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STROSSMAYERA
U OSIJEKU



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ZNANOSTI I
UMJETNOSTI
Zavod za
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POPULARIZATION SYMPOSIA AS A NEW ORGANIZATIONAL PLATFORM FOR MAJOR EVENTS – THE CASE OF CREATIVE TREASURY

POPULARIZACIJSKI SIMPOZIJI KAO NOVA ORGANIZACIJSKA PLATFORMA ZA VELIKA DOGAĐANJA – CASE OF KREATIVNA RIZNICA

ABSTRACT

Public institutions have the infrastructure that can be used as a part of the operational mission of public institutions to organize major events. By providing physical and human resources of public institutions (and public schools), it is possible to implement new forms of organizing major events, one of which is the popularization symposium. The aim of this paper is to explore the organizational and infrastructural prerequisites of popularization symposium as a new organizational platform, as well as to analyze its measurable effects. An example where the indicated paradigm has been analyzed refers to popularization symposium of cultural and creative industries (CCI) - industries that are currently in the process of formal institutionalization. Establishment of the sector of cultural and creative industries is stimulating professional and scientific thinking about vital points that are important for the structure of the industries. Confrontation of theory and practice organized by public institutions, which is open to the general public, is an innovative approach to establish a dialogue of heterogeneous participants in those emerging sectors. Regarding the above mentioned, the Creative Treasury - popularization symposium on cultural and creative industries, has been organized at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek in 2015 and 2016 as a kind of an experiment, which brought together creative professionals, amateurs and scientists. By organizing major events, public institution ceases to be just an educational institution and becomes an active factor of experience economy. In addition to its role as the unifying platform, popularization symposium in this paper is being evaluated as a new kind of organizational platform for major events, which sets the main hypothesis that this type of platform can be used for interaction between exhibitors and visitors, but also as a platform for research studies of heterogeneous participants.

Keywords: popularization symposium, cultural and creative industries (CCI), public institutions, experience economy, innovative practices, Creative Treasury

SAŽETAK

Javne institucije posjeduju infrastrukturu koju je radi misije poslovanja javnih institucija moguće koristiti i za organiziranje velikih događanja. Ustupanjem prostornih i kadrovskih resursa javnih institucija (tako i javnih učilišta) moguće je organizirati nove oblike organiziranja velikih događanja, a jedan od njih jest popularizacijski simpozij. Cilj rada istražiti je organizacijske i infrastrukturne pretpostavke popularizacijskog simpozija kao nove organizacijske platforme te analizirati njegove mjerljive učinke. Primjer na kojemu je navedena paradigma analizirana odnosi se na popularizacijski simpozij kulturne i kreativne industrije (KKI) – industrije koja se trenutačno nalazi u formalnom institucionaliziranju. Ustrojavanje sektora kulturne i kreativne industrije poticajno je za stručno i znanstveno promišljanje vitalnih točaka važnih za ustroj industrije. Sučeljavanje teorije i prakse otvoreno najširoj javnosti organizirano od strane javne institucije inovativni je pristup uspostavljanja dijaloga heterogenih dionika sektora u nastajanju. Na tragu navedenog 2015. i 2016. godine organizirana je Kreativna riznica - popularizacijski simpozij kulturne i kreativne industrije Ekonomskog fakulteta u Osijeku kao svojevrsni eksperiment kojim su okupljeni kreativni profesionalci, amateri i znanstvenici. Organiziranjem velikih događanja javna institucija prestaje biti samo obrazovna institucija i postaje aktivni čimbenik iskustvene ekonomije. Osim svoje uloge povezujuće platforme popularizacijski simpoziji u ovome radu evaluira se kao nova vrsta organizacijske platforme velikih događanja čime je postavljena i glavna hipoteza rada kako se ovakve vrste platformi mogu koristiti za interakciju izlagača i posjetitelja, ali i kao platforma za istraživačke studije heterogenih dionika.

Ključne riječi: popularizacijski simpozij, kulturna i kreativna industrija (KKI), javna institucija, iskustvena ekonomija, inovativna praksa, Kreativna riznica

1. Major events

Trends in the global economy are causing discussions about conceptualizing *cultural and creative industries* and *creative economy* and on the structure of these phenomena, for which the best solutions are still being sought. Despite the development of digital culture, which is increasingly creating digital platforms in order to communicate with stakeholders, organization of major events where participants of the same sector personally meet cannot be reduced, and thus becomes a phenomenon that is studied in different disciplines of social sciences. Thus, for example, scientific studies that analyze phenomena such as "conference tourism", "festivals", "fairs", "symposium", "seminars" or "major event" have been conducted (Yoon et al. 2010, Siksind 2010, Moeran and Pedersen 2011, Moscardo 2007, Hoyle 2002). Major events are a form of economic activity whose economic and cultural effects are measured by various indicators, some of which are audience range, benefits to customers and benefits to users. Observed on the basis of selected indicators, major events can be classified according to the classification offered by Siskind (2010) in Table 1.

Table 1 Types of events: comparison

Type of event	Description	Audience Range	Benefits to Customer	Benefits to User	Disadvantages
Trade show exhibit	Participation in an existing trade show	Will attract all those interested in a common theme or industry	A wide range of exhibitors and activities under one roof	Being compared to the competition	Opportunities for attention and attendee time are limited

Type of event	Description	Audience Range	Benefits to Customer	Benefits to User	Disadvantages
Truck tour	A traveling event that is housed in a truck, van, or other motorized vehicle	Very specific since the display travels to their location	Can ask relevant questions at a relaxed pace; no travel time required	Control over audience quality	Very expensive; a great deal of preparation must be done to ensure audience quality
Road shows	A traveling event held in local rented facilities	Reach regional audiences	Attendance is often by appointment	Control over audience quality; can customize message for each audience	Can range from low to high budget, which also includes having personnel on the road
Seminars	An educational program focused on customers and prospects	Can focus on one element such as technical or administrative personnel	Can learn and network	Can learn and network	Run the risk of attendance being influenced by things beyond your control, i.e., weather, traffic, etc.
Hospitality events	An event that can be held on its own or in conjunction with other events; usually a social setting where customer relationships are enhanced	Has broad appeal, but can be tailored to suit a specific audience need	Great for networking among colleagues and industry personnel	Great for PR and networking	Tough to sell in a social situation; clients are often skeptical; the services of an independent event planner are often necessary
Stand-alone	These are opportunities in malls, lobbies, boardrooms, reception areas, etc.	Appeals to a very general audience base	A surprise addition to a normal shopping experience	An inexpensive way of getting value from a display that is not otherwise being used	Not well targeted; a shotgun approach
Professional conferences	An educationally oriented event focusing on one professional group	Very targeted delegates who are all part of one professional group	Great place to network, learn, and see relevant products and services	Tight control over audience quality	Exhibit traffic can be sporadic
Private shows	A trade show organized exclusively for one vendor or buying group	Can be very targeted as audience members are usually by invitation	Very focused shopping experience	Blocks out the competition	Large organizational responsibility that might be subcontracted if your event is large enough

Source: Siskind, 2010: 59-60

Table 1 does not list all types of major events. For example, festivals are not included, whose specificity stems from belonging to a specific sector of cultural and creative industries, and which are increasingly developing in their thematic and sectoral diversifications. One reason for the growth and development of festivals are the benefits that festivals offer to the local communities in

which they are primarily held and they affect the development of the local economy, but they also strengthen social cohesion within the community (Yoon et al. 2010).

Public institutions have the infrastructure that can be used to organize public events. For example, the educational system of public universities has a legitimate role in organizing major events, especially if the main theme of the major event is related to the scientific discipline of public institutions that are organizing the major event. By providing physical and human resources for the purpose of organizing major events, public colleges thus fulfill multiple roles: linking theory and practice, networking between the academic community and the real sector, accomplishing their socially responsible role by putting public infrastructure in the function of the main theme around which major events bring together the interested public. Thus observed, organized major events are an economic activity that takes place in a public space. Educational systems have also recognized this phenomenon and in various universities are beginning to educate "event managers" as individuals who are trained for "exhibit management" (Siskind 2010), i.e. to organize major events.

Pine and Gilmore (1998: 98) have already warned that economy is constantly developing and moving forward to modern and technological economy, i.e., in the direction of experience-based economy. The term "experience economy" is known as Pine and Gilmore's concept - a model for the final stage of economy in the age of transition and evolution of society and economy to post-modernity times, when economy moves from the stage of selling of goods and delivering of services to the final phase with an emphasis on staging experiences. In the experience economy makers of experience are named as staggers. In this sense stage means place and space, where they perform according to their roles. (Antonova 2015 – uspoediti sa Pine & 1998, 97–105).

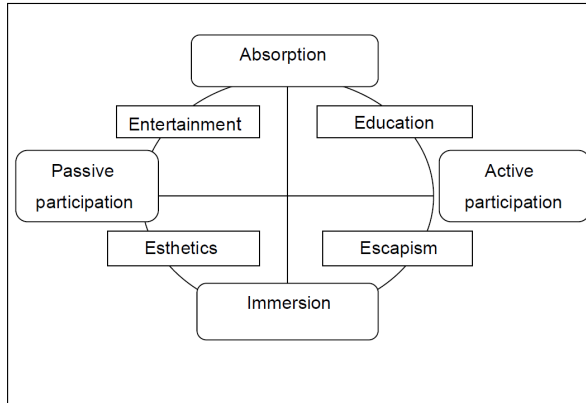
Based on the text above, authors are setting up the hypothesis that *the major events can be used as a platform for interaction between exhibitors and visitors in public institutions, as well as event organizers.*

2. Popularization symposium - organizational and infrastructural requirements

Major events are related to the high financial investments, which are covered in several fundamental ways: a) participation fees for exhibitors, b) the sale of tickets to participants, c) funds received from public or private companies/institutions, d) sponsorship and/or donations. Financial requirements of major events are one of the distinguishing and classification criteria. Other distinctive criteria for major events are: event theme, ways of presenting content, open to the public, the target group of visitors, etc.

Antonova (2015) described the experience economy as "The successful experience and practice wakes up a wish and motivation to be more active and creative in interaction with all possible and suitable roles and to be succeeded in the communication with other participants."

Figure 1 *The 4 Es of Experience Realm, the Sweet Spot*



Source: Antonova 2015: 10 (according to Pine & Gilmore 1999: 30)

Since popularization symposium includes a strong motivational component known as "popularization" (certain topics, phenomenon or dispute), it is recognized as a very specific method, which combines entertainment, educational, esthetic and escapist dimensions (Figure 1). Consequently, it is expected that both exhibitors and participants have a strong enough motivation for in-depth discussions on the main theme of the popularization symposium. Because of innovation that popularization symposium contains, authors are proposing a supplement of the Table 1 with *popularization symposium* as a new type of big-scale event.

Table 2 *Types of events – with supplement*

Type of Event	Description	Audience Range	Benefits to Customer	Benefits to User	Disadvantages
Popularization symposium	It combines features of seminars, hospitality events, stand-alone professional conferences and festivals. At least one organizer is a public institution	Amateurs, professionals, researchers, consumers of thematic content	Networking, public visibility, promote projects, ask questions, learn, certificates of exposure, entertainment, without registration fee	Education, entertainment, active participation, competition, the impact on thematic content, free tickets	Attendee time is limited, focus on thematic content, the arrival of visitors is not always controlled by the organizers (i.e. weather, other events at the same time, etc.)

Source: authors

In relation to all the types of events clarified (Table 1) popularization symposium represents a major free event for exhibitors and visitors, and to invest in this kind of events is justified from the perspective of the organizers using their own resources. In this case, the question that can be faced is how can organizers benefit from such events? A major event (popularization symposium) that is organized by a public institution contributes to public institution exercising its role as a socially responsible institution, while joining the theory and practice of public institutions contributes to its pro-active role. At the same time, public institutions achieve visibility based on media releases that accompany major events, especially those of wider social importance.

2.1. Popularization symposium - definition

Popularization symposium¹ is a major public event at which all stakeholders of thematic content are the exhibitors (amateurs, professionals, scientists, experts, representatives of institutions/organizations) and their presentations are open to the entire community. It follows that popularization symposium is a major free event that popularizes content of general social importance, and at least one organizer is a public institution. Because of its characteristics, popularization symposium brings together supply and demand of thematic content and the public institution, as the event organizer, plays the key role of a moderator. Social importance of the popularization symposium is confirmed by the number and type of sponsors - institutions of the public sector that support the content of the event with their name, based on the anticipated/achieved number of attending exhibitors and visitors.

Since popularization symposium is a meeting of interested stakeholders of a certain sector, it can be seen as a place where you meet "both" sides of a certain sector (providers of thematic content and its users). The following text explains the organizational and infrastructural features of popularization symposia.

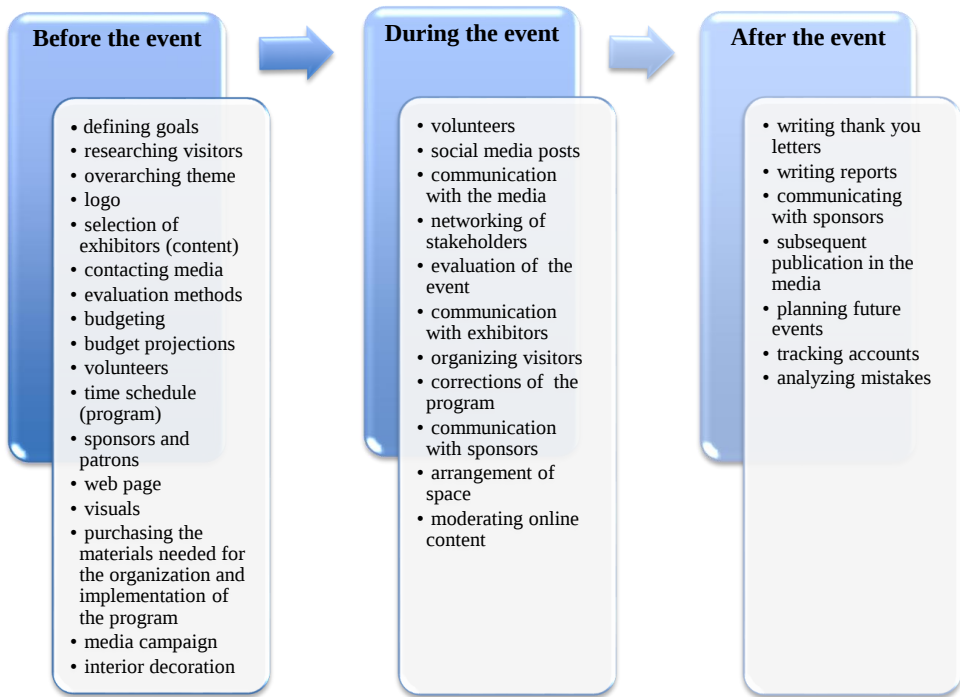
2.1.1. Organizing a popularization symposium

Popularization symposium, according to its definition, is a major free event for popularization of content of general social importance. In order to implement a successful event in terms of realization of the objectives, it is necessary to systematically organize and manage the event.

The organization of the event starts from the initial point set by the organizers, i.e., public institution as the driver of the event. The organizers collaborate with partners, gathering volunteers, finding adequate funds, sponsors and donors, conceiving the program involving exhibitors and participants in order to offer high quality cultural and creative content to the target group (visitors). One person cannot organize a popularization symposium on their own and it is necessary to build a network of associates who will help with the organization of the event. In addition, organizational activities must be planned in accordance with the background activities necessary for the realization of the major event. The authors of this paper present the key points of workflow activities necessary for the realization of a popularization symposium through Figure 2.

¹ The symposium is a meeting of experts to discuss about a particular theme. (<http://www.hrleksikon.info/definicija/simpozij.html>, 5.5.2016.)

Figure 2 Flow chart of activities necessary for the realization of popularization symposium



Source: authors

Although each board² is doing its own part of the work, they must act together to ensure that all organizational activities are functioning since they are interconnected. Through joint action, boards achieve synergy effects, which are reflected through the target group, but also to all segments of the popularization symposium. Before the major event, it is necessary to organize a team of volunteers who will work on organizational and promotional activities of the event. The number of volunteers depends on the scope and complexity of the event. The entire organizational team should follow the established goal, which is primarily the success of the major event. As the event is organized for visitors, it is important to research their structure and preferences with respect to cultural and creative content. All the contents are gathered under the main theme, and they need to be current and attractive to both exhibitors and visitors. The selection of exhibitors is conducted by organizers, on the basis of previous exhibitors' application, in accordance with the criteria that have been defined by the organizers. The financial resources are necessary for the implementation of events and organizers have planned income and expenses included in the budget. After it has been authorized, the program will be published, as well as the entire event schedule. The website of the major event must be transparent and informative, and filled with amenities of the event. Sponsors

² Boards are formed depending on the needs and complexity of major events.

and supporters are those who support the event through funding, donations or promotion. Visual content presents the major event to the general public through leaflets, posters and other visual materials, and in this respect it is important to be unique. The purchase of needed materials refers to all the materials and resources needed for the project. Media campaigns are constantly maintained before and during major events. Arrangement of space creates an atmosphere at the event and represents the institution in which the major event takes place.

During the major event, implementation of activities by volunteers and the contents of the events are monitored. Media campaign and the website of the major event are continuously updated. Visitors can consume the prepared food and beverages served at the event. The evaluation of the content and corrections of the layout are also continuously updated.

After completion of individual content, each exhibitor is given recognition and certificates for the held presentation. During and after the major event, organizers are analyzing gaps and producing reports with the main features of the major event and with the accomplished goals. Finally, all bills and expenses of the event are settled, and the paid items are analyzed because that is the starting point for events that have recurring character.

2.1.2. Digital platforms for organizing major free events

Major free events can use free digital platforms for digitized management of the organization of major free events. The biggest advantage of these platforms is the possibility of direct contact with the (registered) visitors and advertising of events through social networks and the use of other forms of digital promotion of the advertised events. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of such platforms are listed in Table 3.

Table 3 Comparing online registration systems for organizing major free events

	Eventzilla	Eventbrite	TicketLeap
Fees	\$1 per attendee for paid events. Free for free events.	For paid events, there is a charge of 2.5 percent of the ticket price plus \$.99 per registration. Free for free events.	Paid events cost 2 percent of the ticket price plus a \$1 online ticketing fee and a 3 percent credit card processing fee. Payment is sent via check or direct deposit three days after the event.
Customization	Users can upload a logo and event flyer to the registration page	It has a lot of options for customizing event pages. There are 15 preloaded themes and event organizers can choose their own colors.	The only customization available is the ability to change the background of the registration page.
Social Sharing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attendee Check in	Attendees receive a QR code once they register, which the organizer can scan at the door to check them into the event.	Users can check attendees into the event by printing out a guest list, using the free entry manager app or scanning QR coded tickets.	Organizers can check in attendees by scanning a QR code. They can also use an online box office feature although an Internet connection is required.

	Eventzilla	Eventbrite	TicketLeap
Promotion	Event organizers can embed a ticketing widget into their websites or blogs.	It has tools that allow organizers to easily promote their events on Facebook or on a separate website via a registration button or a ticketing widget. Individualized tracing links can be set up for distribution to different marketing outlets allowing users to track how each is performing.	It allows users to create unique tracking codes to track the origin of ticket sales and registrations. Organizers can track how many social interactions their registration pages generate and whether the interactions generate sales. Also allows users to embed an event into Facebook.
Advantages	It is the least expensive option of the three presented. It's simple to set up and attendee payments go directly into the organizer's PayPal account.	It can customize the event page to match the look and feel of the brand. It allows users to accept payments and sell tickets on site.	The solution tracks which marketing promotions are working via unique tracking codes and social interaction tracking, allowing event promoters to reward the most active supporters.
Disadvantages	The platform has very little ability to customize the look and feel of the event registration page.	The service fees are high in comparison to other solutions and users don't receive payments until after the event is over.	Very little customization is available to customize an event registration page. It disburses payment to event organizers after the event is over.

Source: developed by the authors according to the data available on the website
<http://www.eventtechbrief.com/page.cfm?action=library/libID=3/libEntryID=23> (accessed on May 5, 2016)

After examining the previous table it can be concluded that free platforms for organizing major free events vary according to the following basic characteristics: fees, customization, social sharing, attendee check-in and promotion.

Contacting visitors before and after the major event is the advantage arising from the possibility of a register that has been made from digital contacts (e-mail, Facebook or other digital identity) of visitors that have already participated in the popularization symposium of the same organizers. In this way, the event organizers can conduct research visitors' viewpoints, in which the sample frame is made of participants that are familiar with the main theme of the popularization symposium, or, with a specific topic of the main theme or the event itself.

3. Popularization symposium - the case of Creative Treasury

Popularization symposium *Creative Treasury* was used as an example of a major event that has the potential of innovative cultural and creative practice. *Creative Treasury* is designed as a free platform that represents a meeting point of theoreticians and practitioners in the domain of *cultural and creative sectors*, which can combine their strengths and resources, and using scientific moderation, a new paradigm can be opened. *Creative Treasury* each year sets a new main theme, where in the first year (2015: Cultural and creative industries in the Republic of Croatia), the main theme was set as general in order to familiarize visitors with the concept of a new industry. In 2016 the main theme was *Socially responsible creativity* while the main theme for 2017 has been announced as *Chemistry of creative industries*. *Creative Treasury* has been organized by the higher education public institution Faculty of Economics in Osijek, which as a scientific and educational institution opens new ways of thinking about cultural and creative industries. Partners of this project are other public institutions and the non-profit sector.

Creative Treasury ensures the creation of a network of contacts of all the presented representatives of cultural and creative institutions, stakeholders of all components of cultural and creative industries, academic institutions, art and trade associations, individual artists and media. *Creative Treasury* is opened to the public and it is divided into three major parts. *The first part* covers all professional and scientific lectures/presentations; *the second part* contains cultural and creative performances (theater performances, exhibitions, film screenings, book presentations, literary discussions, concerts), and *the third part* includes round tables, forums and workshops.

Although *Creative Treasury* focuses on visitors within younger age groups (students and high school students), it is intended for the wider community and all age groups. According to data from 2015 and 2016 provided by the *Creative Treasury*, there have been different participants, such as employed, self-employed, unemployed, pensioners, members of cultural and creative organizations and all formal and informal participants that are representatives of the future of cultural and creative industries, businessmen, private entrepreneurs.

The exhibitors included representatives of various NGOs, artists, singers, photographers, actors, cultural employees, fashion designers, creative amateurs, writers, filmmakers and actors of all 12 components of cultural and creative industries of Croatia, as well as experts and scholars who lectured on topics related to cultural and creative industry.

Using the Eventbrite system for major events (Table 3), the organizers had control over the number of registered visitors at all times. Statistical analysis of attendance was conducted upon completion of the *Creative Treasury 2016*, which is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Analysis of visits to the popularization symposium *Creative Treasury (CT)*

Date	The day of CT	Number of events	Number of visitors	The average number of visitors per event
April 20, 2016	First day	25	825	33
April 21, 2016	Second day	32	829	26
April 22, 2016	Third day	26	1195	48
April 23, 2016	Fourth day (workshops)	10	155	16
Total	Four days of CT	93*	3004	-

* The number varies in relation to the total number of events, since the 93 events had registered tickets as a means of event attendance. Tickets were not issued for exhibitions and video projections that were opened during every day of the major event.

Source: authors

More than 50 media publications (online, print and audiovisual media) contributed to public visibility of the *Creative Treasury 2016* as a major event. All public institutions involved in the implementation of the major event benefit from the synergistic effects of such public visibility (organizers: secondary and higher education institutions, as well as sponsors and partners: public administration institutions and the private sector), as well as the overarching main theme problematized in the popularization symposium about *cultural and creative industries*. *Creative Treasury 2016* contributes to establishing cultural and creative content in eastern Croatia and to active participation of younger age groups, building their habits related to cultural and creative content.

4. Conclusion

Analysis of the case of the major event - *Creative Treasury* has confirmed the set definition, according to which public institutions should be organizers of popularization symposia as major free events, where socially important issues can be opened and examined, thereby contributing to thoughtful and moderated dialogue of all the stakeholders. This opens up a new paradigm, and public institutions proactively implement their socially responsible role.

Popularization symposium is an innovative practice in organizing major events, which have at least one public institution as an organizer, which provides its infrastructure. The assumption of organizing popularization symposium includes knowledge about the organization of other major events with all the qualities of experience economy, but with a need for innovation that this kind of symposium requires. Current thematic main contents guarantee a broad response of exhibitors and audience and the interest of all segments of society. The visibility that public institutions get through implementation of the popularization symposium contributes to their reputation.

Given that the paper presents the case of *Creative Treasury* - popularization symposium of cultural and creative industries at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek as a popularization symposium that is actually a meeting point of interested stakeholders of a specific sector, brings the recommendations for future research. In fact, this major event can be seen as a platform where participants from a specific sector are networking, organizing and shaping the future of their own activities, and employees of public universities get the opportunity to gather problems from the real sector, and articulate them in hypotheses that are important for practice, researching them using scientific methodology. In this way, organizers of major events can carry out primary research about stakeholders of assembled sectors in which the sample frame consists of respondents familiar with the main theme of the popularization symposium.

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