring both moral and financial support. This involves demonstrating innovation, adaptability, and improvisational capacity during crises, fostering partnerships, and enhancing the sector's influence. Internally, empowering leadership is crucial, as it decentralises decision-making, increases organisational agility and decision-making speed, and ensures continuous learning to develop the necessary competencies.

2. Planning and management strategies. Externally, continuous environmental monitoring is vital for anticipating change and preparing adaptive responses. Engagement in the political sphere enhances organisational influence and the ability to contribute to favourable decisions. A clearly articulated mission provides direction for purposeful action and shapes public perceptions of organisational values. Internally, a balanced organisational structure and distributed responsibilities enable informed decision-making and more effective operations. Alignment with mission and values supports the identification of emerging challenges, sustains motivation, and maintains strategic coherence.

3. Organisational culture. Externally, ongoing audience support contributes to organisational integrity, relevance, innovation, and stable income streams. Internally, effective information and communication management ensures regularity and responsiveness. Creating a secure organisational environment grounded in shared values facilitates open dialogue, conflict resolution, and constructive discussion. Supporting member motivation by acknowledging individual experiences is vital for sustaining engagement and reinforcing organisational resilience.

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Santrauka

Nevyriausybinių meno organizacijų atsparumo didinimas krizių kontekste

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Reikšminiai žodžiai: organizacijų atsparumas, nevyriausybinės organizacijos, meno organizacijos, krizės.

COVID-19 pandemija išryškino organizacijų atsparumo reikšmę, o tarp labiausiai pažeistų sektorių išskirtinai paveiktos buvo nevyriausybinės meno organizacijos. Atsižvelgiant į šią problematiką, tyrimo tikslas – sukurti empiriškai pagrįstą modelį, skirtą nevyriausybinių meno organizacijų atsparumui didinti krizių kontekste. Tyrimo uždaviniai: 1) identifikuoti ir išanalizuoti organizacijų atsparumo teorinius aspektus; 2) suformuoti teorinį modelį, orientuotą į meno organizacijų atsparumo stiprinimą; 3) empiriškai patikrinti pasiūlytą modelį.

Teorinės analizės metu suformuluoti organizacijų atsparumo principai meno organizacijoms ir parengtas teorinis modelis. Empirinėje tyrimo dalyje modelis buvo tikrinamas taikant kokybinius metodus – pusiau struktūruotus ekspertų interviu ir dokumentų analizę.

Gauti rezultatai atskleidė, kad nevyriausybinių meno organizacijų atsparumui krizių sąlygomis esminę reikšmę turi tiek išoriniai veiksniai (politinė, ekonominė, socialinė ir kultūrinė aplinka, santykiai su auditorijomis ir išorinėmis suinteresuotomis šalimis), tiek vidinės organizacinės charakteristikos. Atsparumo didinimas siejamas su trimis dimensijomis: lyderyste, procesų planavimu ir valdymu bei organizacine kultūra. Lyderystės dimensijoje akcentuojamas suinteresuotųjų šalių lūkesčių atliepimas, inovatyvumas, improvizacijos gebėjimas, partnerystės palaikymas, įgalinanti lyderystė, organizacinis lankstumas, sprendimų priėmimo sparta ir nuolatinis mokymasis. Procesų planavimo ir valdymo dimensijoje pabrėžiama nuolatinė aplinkos stebėsena, politinių procesų stebėsena ir įsitraukimas, subalansuota struktūra, atsakomybių aiškumas, vieninga misija bei vertybių sistema. Organizacinės kultūros dimensijoje išryškinamas nuolatinis ryšių palaikymas su auditorijomis, informacijos bei komunikacijos sistemų valdymas, saugios organizacinės aplinkos kūrimas, narių motyvacijos stiprinimas ir individualių patirčių pripažinimas.