

Risk Management in Events A Review of Conceptual Evolution and Approach in Arab Context

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Abstract:

This paper provides a comprehensive literature review of the concept of risk management in events, which has evolved with the growth of the events industry. Events have become a key communication tool used by organizations of all sizes to achieve both profit-driven and non-profit goals, such as gaining customer trust, improving reputation, enhancing brand identity, or demonstrating commitment to social responsibility. However, the increasing occurrence of human tragedies such as fires, violence, stampedes, and riots during events highlights the critical need for effective risk management.

The paper illustrates the maturation of the concept through the establishment of a scientific methodology by researchers and practitioners, which includes detailed strategies and techniques. Researchers have shifted their focus to studying unforeseen risks—those that fall outside the scope of pre-event planning and are not included in potential scenarios—and the importance of decision-making in mitigating these risks. They also emphasize identifying the cultural, social, and psychological factors affecting event organizers, which can influence the decision-making process in such situations. Furthermore, the researcher attempts to apply risk management concepts through a proposed approach aligned with the Arab context. which also face tragedies, particularly in sports events, extracting indicators such as differences in organizational culture .

Keywords: Events; Risk Management; Communication; Decision Making; cultural dimensions.

1-Introduction

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In the era of a risk society, as described by researcher Ulrich Beck, the event industry is experiencing continuous growth as one of the major communication activities, both internally and externally for organizations. In 2023, statistics recorded over \$1,183 billion circulating in the global event (The Insight Partners, 2023), with projections indicating further growth in the coming years. This highlights the increasing preference for events among organizations, with their annual agendas filled with numerous events.

This makes event the most significant and highest-budgeted communication activity, whether small or large, due to its potential to achieve goals with stakeholders, including clients or the public, such as gaining trust, promoting the brand, improving its image, expanding its network, or raising awareness about important community issues. In non-profit contexts, events also contribute to spreading ideas, enriching discussions on relevant topics, and seeking solutions to societal problems. However, these organizational goals through event cannot be considered without acknowledging the unpredictable risks that may arise during these events, as past experiences have shown. This has led to an increasing focus on risk management during event, which has become an integral part of the process.

Organizers must commit to managing and controlling these risks before any event, dedicating adequate time to think and prepare the necessary measures. For instance, a major event such as the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar allocated 2.6% of its total budget to risk management, a significantly higher percentage compared to previous World Cups, especially considering the security threats and health crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 -Problem Statement

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the phenomenon of event organization. Events are no longer merely public gatherings or transient cultural and sports manifestations; rather, they have evolved into strategic occasions in which various organizations invest—whether profit-driven entities such as companies and commercial institutions or non-profit actors such as associations, governmental, and international organizations. These events are exploited to achieve a wide range of objectives, from marketing, promotion, and influencing public opinion, to building brand image or embodying symbolic and political values.

As the scale of events has grown in terms of participant numbers, diversity of activities, and complexity of arrangements, a pressing need has emerged for a scientific and organizational approach to managing the potential risks and sudden crises that may accompany them—whether these involve natural disasters, technical failures, or unexpected crowd behavior that could lead to security disturbances or human and material losses.

From this perspective, a new field of knowledge has emerged: risk management in event organization. Within it, researchers and experts have sought to develop tools and practical models aimed at anticipating risks, minimizing their impacts, and ensuring the continuity of the event and the safety of its participants. This field has been distinguished by the diversity of its approaches, including technical models and others that attempt to consider human and organizational dimensions, making it a fertile domain for study and practice.

Given the importance of this field, there is a clear need to examine its main knowledge foundations and explore the scientific accumulation that has been produced in this context, with the aim of introducing it and acknowledging its contributions. This is particularly relevant in Arab contexts, where the field remains relatively new and is largely absent from training programs and adopted organizational approaches.

On another note, the risks associated with events are not alien to the reality of events in the Arab world, especially large-scale events such as sports tournaments, which have witnessed riots and stadium collapses, resulting in casualties. Other types of events have also seen tragic incidents, such as the stampede during the 2015 Hajj season that led to the death of 769 pilgrims (Aljazeera.net, 2015). Moreover, the issue is not limited to large events; even smaller ones have experienced security failures, overcrowding, fires, or natural disasters affecting participants, or breaches during live broadcasts.

Among the most tragic events in Algeria is the stampede at the concert of rapper “Soolking,” which resulted in the death of five people (BBC, 2019), as well as the riots that occurred during the inauguration of Ali Ammar Stadium (El Khabar, 2024). These events highlight the fact that risks are inherent to any event, regardless of its size, and that the responses have often been haphazard, lacking in planning, coordination, and proactive measures to ensure preparedness.

This underscores the importance of our attempt in this research paper to review the literature on risk management in event organization and to align the accumulated knowledge produced by academic research with the specificities of the Arab context—characterized by a unique cultural composition, religious and historical mental frameworks, and administrative and procedural practices that may not always align with ready-made and imported models.

Hence, our central research question in this study is:

How has the accumulation of knowledge contributed to enhancing the effectiveness of risk management in events? And what aspects require reconsideration in light of the Arab context?

from which the following questions were derived:

Q1- What does the concept of risk management in event mean?

Q2- What strategies and techniques do organizations rely on for risk management in events?

Q3- What challenges do organizations face in its practical application?

Q4- Which approach of risk management in event for Algeria and Arabic context?

1.2- Methodology

Through an extensive literature review, we reviewed many articles and books, including sources established by the researchers who laid the foundations of this discipline of risk management in event, showing its evolution, and the challenges it still faces, despite the accumulated knowledge and practices of event organizers.

The research also reviews the risks faced by events worldwide, particularly in the Arab world and Algeria, with a focus on sports events, emphasizing the importance of proactive, scientific, and methodical risk management to avoid or minimize potential damage.

1.3- The Importance of the Research Topic:

Organizing events today, despite their significance for organizations, presents one of the most challenging tasks due to the specific measures required, especially when it comes to risk management. With the growing presence of a risk society, an event—regardless of its size—requires careful thought and effort to ensure security and safety and to anticipate any

possible incidents that could occur at the designated time and place. Certainly, drawing on the accumulated scientific and knowledge-based resources in risk management for events is a winning strategy to either prevent risks or mitigate their consequences, saving time, money, and effort, while also protecting the organization's image, budget, and its ability to achieve its goals.

Therefore, it becomes essential to examine the body of literature dedicated to risk management in events. Introducing and disseminating knowledge about this field is a crucial step that strengthens the work of both event professionals and academic researchers. On the other hand, our attempt to align this accumulated knowledge with the Arab context opens the door for Arab scholars to explore the specific factors, obstacles, and challenges that must be addressed to ensure human safety, regardless of the size or type of the event.

1.4- objectives

This research paper aims to attract the attention of researchers and practitioners in the field of communication to the topic of risk management during event organization.

Firstly, this is due to the frequent unfortunate incidents that have occurred at many events in Algeria and the Arab world, which could have been prevented or minimized had there been scientific consideration and preparation for their management, or at least prior preparedness by taking the necessary measures. In our paper, we specifically present a case study of the 1988 Winter Olympics conducted by researchers Chang, P., & Singh, K, where risk management in organizing the event became a primary reference for professionalism and scientific approach adopted by the organizing team.

Secondly, it encourages further research in this specialization, especially considering the increasing number of conferences, meetings, sports events, and festivals that require a specialized team for risk management. The risks range from disruptions in official speeches, to online broadcast hacking, provocative behavior, structural accidents, violent events, stampedes, and other incidents that occur at various events of all sizes.

Thirdly, from an academic perspective, event management and risk management are well-established fields in Western universities, with some offering them as master's programs or as specialized courses within communication and management degrees. This necessitates combined efforts in researching and establishing these concepts locally, especially in Arab context.

2-Event Concept

2.1-Definition

The event industry has flourished in the past two decades, thanks to its growing importance and influence on both internal and external audiences of stakeholders who aim to build trust.

One of the most frequently cited definitions of a special event is from researcher Getz (Getz, Festivals, Special Events, and Tourism, 1991, p. 6), who describes a special event as an event that happens once or irregularly outside of the usual program or activities of the sponsoring organization. For the client, a special event offers an opportunity for an entertainment, social, or cultural experience outside of typical options or beyond daily life experiences (Getz, Festivals, Special Events, and Tourism, 1991, p. 6) (Doug, 2011, p. 2). He further describes it as a "chance for an entertaining, social, or cultural experience beyond the ordinary or daily experience" (Getz, Festivals, Special Events, and Tourism, 1991). Moreover, the event industry includes a wide range of activities such as festivals, parades, meetings, conferences, sports exhibitions, and other special events. Event organizers are responsible for

researching, designing, planning, coordinating, and executing these events (Goldblatt, 2011, p. 11).

Getz (Getz, Festivals, Special Events, and Tourism, 1991) also suggested that the definition of a special event depends on the perspective of the individual. The distinction between categories of events tends to reflect an individual's perspective. For example, an event that is held annually may be considered special in its first year because it is highly different, but may be seen as routine in subsequent years as the "novelty" fades.

2.2-History of Event Organization

Although there has been increased publicity for special events in the past decade, special events cannot be considered a new phenomenon. The first recorded sports games were held in 776 BCE, and in the Quran, Allah says, "said, Your appointment is on the day of the festival when the people assemble at mid-morning" (Qur'an, 2025) refers to a celebrated event in the time of Pharaoh In the era of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) . As for the use of the term "special event," researchers Jago and Shaw (Jago & Shaw, 1998) suggest it was first coined by Disneyland to define "events that are known to the park and differ from the usual."

Researchers also indicate that the flourishing of event organization began in the 1980s and matured into a full-fledged industry by the 1990s. Major events included the Commonwealth Games in 1982, along with various rock music festivals organized by ABC Channel, and the opening and closing ceremonies of the Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles, Barcelona, and Sydney, as well as the Winter Olympic Games in Turin (Allen, Harris, & Jago, 2021, p. 10). The pivotal moment in event organization came with the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, where the economic benefits of organizing the event became evident. Organizers combined cinematic displays with the sports event in an unprecedented way, making it a benchmark for all future sports events, as it led to substantial economic gains for the host city and country, and promoted the cities hosting such events to global audiences.

2.3- Academic Interest in Events

A review of academic journals across various fields reveals that the vast majority of research and publications on special events in recent years have come from researchers involved in the tourism industry. Much of the attention given to special events has also been based on their tourism potential, as regions began to realize the power of special events in attracting visitors from outside their area. This led to the launch of the quarterly journal titled *Festival and Event Management: An International Journal* (FMET) in 1993.

2.4- Classification of Events

Allen and al. (Allen, Harris, & Jago, 2021) categorize events in several ways, including by size, form, and content, as described below.

Special events are often categorized by their size or scope. Common categories include mega-events, hallmark events, major events, and local community events, though the definitions are not always precise and their boundaries can overlap.

- **Mega-Events**

These events are explicitly aimed at the international tourism market and are large enough to be described as "mega" due to their size, including factors such as attendance, targeted markets, public financial investment, political impacts, television coverage, infrastructure development, and their effect on the economic and social fabric of the host community. Examples include world expos, the FIFA World Cup Final, and the Olympic Games.

- **Hallmark Events**

Hallmark events are those events that become so closely associated with the spirit or identity of a city or region that they become synonymous with the name of the place, gaining widespread fame and recognition. This term is often used in the context of tourism, where hallmark events not only attract visitors but also contribute to the creation and support of the destination's image and identity. The tourism researcher (Ritchie, 1984) defined these events as follows:

"A major one-off or recurring event with a limited duration, primarily developed to enhance awareness, attractiveness, and profitability for a tourist destination, both in the short and/or long term. These events succeed based on their uniqueness, stature, or timely significance in creating interest and attracting attention."

Classic examples of hallmark events include the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, known worldwide as an expression of the vibrancy and joy of the city.

Hallmark events can also be associated with entire countries, not just cities or regions, with examples including the Tour de France and the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico. These events, which are deeply tied to the character of these places and their residents, bring in massive tourism revenue, foster a strong sense of local pride, and gain international recognition. Getz (Getz, Event Management and Event Tourism, 2005) described them in terms of their ability to provide a competitive advantage for the host communities:

"In other words, the term 'hallmark events' describes an event of significant importance in terms of traditions, appeal, quality, or audience. These events give the host place, community, or destination recognition and special status."

- **Major Events**

These are events that, due to their scale and media coverage, are capable of attracting large numbers of visitors, media attention, and economic benefits. An example is the Australian Open tennis championship.

2.5- Objectives of Events

flourishing of event activities within organizations is closely tied to their ability to achieve their goals, as many authors, including (Burgan & Mules, 1992), have pointed out that the benefits of events include creating a positive image, internal investment, promoting tourism through media coverage and television broadcasts, and generating income. These may be goals that justify the event.

On the other hand, Silvers and Allen & al (Silvers j. , 2007) (Allen, Harris, & Jago, 2021, p. 13) described institutional and commercial events as "any event that supports business goals, including administrative functions, corporate communications, training, marketing, incentives, employee relations, and customer relations, whether scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events."

The objectives of events can be summarized as follows:

- a. Attracting tourists or developing tourism.
- b. Raising brand awareness for profit-making organizations.
- c. Improving the organization's image and reputation.
- d. Attracting media attention.

- e. Achieving a significant or moderate economic impact depending on the scale of the event.
- f. Building trust with stakeholders and employees.
- g. Enhancing influence among relevant stakeholders and establishing a distinguished network of relations.

2.6- Relevance of Event Management in Organizations

The relevance of events lies in improving internal business practices and employee routines, while gaining customer trust externally. In both cases, events ensure the organization's continuity, well-being, and stability.

On the other hand, events also contribute to enhancing the social responsibility aspect of organizations and community engagement. They are not only commercially focused but can also serve as tools for social responsibility by highlighting important societal issues such as the environment, public health, or education. Organizing charitable events or awareness campaigns enhances the organization's image as a responsible community partner.

3-Risk Management in Events

In the second part of this research paper, we address the concept of risk management, specifically risk management during event organization, by reviewing the academic output on the topic. We also dedicate sections to the case study conducted by researchers Philip C. Chang and Singh (Chang & Singh, 1990) on the 1988 Winter Games, which has been included in this paper as it is regarded in academic literature as the pioneering reference for risk management practices in large-scale events, laying the foundation for the specialization according to a rigorous scientific approach.

3.1- The Concept of Risk

Organizations have faced various unexpected risks during events they organized, ranging from local violent extremism to cyber threats (Ashwin, 2020). Before delving into risk management, what is meant by risk?

The German sociologist Ulrich Beck developed the concept of the "risk society," (Beck, 2006) exploring how modern societies have become increasingly prone to risks arising from modernity and technological advancement, prompting him to call for a deep reassessment of how risks are understood and managed.

Beck argued that modern risks differ significantly from "risks" before the industrial revolution, such as natural disasters, because many of them in modern societies are technological, human-made risks. Thus, there is a need for scientific identification, examination, and reporting to foresee and predict threats and identify the kinds of risks they pose to society and individuals. Beck noted that this task of identifying risks remains an underdeveloped synergy between natural and human sciences; between everyday rationality and expert rationality. He emphasized that risk identification should not be left only to scientists, but requires "cross-disciplinary collaboration, citizen groups, factories, management, and politics" (Beck, 2006) (Trausell & Bissell, 2003)

In the context of events, risk perception has been described by Berlonghi, the Founder of Risk Management in Events (Silvers & O'toole, 2021) as "the specific concerns of different entities involved in the event" and "the fears that concern the various stakeholders of the event," (Berlonghi, 1990, p. 19) adding that the risks identified by event organizers may not always be accurate or verifiable, especially in the absence of systematic risk assessment.

Meanwhile, the ISO 31000 standard defines risk as the outcome of an organization's environment (ecosystem) and its pursuit of goals and mission in an uncertain environment influenced by internal and external factors beyond the organization's control. Although risks are often associated with undesirable events, they can also provide opportunities for positive outcomes in achieving organizational goals. Furthermore, when risks are managed effectively, the likelihood of achieving stated objectives increases.

With the definition of risks that event organizers face, as an unexpected event that is difficult to control or predict its outcomes, risk mitigation techniques evolved through experience and scientific research, offering organizers guidelines, methods, and practical approaches to follow when such events occur or to prepare for them. Thus, the concept of "risk management" has emerged, which W. Hubbard briefly defines as "acting wisely when assuming risks" and also as "knowing the risks you face so you can take action." (Hubbard, 2020, p. 11) In another definition: "It is the identification, analysis, and prioritization of risks, followed by a coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the likelihood and impact of negative events." (Hubbard, 2020, p. 12) It is also defined as "a detailed examination of the components of risk, including assessing the probability of different events and their final consequences, with the ultimate goal of directing risk management efforts."

the economic field, Dionne defines it as "a process of developing a framework that allows companies to manage uncertainties in their financial and economic activities (Dionne, 2013). It is an essential part of the company's strategic development and must be designed at the highest level of management, particularly the board of directors." The integrated approach to risk management includes :

- a. **Identifying Risks:** Recognizing the various risks a company may face, including operational and financial risks.
- b. **Assessing Risks:** Evaluating the likelihood and impact of these risks, including understanding the probability of events and their outcomes.
- c. **Managing Risks:** The process of controlling and mitigating these risks to protect the organization.

Corporate risk management aims to assess, monitor, and control all potential risks, including interdependencies between them. It is part of guiding the company's strategy and requires attention from the highest level to ensure integration into overall business operations.

This concept has received considerable attention in scientific research, especially with the growth of the event industry and the increasing number of active agencies in this field. Initially, research focused on material risks such as natural disasters or accidents affecting the event, narrowing the scientific exploration to fundamental concepts that dealt with securing people and property. By the 1990s, however, academic institutions, alongside major corporations, began developing frameworks and methodologies for managing risks in large events such as the Olympics and international exhibitions. Research then classified risks into organizational, legal, and environmental risks, and post-COVID-19, scientific focus shifted to health and smart risks related to technologies like virtual reality and augmented reality, as well as cyber risks.

It is also crucial to recognize the areas of risk in event organization—where do the risks lie when organizing any event, regardless of its size or type?

3.2-Reference Event in Establishing Risk Management

The Winter Games 1988 represents the first practical and systematic application of risk management practices, making it a reference point and a foundational case for the subsequent development of risk management in events. Researchers **Shang** and **Singh** in their research article discuss the steps followed in this event, starting with the organizing committee (Chang & Singh, 1990) , which consisted of seven people: two lawyers, two practicing risk managers, an insurance broker, an independent businessman, and the general manager of the administration.

3.2.1-General objective of the committee

The general objective of the committee was to plan, organize, develop, and manage an effective risk management program that reduces or eliminates the negative effects of incidental losses. To achieve this goal, the committee followed a defined process that included two essential steps:

- a. Identifying and analyzing risks.
- b. Developing and managing risk financing programs and controlling incidental losses based on the analysis.

Following this, the stage of identifying and analyzing potential risks began through the following activities:

- a. **Reviewing contract drafts and agreements** before and after signing to understand indemnity clauses and liability risks.
- b. **Attending meetings** to address risks and liabilities associated with planned activities.
- c. **Holding weekly meetings** for the finance and administration group, monthly meetings for staff, and monthly meetings for the executive board.
- d. **Reviewing materials** prepared by the Olympic Winter Games committee, including press articles, financial statements, facts, and information.

3.2.2-Activities and Procedures Followed by the Risk Management Committee

- a. **Field inspections** of various facilities and associated infrastructure.
- b. **Attending informational meetings** with managers of different departments, which allowed for direct access to information about activities undertaken by other managers. This was crucial for identifying potential risks that could go unnoticed.
- c. **Reviewing contracts** between the Olympic Winter Games committee and various facilities, where risks were analyzed through the study of potential loss scenarios and emergency planning (including alternative venues, backup facilities, and additional electrical power).
- d. **Reviewing documents** related to past events, such as the 1984 Summer Los Angeles Games and the 1976 Montreal Olympics. While the information available was limited, it provided the committee with insights into the types of risks and critical factors that required further study
- e. .

3.2.3-Identifying Main Risk Categories

Through these activities, the Risk Management Committee identified three primary areas of exposure to risks, categorizing them as follows:

- a. **People :**
This category included risks related to injuries and/or deaths of employees, volunteers, VIPs, Olympic family members, athletes participating in the Olympic Games and their preparation.
- b. **Property :**

- a. The concern here was about **physical loss or damage** to all owned, leased, or controlled assets.
- b. This also included **loss of revenue or additional costs** resulting from the loss of specific assets, such as broadcasting revenue.
- c. **Public :**
 - o The risks in this category involved physical injury or death to third parties interacting with the Olympic Committee through contracts or agreements.
 - o This included, for example :
 - Spectators using transportation systems.
 - Attendees purchasing tickets to watch the sports events.
 - o The Risk Management Committee estimated that around 1.3 million individuals fell into this category.

3.2.4-Risk Financing Program

The risk financing program consisted of:

- a. Transferring risks through insurance.
- b. Partially absorbing risks through deductibles.

Insurance Coverage :

- a. **Group Insurance :**
 - . Covered: Athletes, coaches, officials, invited guests, and volunteers.
- b. **Property Insurance :**
 - . Coverage: Loss or damage to assets owned, leased, or controlled, including during construction.
- c. **Casualty Insurance (Third-Party Liability):**
 - . Primary Coverage :
 - o Physical injuries or property damage.
 - o Additional Coverage: Excess liability insurance to increase the limit.
 - o **Directors and Officers Insurance:** To protect the personal assets of the directors and officers at OCO'88.
- d. **Vehicle Insurance:**
- e. **Fidelity Insurance:**
 - o Coverage :
 - Protection against **employee theft** and **volunteers**.
 - **Forgery** and **illegal deposits**.
 - Coverage for losses in **checking or savings accounts** due to forged or altered checks.

Clearly, the **Winter Olympics 1988 Risk Management Committee** worked with an unprecedented level of professionalism, conducting field surveillance, holding meetings, and discussions to gather information, anticipating all possible risks, developing scenarios for potential outcomes, and organizing measures accordingly for each scenario. These systematic plans laid the foundation for general risk management and specifically for risk management in events, which eventually led to the development of the **ISO 31000** standard.

3.3- Risk Factors in Event Management

The **IRFU (Irish Rugby Football Union)** event management guide identifies several risk factors that may arise during event organization and suggests actions to mitigate these

risks (IRFU,Irish Rugby Football Union, 2008, pp. 17-19). These risks include various aspects, such as:

a. Maintenance:

Lack of or negligence in maintaining event equipment and structures can lead to malfunctions during the event. It is essential to perform continuous inspections and take appropriate measures to avoid such risks.

b. Structural Safety:

The failure of temporary structures (such as seats, stages, sound towers, tents) can have catastrophic effects, especially in crowded spaces. It is important to use reliable structures that comply with engineering standards and ensure they are installed by experienced personnel. A qualified person must certify the stability of these structures, and advice should be sought on the maximum wind load they can withstand. Once erected, a qualified structural engineer must "sign off" on these structures as safe.

c. Electrical Systems:

Electrical hazards pose significant risks, especially if the installations are not correctly set up or managed. Poor installation can result in serious injuries to staff and attendees.

d. Environmental Issues:

Environmental risks arise from the event's setting and facilities, such as food and water safety, noise, air pollution, and other environmental factors that can impact the health and comfort of the attendees.

e. Weather Disasters:

Weather changes can happen suddenly and present real safety risks. Continuous monitoring of weather conditions is essential, and event organizers should make decisions quickly to cancel the event if necessary to avoid any potential harm

3.4- Risk Management Strategies for Events

These standards have evolved significantly over the years. They are used by companies and governments worldwide and represent the culmination of knowledge and experience in this field (Silvers & O'toole, 2021, p. xii). They began with the AS/NZS 1999 standard and later evolved into ISO 31000 and ISO-IEC 31010.

The **ISO 31000** standard is the primary guideline for risk management, outlining the principles and processes necessary for effective risk management across all types of organizations, including event management.

3.4.1 - Principles of Risk Management According to ISO 31000

a. Integration into Governance:

Risk management must be an integral part of an organization's governance framework and decision-making processes.

b. Systematic and Comprehensive Approach:

Risk management should be a structured, comprehensive, and integrated process within the organization's management practices.

c. Customization:

Risk management approaches should be tailored to fit the internal and external environment of the organization, as well as its goals and needs.

d. Understanding the Context:

It is essential to understand the organizational context, including strategic objectives, challenges, and available opportunities.

e. Reliance on Reliable Data:

Decision-making must be based on high-quality, accurate information.

f. Continuous Improvement:

Risk management should be a dynamic process, allowing for continuous evaluation and improvement of practices

3.4.2 Risk Management Framework (ISO 31000)

This framework provides a systematic approach to risk management that includes the following steps (Comitte British Standard, 2010, pp. 17-18):

a. Leadership and Commitment:

Organizational leadership must commit to ensuring that risk management is embedded in all aspects of the organization.

b. Risk Management Process:

- o **Risk Identification:** Recognizing events or situations that could affect the event.
- o **Risk Assessment:** Analyzing risks based on their probability and potential consequences.
- o **Risk Treatment:** Taking measures to mitigate, avoid, transfer, or accept risks.
- o **Monitoring and Review:** Continuously monitoring risks and reassessing strategies.

3.4.3 -Techniques for Risk Assessment (ISO 31010)

a. Brainstorming:

Generating a wide range of ideas through group discussions to identify potential risks.

b. Delphi Technique:

Gathering expert opinions on a particular topic, often anonymously, to obtain a more objective risk assessment.

c. Structured or Semi-structured Interviews:

Gathering information about risks through interviews with experts or stakeholders.

d. Checklists:

Using predefined lists to identify potential risks in a particular activity or process.

e. Hazard and Operability Analysis (HAZOP):

Identifying risks in complex systems, typically used in chemical or manufacturing industries.

f. Environmental Risk Assessment:

Evaluating environmental risks associated with a project or activity.

g. Scenario Analysis:

Analyzing the potential impacts of future events.

h. Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA):

Identifying possible failure points in systems and analyzing their effects.

i. Cause and Effect Analysis:

Using tools like Ishikawa diagrams to identify the root causes of risks.

j. Human Reliability Analysis:

Assessing risks associated with human error in systems or processes.

k. Risk Mapping:

Visual representation of risks, often in a chart format, to prioritize them based on probability and impact.

l. Fault Tree Analysis (FTA):

Identifying failure causes and understanding the relationships between events that could lead to accidents.

4- Challenges in Dealing with Unexpected Risks: Making decision

One of the challenges in risk management during event is the occurrence of risks that were not anticipated based on past experiences or academic studies. In such cases, event organizers must make quick decisions to minimize losses and consequences. This challenge has led to the emergence of a research field focused on understanding the decision-making process and the factors that influence decisions during unexpected situations. Factors include the organizers' attitudes toward other team members, communication practices, their values, and cultural norms (Reid & Ritchie, 2011).

Parent's study on decision-making in sports events identified four key factors influencing the decision-making process (Parent, 2010):

a. Structural Dimensions:

The position of decision-making authority within the organizational structure influences the decision-making process. Decentralized decision-making tends to be more effective as each team member is closer to the information and can respond more quickly.

b. Stakeholder Involvement:

Decision-makers should involve stakeholders whenever their interests are relevant.

c. Information Availability:

The availability of comprehensive information is crucial for making informed decisions.

d. Skills of Event Organizers:

The skills of the decision-makers, including their education, experience, and professional and social networks, significantly influence the decision-making process. These skills provide them with critical information and insights.

5- Analytical Review of the Theoretical Heritage

Based on everything reviewed previously and after exploring the subject of the research paper through various sources and references, the researcher has recorded several points that merit discussion and commentary, as follows:

5-1- Mature Knowledge Accumulation:

Firstly, it is evident that the body of research in the field of risk management in event organization has come a long way. Over time, it has matured due to accumulated knowledge, practical experience, and the lessons learned from past events — starting from the development of technical models to the establishment of international standards that govern the organization of events. These standards aim to neutralize risks or reduce damage when incidents occur by anticipating all potential scenarios and controlling both structural and human-related measures accordingly.

5-2-Application of Logic and Rigorous Planning:

This was noted by the researcher when reviewing the planning model used by the organizing committee of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games, which served as a pioneering example that led to the establishment of the ISO 31000 standard for risk management. The committee's work was based on meticulous planning and effective coordination in managing the flow of information — from the first staff member involved in organizing the event to the primary organizer — with a clear emphasis on following a linear communication model that does not hinder the transmission of information. As highlighted in the research paper, access to complete and timely information is crucial for sound decision-making and effective event management.

5-3-Overlooking Human Complexity and Other Humanities Disciplines:

The philosophy of risk management under Ulrich's framework, as explained in the paper, views risk as a societal transformation. Ulrich believes that identifying risks should involve a union between the natural and human sciences, between everyday rationality and expert rationality. He emphasizes that monitoring and addressing risks should not be left solely to scientists, but must involve collaboration among experts from various fields, as well as citizens, factory owners, administrators, and policymakers. However, the existing body of research has presented risk management as an almost exclusively technical practice, focusing on anticipating and accounting for all structural and human preparations and potential scenarios. While, as the paper notes, this has opened a research path into the decision-making processes of event organizers as human actors during crises, it still reinforces what can be described as the "illusion of control" — the deep belief that everything is predictable and that all appropriate measures have been taken. This overlooks other social and human factors, such as those explored in psychology and social psychology — for instance, mass panic and the unpredictable behavior of crowds during emergencies. The ISO 31000 standard, in particular, tends to reduce the complexity of human behavior and the difficulty in accurately predicting it.

5-4-The Role of Insurance Companies and the Logic of Profit:

It is necessary — even obligatory — to reveal what lies behind the academic scene in the literature on risk management in event organization. The researcher found, through examining the references and sources used in writing this paper, that there is an economic goal behind risk management in Western studies. Specifically, the involvement of insurance companies as a party in the risk management process and their inclusion as a fixed element in the technical

risk management models developed by academic research in this field. This raises an ethical issue regarding how the insurance industry benefits from risk management systems — especially in the context of major events such as global sports tournaments — by imposing its own conditions and increasing insurance premiums. This, in turn, may cause smaller organizers to withdraw due to their inability to afford the premiums in case a risk occurs. Alternatively, some organizers may become negligent in implementing preventive measures, assuming that the burden will fall on the insurance companies. In any case, this presents a purely profit-driven economic vision that does not serve the public safety of participants in the events as much as it secures profits for insurance companies.

5-5- Neglect of Moral Risks:

Additionally, the researcher noted that most studies tend to focus more on material risks compared to ethical or moral risks, as ethical issues that may arise during events, such as bribery, referee errors in major sports events, or the use of events to push political agendas, have not received sufficient research attention, nor have adequate preventive measures been proposed to address them.

6-Proposed Approach and challenges in Arab context

According to the literature explored in this paper, the full maturity of the event industry and a scientific approach to risk management have become clear. This approach aims to avoid both material and moral losses for organizations. However, this study tends to relate this concept to the reality of events in the Arab world and Algeria, as they experience risks, some of which have resulted in tragedies, particularly in sports events, such as what happened at the Port Said Stadium in Egypt, which resulted in the death of 74 fans (CNN, 2012) .

The paper attempts to apply this perspective to the Arab context, focusing on critical thinking within the field of communication studies.

Although the Arab region cannot be seen as a single entity where the event industry applies universally, in countries like the United Arab Emirates, the event industry is thriving and is a production and innovation hub for event ideas and designs of various types. On the other hand, in some countries, the industry remains within its formal and occasional framework. As for risk management, it is often based on the experience of those organizing the events, learned through repetition and trial. Furthermore, we cannot always be sure how much the event organizers have learned from previous risks. However, we continue to see the repetition of the same issues, particularly in sports events.

On another hand, it is expected that risk management in event organization in the Arab context will not follow the same path it has in the West. It is worth noting, as previously mentioned, that in the West, risk management has stimulated the insurance market, where event organizers are obligated to insure structures and participants (athletes, musicians, or even the public) against any potential risks. Insurance companies provide compensation in the event of any risk that is listed in the policies. In contrast, in our countries, there is a lack of an insurance culture, whether due to financial, religion, or other reasons.

Based on Hofstede's model of organizational culture dimensions, particularly in the context of short-term orientation, his research on Arab countries revealed that they tend to avoid long-term planning (Obeidat, 2012) due to religious considerations related to the concept of the unseen (AL ghayb) and the will of God. Hence, we may question whether this cultural dimension will be a barrier to risk estimation when organizing events. Even if certain risks have occurred before, can event organizers rely on a systematic and scientific approach

to risk management, planning for all potential emergencies and dangers in advance? Or will Hofstede's concept of short-term orientation prevent organizers from engaging in brainstorming sessions to anticipate risks for events planned months or even years in advance? This question opens up an area of research parallel to that of Western scholars who study the factors affecting decision-making in events but through the lens of a local cultural, social, and organizational reality.

7- Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has comprehensively explored the concept of risk management in events by reviewing academic literature, which reveals that this field has reached a mature stage. During this maturity, various models, strategies, and techniques were established, culminating in the development of the global standard ISO 31000. Many studies have thoroughly addressed the range of potential risks that may arise during event organization, proposing preventive measures and anticipating various scenarios to avoid them.

Other studies have emphasized the decision-making process of event organizers as a key factor in minimizing material and moral losses. This presents us with a rich research legacy that deserves recognition and academic discussion at the local context, especially given its importance in ensuring safety, protecting individuals, and improving the planning of events, which have often been marked by tragic incidents.

Conversely, through an in-depth reading and analysis of the literature, the researcher identified several objective observations, these include the specific nature of the Western context, which is closely linked to a standardized, technical, and economic logic.

The researcher noted that much of the literature overlooked the psychological and social dimensions of human behavior in dealing with unforeseen risks. Likewise, moral risks—such as bribery and ethical scandals—were often ignored.

Furthermore, the researcher highlighted the strong link between risk management in event organization and insurance companies, which appear as a consistent and central actor in the technical academic models produced by scientific research in this field. The researcher argues that this dependency burdens event organizers financially or may discourage them from engaging in rigorous planning and risk anticipation, relying instead on financial compensation by insurance companies in case of adverse events.

Moreover, insurance companies profit from this setup, given that one of the core conditions for organizing any event is to sign insurance contracts for all aspects of the event. This raises many important questions.

Based on these observations and as a result of this study's analytical review of the literature, the researcher proposed a general framework to benefit from the existing academic heritage. However, this should be done through a risk management approach that is more aligned with the Arab context, using Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions which identifies the specific characteristics of organizational culture in the Arab context through well-defined dimensions. As such, it opens the door for future academic research to establish a localized model for risk management in event organization—one that is efficient, ensures the safety and security of event participants, and achieves event objectives through optimal planning with minimal risk.

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