



ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF CREATIVE EVENTS

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Events have been an important part of the life throughout the history of humanity. Throughout the history, people not only entertained themselves with events but also they handed down social and cultural knowledge from generation to generation. Now, traditional events have to change and develop themselves in the human life which changed through modernity. Therefore, event managers have focused on engaging in activities which could influence satisfaction and loyalty of the audience by organising creative events in the recent years. It is now an obligation to study both social and individual effects of these events. The aim of this study is to analyse individual and social effects of a creative event. Within this framework, social media statements about the event titled “dialogue in the dark”, which was organised in Istanbul, shared by individuals who participated in this event were analysed via the method of content analysis. Acquired qualitative data was discussed by being categorised.

Keywords: creativity, effects of creative events, entertainment, event management, society.

Introduction

Event management is an applied science in which inter-disciplinary studies are used mostly. Therefore, event management is becoming a new format that is continuously renewing and developing itself with the technology that is changing and developing. In particular, event practices now cease to be ordinary activities and have become a structure that has horizontal and vertical components through recent developments in communication technologies and multi-functional globalisation effects. The base for is that events are creating their own stories with creative, interesting and transmediatic practices. That is, communication speed and living spaces of people are changing, and thus events acquire creative functions and they transform into a new format.

The events organised in the recent years have acquired a new dimension especially through the use of technological devices. But how much of the creative features of

these events do the participants perceive? Creative practices' way of influencing social life is a problem to be solved. This study differs from other studies in that it puts forward the effects of creativity factor in the process of event management because most of the studies conducted about event management aimed primarily to determine the loyalty and satisfaction levels of participants (Petrick 2004; Kaplanidou, Gibson 2010). Furthermore, these studies are based on the research conducted during the events. On the other hand, the present study is based on the comments of participants that they shared on the internet through their own will after the event was finished. This study aims to analyse individual and social effects of the event titled "dialogue in the dark" whose aim was to organise a creative event in Istanbul. Within this scope, individual and social dimensions of the event were studied by making content analyses on sharings of the participants on the social media.

Literature

The concept of creativity is an ever-developing and self-renewing concept. Thus, it is frequently used in interdisciplinary studies. Its study area includes many disciplines such as educational sciences (Parnes 1971; Gordon 1974), individual recognition (Guilford 1967) and organisational creativity (Porter, Lawler 1968). This enriched the concept in the course of time. Therefore, creativity has been used as a medium to produce new and appropriate ideas in every field of human activity from science to art, education to business administration. Creativity can be described as the ability to produce new things, creativity can also be described as a process which directs us to produce useful and comprehensible outcomes (Kao 1997: 14). Similarly, one can define creating both as producing new things that are not available in the world and as reuniting available things to make new ones. In other words, creativity is the ability to materialise new ideas and opinions which are not existent in the *status quo*. Mind produces quite new ideas and opinions by accumulating cores of experiences, emotions, and opinions which are stored in the memory (Gürgen 1990). Therefore, thinking individuals play a pivotal role in creativity. Creativity is about abilities to solve problems, making decisions and expressing oneself. It is also a thinking skill which is the basis for innovations, it includes the production of new ideas by accumulating, changing and synthesising available ideas (Harris 1960). Thus, creativity directly affects daily lives of people. That is to say, creativity substantially affects and supports people's feeling good and enjoying life. According to George Bernard Shaw, the process of creativity starts when a person uses his imagination. A person imagines his wishes and becomes the thing he wishes, and then makes creations accordingly (Baldwin Seggebruch 2011: 32).

The concept of creativity, which has such importance in daily lives of individuals, also plays a key role within the social life. It is an important motivation that individuals' tendency to creativity is supported by the society (Cropley 2006). On the other hand, creative individuals not only are valuable people for the society but they

also nourish and provide new living spaces to the society. Therefore, creativity contributes positively to the sustainability of the society and all of the factors of social life by making use of all sorts of potentials within the society (Öncü 1992: 261–262). The connection between the society and individuals could clearly be revealed through creativity. Namely, creative practices enrich the society (Damon 2009). To give an example, social life changed and developed through the invention of printing press. In particular, creative practices in the sector of advertisement acquired a new dimension through the printing press, and it had many positive effects on the social life (Moriarty *et al.* 2015). It is not enough for an idea to be called creative even if it is new and original. A creative idea is only considerable when it is useful; to put it another way, only if it is valuable. The society decides whether this idea is both new and valuable or not. Thus, there is an organic relationship between the society, and individuals and creativity (Johansson 2007: 29). Creativity connects the society with individuals making them an inseparable whole, and they improve and enrich one another. The connection between practices and responses to sophisticated problems is formed through creative ideas (Pérez-Fabello, Campos 2011). Anatoliy Stoletov (2016) studied the relationship between social creativity and the society also. According to Stoletov, new social forms and dialogues emerge when people in a society engage in social creativity, which leads to alteration of social reality. However, if outcomes of different kinds of creativity like scientific or artistic are materialised, then the outcomes of social creativity become symbolic since, as an example, representation of success may differ under various circumstances. People's affecting social reality is included in the recent description of success, and these effects can be changing social relationships, social space and time and enabling development of the society (Stoletov 2016: 149). There have been many studies conducted to analyse the effects of creativity on the society (Gowan, Olson 1979; Joas, Kilpinen 2009; Moran 2010). The reason for this is that development and improvement of societies are closely linked to the creativity of individuals. When the fact that creativity leads to inventions, and inventions lead to technology and production is considered, development of societies in which individuals do not or cannot make use of their creativity and productivity might be difficult. Evaluation and development of creativity in educational institutions which prepare individuals to social life could be an element contributing to social development. Furthermore, not only motivations of life and happiness levels of individuals but also social satisfaction levels come into prominence through the concept of creativity. For this reason, we can see creativity as the heart of social existence.

Event management and creativity

Through history people have organized events regardless of space and time, and these activities have had an important role in individual and social life. People organised events to satisfy their needs such as reaching common purposes, socialising and entertaining themselves. All the religions and societies live together with events from Indian's sharing tribal hunts to Thanksgiving, from fairs to carnivals. Many countries and cultures have a rich tradition of ceremonies and rituals going on for millen-

niums. These traditions which are influenced by increasing urbanisation and industrialisation, and changing societies set up a substructure for various events that are celebrated in today's world (Bowdin *et al.* 2006; Pira 2004). Events which are at the centre of the social life have many social and cultural effects on the society by their nature (Getz 2007). On the other hand, use of free time in the flow of daily lives of people is also highly important. Today, people have difficulty in finding a free time for themselves. For this reason, they focus on both entertainment and learning possibilities in the free time they could find. David Riesman stated that participation to entertainment has become an obligation in today's world; however, this has not occurred by itself, this has been a situation which deprives the individual of his privacy who does not hide anything from his group including the way he uses his free time, and this occurs because individuals do not want to stay out of the others. Similar to Riesman's statements, people in today's world take part in similar events in their free time (1992). The reason for this is that events are directly associated with experiences. Events bring people together and offer opportunities for people to share experiences and thus, measurable outcomes are obtained (Rutherford Silvers 2004). Some of these outcomes are event concept which refers to the final product, event process which refers to procedures of the event, event team which refers to an organisational element, and all these outcomes are related to creativity (George 2007).

People started to live under a bombardment of messages through globalisation and developments in communication technologies. Therefore, it is a must to organise events which will draw the attention of people and will create a behavioural change. For this, creativity must come into prominence in the process of event management. In order for events to be memorable, organisation of them should include design and creativity, yet first of all, these features have a substantial part in providing security to event contract. Complex and extreme types of these features are sometimes used to acquire great success (Berridge 2010: 208). The places where events are held play key roles in terms of the creativity of the event. *"Place, in addition to its being a location which is produced, built, created, it is also a social environment where social events take place. Place is a pot where history takes place and is a register where time turns into history"* (Alver 2010: 19). Therefore, place and event are two concepts that nurture each other from the perspective of creativity. In order to make use of their free time in a different way, some people exert effort to find such things. There can be various reasons underlying this. For example, visitors or tourist try to visit different and creative places like exhibitions or design environments which they may find interesting (Förster 2009). The concepts of space, place, and memory have changed and developed through digitalisation of events. It can be seen that the concepts of space and place sometimes are used for the same meaning according to the discipline in which they are used, and sometimes are used for perceptual meanings which are related to each other. The concept of space reaches a new point in the "events" with the digital world since individuals and places started to be reproduced independent from space and time. According to Kevin Robins, space is now an electronic environment and does not have a centre (2013). While the places of events were stable and specific living spaces in periods when technological developments did not deeply influence social life, the concepts of place and

time have changed through technological developments in time. Now, professionals of events can organise a single event in different places at the same time especially on on-line platforms in order to conduct creative practices. Thus, they can maximise both reaching of messages and participation of the audience.

Event management is linked to product, individual and place all of which are creative dimensions. Firstly, organisers of the events are creative and they work in such environment. Their job is very valuable in terms of society and economy in the creative industry. However, event managers should go through a creative process in order to obtain useful and original outcomes. Their job yields a new, genuine and useful phenomenon which is a live event for an audience. The main focus of the present study is creativity which stands for this creative process. Finding new things about the creative process in the literature and learning them will contribute to determining issues to be studied about event management (Hopwood 2012: 123).

Methodology

This study aims to explain social and individual effects of creative events. Within this framework, social media statements about the event titled “dialogue in the dark” whose aim was to organise a creative event in Istanbul shared by individuals who participated in this event were analysed via the method of content analysis.

Research methods implemented on the Internet are divided into two as quantitative and qualitative. While quantitative ones consist of on-line or off-line questionnaires, knowledge about use of web and content analysis of search engines, qualitative methods consist of on-line or off-line in-depth interviews, implementation of attended observations which can also be called as digital ethnography, discourse analysis, historical and aesthetic criticism (Hollway, Jefferson 2000; Bruhn Jensen 2011: 48; Kozinets 2002). Within this scope, this study is a qualitative study which is conducted on the Internet. Within this framework, comments shared on the most popular social media websites in Turkey from the date of January 5, 2014 to December 20 are analysed through qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (social media statistics) methods.

Sample

The sample of this study consists of participants of the event titled “dialogue in the dark” which took place in Istanbul and individuals who made sharings on Ekşi Sözlük, Facebook, and Twitter about the topic. Participant information according to social media devices are as follows (see Table 1).

Table 1. Participant Information (source: created by authors)

Ekşi Sözlük	127 people commented on the topic.
Twitter	It has 1391 followers and it received 976 likes. There were 1206 tweets.
Facebook	21,932 people liked its page on Facebook, 20,992 people follows the event page of Facebook.
YouTube	There were 62 videos shared.

Instrument

The event titled “dialogue in the dark” was organised by Andreas Heinecke which took place in more than 130 countries in the world and more than 8 million people participated in. While Heinecke was working at a radio station, he came across an individual who was visually impaired. First, he felt sorry for him and did not know how to behave. But shortly after, he understood that visually impaired people had many speciality that people who could see had not. While Heinecke educated his young counterpart to be a qualified radio broadcaster, the visually impaired youngster became his teacher about topics related to life. A visually impaired individual literally “opened his eyes” and caused him to think about what we can do when we go beyond our differences. Heinecke, realising the value of this relationship, initiated his first social enterprise in 1995. He organised a different, new and a creative event that nobody was used to by transforming his experience into an event.

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Findings

Content analysis of sharings on Ekşi Sözlük which is a people-powered dictionary style web page consisting of comments of registered writers about every kind of topic and concept in Turkey, Facebook and Twitter were made. Data acquired within this context was classified under four main categories which are creativity level of the event, effects of the event on the individual, effects of the event on the social life, event satisfaction and loyalty.

Creativity level of the event

People show a tendency to make use of their free time and to participate in the events through modernisation. The element of creativity in the events in which people directly participate influences the participation of individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, Lefevre 1989). Place and time play pivotal roles when calling an event creative (Förster 2009). The opinion of a person who participated in the event titled “dialogue in the dark”: “This is one of the most extraordinary events to experience in which perception of place, time and body get lost. And when it ends, an inner questioning begins of course” (Ekşi Sözlük, JeJune, personal communication, 7 February 2014). Similarly, another participant talks about his confusion about place and time: “I lost my perception of time and place. I thought that it had been only half an hour but it had been one hour and a half” (Ekşi Sözlük, Senveben, personal communication, 15 January 2015). Another participant states that this event exceeds the limits of creativity: “I have never seen a more creative and extraordinary event” (Ekşi Sözlük, Ben buldum, personal communication, 4 March 2014).

Creativity is the ability to materialise new ideas and opinions which are not existent in the *status quo*. This is about perceptions and memories of participants.

Creativity is only creative when it is perceived. Therefore, it is highly important for people to reveal their all senses in creative events (Gürgen 1990). One of the individuals who took part in the event, which is the topic for this study, and who commented about it on social media: “This is an impressively amazing and influential event, really. [...] in which tiresome meaningless voices of life regarding life itself becomes meaningful in the utter darkness where we see not only through our eyes but also with all our senses” (Ekşi Sözlük, Poiiii, personal communication, 6 May 2014). This person experienced a journey among all his senses through the event. This provides insight about the creativity potential of the event. On the other hand, creative events also push the limits of participants. According to another participant who makes up the sample of the study, “The event in which I have experienced one of the most impressive moments in my life. After the first one or two steps, I thought that I would not be able to do it; however, I continued with the help of the guide” (Ekşi Sözlük, Imza foyu, personal communication, 17 July 2014). This person faced with his own limits in this process and the event greatly influenced the person.

Creativity level of the event titled “dialogue in the dark” was analysed according to comments of participants who make up the sample of the study, and a major part of the participants were of the opinion that the event was creative.

Effects of the event on the individual

Events have many individual and sociological effects (Shone, Parry 2010). Within this context, effects of events on individuals were analysed in various studies (Li, Petrick 2006; Drengner *et al.* 2012). One of the participants: “You are going through a very deep empathy. A visually impaired guide becomes your eye in this nothingness [...]. Foreign voices with which you participate in the tour gives you confidence. Colour, religion, hair, beard, appearance, outfit [...]. You get rid of all the prejudices and feel the purest of all emotions within yourself. One hour and a half that you spent provides you an experience that you can never go through again. For example, you learn that visually impaired people see voices in their dreams. When the tour of Istanbul in the dark finishes, you want to hug the light madly. And when you go on your life where you left off, farewell sentence of the person who becomes your inner eye rings in your ears: ‘Do not lose your light’” (Facebook, Yusuf Saraç, personal communication). The creative event had great effects on the participants of the study. In particular, there were emotional and behavioural changes: “Endless thanks to those who have contributed to this event which works on empathy so greatly and teaches not to fear from the darkness” (Twitter, Süeda, personal communication). Moreover, the event had some permanent effects on some of the participants: “This is the event which has been raising my hairs, filling my eyes with tears and exciting me for a week” (Ekşi Sözlük, Bayan yani, personal communication, 28 April 2014).

Events have various effects on individuals. However, the difference of creative events from traditional events is that they can have permanent effects on individuals, and cause emotional changes which can be a reason for the behavioural change. In

particular, the behaviour of developing empathy which directly influences the attitudes of individuals in daily life is observed clearly through the creative event which is the topic of the study. It can be said that the higher the creativity level of the events is, the clearer the behavioural changes of individuals become.

Effects of the event on the social life

There have been many studies conducted analysing the effects of the events on the society. These studies analyse what kind of effects socio-cultural factors which are merged with events have on social life. In many of these studies, it is emphasised that the events have important social functions in creating a sustainable society (Lee, Hsu 2013; Kim *et al.* 2015; Akyol, Yürük 2015). Therefore, many people have started to include the events in their daily lives. One of the participants of the event who is included in the sample of the study performed a marriage ceremony in the event: “Marriage ceremony in Dialogue Museum in utter darkness” (NTV Kültür Sanat, Twitter). In addition, events are important resources for social awareness. This is an opinion which was supported by participants: “This is an exhibition in which everybody must participate in order for a social awareness to be created” (Ekşi Sözlük, Bahtiyar Juliet, personal communication, 22 January 2014). Every event also questions the incidents in the society in which events take place (Pira 2004). Similarly, participants of this event showed a tendency to question the society: “This is an event which makes us think that what are we doing as a society and where do we stand. I mean yes, my eyes can see, I am happy and everything is fine but what about the others? This event raised a serious awareness for me about the disabled” (Facebook, Can seren, personal communication). Furthermore, some of the participants wanted this event to be widespread in the society, which demonstrates the social importance of the event for some of the participants: “This is the event which was visited by only 25 thousand people in my city whose population is 17 million. This is an event which must be seen by many people and experienced by all of the society [...]” (Ekşi Sözlük, Ride, personal communication, 27 May 2014).

As it was mentioned in the literature part of the study, most of the events have social effects. However, creative events reveal social tendencies more. Individuals influence social life directly in proportion to the content of the event beyond entertaining themselves or spending their free time, which causes the participants to embrace the event.

Event satisfaction and loyalty

Loyalty defined as “loyalty in terms of constant purchasing, frequent purchasing, and word-of-mouth recommendations” (Lee, Kim 2006). An increase in the satisfaction level of the event participant demonstrates participation frequency of the event, and thus the sustainability of the events is ensured. Moreover, there is an important relationship between loyalty and satisfaction (Petrick *et al.* 2013). The topic of

event satisfaction and loyalty was analysed by many researchers who work on event management. In particular, researchers tried to understand the factors affecting the satisfaction and loyalty of the participants in the events. Satisfaction and loyalty of participants in the creative events have acquired a new dimension. While some of the people from the sample state simple satisfaction expressions like “We participated in the dialogue in the dark. We were very pleased” (Twitter, Işıl Apaydin, personal communication) or “This is the exhibition in which I participated yesterday and now I am of the opinion that everyone should participate in” (Ekşi Sözlük, Suvetoprak, personal communication, 4 August 2014), the others expressed their satisfaction with creative sentences: “Everyone who wants to view the world from a completely different perspective after going out of utter darkness must visit here (Twitter, Beyza Nur Turan, personal communication)” or “When I passed the labyrinth and went inside, I was like I lost not only my eyesight but also my all other senses. Everywhere is dark and everything is black. I immediately felt the need to hold onto something or cling on someone. My friends whose faces I see every day were just voices then (Ekşi Sözlük, İreminalt benliği, personal communication, 12 April 2014)”.

One of the most important loyalty elements about events is participants’ talking about the event in other places and making people around them laugh. We can say that the most important feature of creative events is that this laughing process happens very quickly. On the other hand, it can be seen that people talked about this event and shared things about it on many different social media devices. This caused the event to have its own time place and memory. According to Donald Getz (2007), events are activities which take place in a specific period of time. Through creativity, events and the sector of entertainment acquire a new dimension and reveal a number of fans who give life to the same event without knowing of each other.

Conclusions

The aim of this study is to determine individual and social effects of creative events. Within this framework, social media comments about the event titled “dialogue in the dark” which was described as a creative event and was held in Istanbul shared by individuals who participated in this event were analysed via the method of content analysis. As a result of the analyses, it was revealed that creative events form their own unique place and time. This finding shows similarity to the studies of Jens Förster (2009). In addition, events create their own dynamism by place and time’s becoming different in creative events, which enables the creation of an organic memory. This demonstrates the necessity to define the memory created by an event while defining the event itself.

Within the scope of the study, analyses regarding effects of creative events on individuals, society, and satisfaction and loyalty were conducted. Within this context, it was revealed that creative events cause individuals to experience emotional changes. It was determined that the event titled “dialogue in the dark”, which makes up the sample of the study, directly affects emotions like developing empathy in the first

place. According to Robert S. Feldman (2011), motions help individuals act, shape their future behaviours and organise their social relationships. Therefore, the effect of creativity on emotions is vital to foresee the behavioural changes of individuals. As a result of the analyses conducted within the scope of the study to determine the social effects of a creative event, it was revealed that people perceived the topic very differently from conventional events. In conventional events, people perceive the social effect of the event as benefits to the society by the event and interpret them accordingly (Kim *et al.* 2015; Akyol, Yürük 2015). However, participants of the creative event who make up the sample of the study suggested that the event should be experienced by all of the society beyond focusing just on material and non-material benefits of the event. This demonstrates that individuals embrace all of the society and can develop perceptions about sharing the same values.

One of the most important topics for the professionals of event management is ensuring satisfaction and loyalty of participants. The reason for this is that maintaining the sustainability of the events whose satisfaction and loyalty levels are high will be easier. Participants of the event titled “dialogue in the dark” who are chosen as the sample within the framework of the study expressed their satisfaction about the event on various social media devices and stated that they will participate again, which shows that satisfaction and loyalty of the participants of creative events are positive.

In conclusion, through globalisation and developments in communication technologies, creative practices are also developing concurrently with them. Events, which are at the centre of the social life, could play key roles in terms of testing creativity and contributing to the development of the society. For this reason, it is suggested that both the professionals and the individuals should be interested in creative events and should place them at the centre of their daily lives.

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KŪRYBINIŲ RENGINIŲ INDIVIDUALIOS IR SOCIALINĖS ĮTAKOS ANALIZĖ

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Santrauka

Žmonijos istorijoje renginiai buvo svarbi gyvenimo dalis. Renginiai ne tik teikė pramogą, bet ir iš kartos į kartą perimdavo kultūrinės žinias. Nūdien tradiciniai renginiai turi kisti ir plėtotis modernybės pakeistame žmonių gyvenime. Todėl pastaraisiais metais, organizuodami kūrybinius renginius, renginių vadybininkai susitelkė ties įsitraukimu į tas veiklos rūšis, kurios gali daryti įtaką publikos pasitenkinimui ir lojalumui. Dabar turime pareigą tyrinėti šių renginių tiek socialinę, tiek individualią įtaką. Šio tyrimo tikslas – išanalizuoti kūrybinio renginio individualią ir socialinę įtaką. Šiuo atveju pareiškimai socialinėse medijose apie renginį, vadinamą „pokalbiu tamsoje“, kuris buvo suorganizuotas Stambule ir aptartas jame dalyvavusių asmenų, buvo išanalizuoti remiantis turinio analizės metodu. Gauti kokybiniai duomenys buvo suskirstyti kategorijomis ir diskutuojami.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: kūrybingumas, kūrybinių renginių įtaka, pramoga, renginių vadyba, visuomenė.