

BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN COLLABORATIONS

A Case Study on the Finfringe Festival

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Abstract <p>Collaborations are increasing between cultural organizations and businesses, as cuts in arts funding force cultural operators to think about how to cope with future challenges. However, it is not always easy for small operators to find and sustain collaborations, due to a lack of resources or the feeling of not being able to offer, as a small-scale organization, collaborators enough in return for their support.</p> <p>Building a sense of community is important as it deepens collaborations and can benefit the surrounding society. By understanding value creation, a sense of community can be built and collaborations developed. This research aimed to shed light on how a sense of community can be strengthened and identify the types of value created in the collaborations of a small arts festival.</p> <p>For a deeper understanding and tangible information on a grassroots level, this research was a qualitative in-depth single-case study. It was conducted through six semi-structured interviews of the collaborators of the performing arts festival, Finfringe. The selected perspective of the research was from the business collaborators' point of view. The framework of this study lay in the Collaborative Value Creation framework, the definition of a Sense of Community and research around these topics.</p> <p>The research indicated that the sense of community was seen as important and offered ways on how the sense of community can be built within a collaboration. The findings revealed that a small arts festival created value for its collaborators. According to the study, the benefits of the collaborations align with previous studies and therefore did not significantly differ from those of bigger arts organizations. The study concluded that whatever the size of the organizations involved, similar factors can be seen influencing success.</p> <p>The objective of this study was to obtain information for art managers of small arts organizations to utilize when establishing and conducting collaborations. The study concludes that small arts organizations should not underestimate their ability to provide value to their collaborators. They should carefully evaluate their resources and approach potential collaborators boldly to establish collaborations that bring value and build a sense of community within the surrounding society.</p>	
Keywords Sense of community, Cross-Sector Collaboration, Value creation, Arts festival, Culture	
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1 INTRODUCTION

I would like to see a future where collaborations between arts organizations and businesses are seen as natural and treasured, a future where the value that small arts organizations can bring to collaborations is recognized, and where arts organizations and businesses together contribute towards building a sense of community in society.

Building a sense of community to lower barriers between people is something we need currently. Current events in the world around us have made me change my perspective of my thesis from a purely monetary view to a larger hope of building understanding and solidarity between people. The arts bring people together to share experiences. I strongly believe it is important to encourage businesses to collaborate with the cultural field because, through collaborative value creation, a sense of community among people can be built.

Festivals are said to unite people and grow community pride (Holopainen & Maukonen, 2016). However, there is not enough research, especially on small arts festivals and the collaborations they engage in. This study will contribute to filling in this gap by offering a grassroots-level insight into a small arts festival's collaborations.

Enhancing the sense of community is important as it deepens collaborations and can benefit the surrounding society as well. It is achieved by analyzing the value created in the collaborations. To fully understand the value created I will shed light on the business collaborators' view on the different factors that contribute to the collaboration's success, the collaborator's understanding of the perceived benefits currently and in the future and identify the different existing forms of collaboration.

Due to the vastness of the subject, this research will not cover value creation on the individual or societal level or research how the studied collaborations have enhanced the sense of community externally in the surrounding society. It will analyze the value creation on an organizational level and how the collaborations strengthen a sense of community internally.

This chapter will introduce the research by discussing the background of the study, the research problem and aim, objectives, questions, and approach, as well as the contributions of this study followed by the limitations and ethical considerations. Finally, I will present the overall structure of this thesis.

1.1 Background of the study

Finland is full of festivals. In 2019, alone 420 rhythm music festivals were organized in Finland and of which a significant amount had less than 5000 visitors (Kinnunen, 2021). In addition to this, Finland is full of many other types of festivals, including many performing arts festivals. You could say that Finland is the promised land of small festivals, yet there is little research data on them. Looking from this standpoint, my interest is to research and understand collaborations of a small arts festival.

It is a generally shared understanding that grants are an essential part of art funding as self-generated income rarely exceeds the costs (Suomen Kulttuurirahasto, 2015). The declining funding and government support (Langeveld & Belme & Koppenberg, 2014; Pantzar, 2022) force arts organizations to find new forms of collaboration and new collaborators. To tackle the dilemma of declining funding different forms of collaboration are growing in the cultural field. The motivation to search for these new forms is also driven by the fact that funders favor collaborations due to the potential synergies they can create (Backer, 2002).

While collaborations are encouraged, they are not necessarily easy to form. Small cultural organizations often feel that they lack the resources needed for engaging in cross-sector collaborations and therefore many organizations find it difficult to find and implement different forms of collaboration (Oesch, 2002). Secondly, Oesch (2002) continues to report that many small cultural organizations found it difficult to approach collaborators because their operations were new, or they felt that their operations were too small-scale to interest possible business collaborators. These are thoughts I have also had as an executive director of a small arts festival. On the other hand, research has found that companies feel that they do not receive enough information on what the cultural organization could offer them in return and how the collaboration could be realized (Oesch, 2002).

I had two main incentives to write this thesis. Firstly, I wanted to shed light on how collaborations can build a sense of community. Research has found how a sense of community unites people and fosters tolerance by strengthening social bonds (Brownnett, 2018). It improves relationships and caring for others (Holopainen & Maukonen, 2016). These are the main reasons I found it important to understand how collaborations can promote a sense of community. This thesis will seek to grasp this in a festival setting.

To form and develop collaborations, organizations need to understand what value they can create together. It is important for arts managers working in small cultural organizations and festivals to understand value creation because it gives insight into the state that the collaborations are at. This understanding helps to develop the collaboration further (Austin, 2000). I believe forming cross-sector collaborations is going to be even more important in the future. Therefore, everything that can help and encourage cultural operators to participate in them is important. For me, this was the second incentive to write this thesis.

1.2 Research problem

I work in a small arts festival organization, where funding and collaboration cannot be taken for granted and yet, it is not possible to do profitable business at market prices alone. My preconceived thought has been that it is difficult for a small arts festival organization to form collaborative relations with businesses because it cannot offer many benefits, such as large numbers of participants and thus, for example, high visibility to the collaborator. This study will provide festivals with valuable information on what they can emphasize when seeking new collaborators.

My core belief has been that cooperation with small arts festivals is beneficial to collaborators and society through the contribution it can make towards a sense of community. Research supports the understanding that festivals create well-being by enhancing the sense of community (Holopainen & Maukonen, 2016) and that alone should increase the respect and value seen in them. Therefore, research on a small arts festival's collaborations is needed.

The research on value creation is growing simultaneously as cross-sector collaborations have become more common (Al-Tabbaa, 2023), yet the research mostly concentrates on non-profit organizations and business collaborations and the value they create for a societal cause. The framework of value creation can be applied to arts festival collaborations, but even though value creation is a trending topic in many fields of business, research on the value creation of small arts festivals and business collaborations is scarce. As a result, existing research is inadequate in addressing the value creation of a small-scale festival and business collaboration.

Small cultural operators have usually the most difficulties in forming collaborative relations with businesses (Oesch, 2002). Therefore, it is important for arts managers

working in the festival field to understand the assets of a small arts festival. One way to comprehend this is by knowing what kind of benefits business collaborators expect from a collaboration now and in the future. A large body of previous research has been conducted on large or middle-sized festivals and their collaborations. Expected and perceived benefits of cultural collaborations from the business' points of view are also fairly well researched. However, there is no significant body of research on what benefits small arts festivals (under 5000 participants) can offer. To be able to strengthen collaborations, it is equally important to understand which factors enhance them.

There has not been enough research on the collaborations of a small arts festival. Therefore, arts managers may feel unsure about seeking and engaging in collaborations. This research will offer valuable information for small arts festivals on how to undertake the dilemma of engaging in collaborations and further developing existing relations.

1.3 Research aim, objectives, questions, and approach

This study aims to understand how value creation can build a sense of community in a small arts festival and business collaboration through a qualitative case study of a performing arts festival located in Turku, Finland.

To fulfill the aim of the research the objectives are the following. Firstly, the thesis will shed light on the factors that strengthen collaborations, secondly assess the benefits that business collaborators are hoping to gain now and in the future from the collaboration, and thirdly determine the different forms of collaboration in a small-scale arts festival and business collaboration. The fourth objective is to analyze these findings by identifying the types of value created in the researched collaborations. And finally, the fifth objective is to analyze how value creation can build a sense of community.

To investigate this topic five research questions are formulated. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) How can collaborations build a sense of community?
- 2) What types of value are created in collaborations at the organizational level?

To be able to answer these questions and gain detailed insight into the collaborations more specific research questions are formulated. These three questions are as follows:

- 3) What factors facilitate collaboration between a small arts festival and businesses?
- 4) How do business collaborators perceive the benefits of collaborating with a small arts festival now and in the future?
- 5) What different forms of collaboration exist between small arts festivals and businesses?

The chosen research methodology is qualitative. To gain a deeper understanding and tangible information on a grassroots level of a small arts festival's collaborations, the research is an in-depth single-case study on the performing arts festival, Finfringe and six of its collaborators. The research will be conducted through semi-structured interviews. The perspective of the research is from the business collaborators' point of view. Funders of the festival are not included in the study due to the pure philanthropic nature of those collaborations.

Semi-structured interviews aim to unravel the collaborations Finfringe has. As the interviews aim to deepen the understanding of the said subject, loosely structured interviews are important so that interviewees can reflect on their points of view freely (Peer, Hakemulder & Zyngier, 2012). During the interviews, there will be a possibility of asking more questions if needed, and it will also leave room for association for the respondent. The interviews will be recorded and held in Finnish. The research data from interviews will be coded, categorized, and analyzed manually using thematic analysis.

1.4 Contributions of the study

This thesis is in close relation to the field of arts management. The study will be beneficial for arts managers of whom many work in small arts organizations where the potential of collaborations has not been utilized to the utmost. By understanding how value creation can build a sense of community, and what the companies expect of collaborations, arts organizations can form and develop collaborations with businesses better. This thesis aims to give relevant information and inspiration for organizations to rethink their strengths and assets and utilize them in collaborations. Therefore, this thesis adds to the body of research in the arts management field.

1.5 Limitations and ethical considerations

It is important to recognize the limitations of this study. As it focuses only on one small arts festival and six of its collaborations, the study gives a limited view of the vast field

of different arts organizations and the findings do not paint a whole picture. The chosen qualitative single case study makes it possible to investigate the said subject in detail and at the same time limits the generalizability of the findings.

National-level cultural policy plays a significant role in how funding and collaborations with arts organizations are perceived. For the reason of exploring a single case in detail at a grassroots level, this thesis does not address the topic.

As a researcher, I needed to take ethical issues into account. I understood that my position as the executive director of the researched Finfringe Festival may have affected the research process, especially the interview and analysis process. The collaborations between the festival and the organizations that the interviewees represent are still ongoing and it may have affected the answers given as interviewees may not have wanted to reveal possible shortcomings. I have kept this in mind when analyzing the data and stayed as unbiased as possible. As the focus was on how collaborative value creation can build a sense of community and the benefits and factors that interviewees have seen beneficial in the cooperation, I have not seen this as a genuine problem.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into five major chapters, references, and appendices. The first chapter is the introduction consisting of the background of the study, the research problem, the aim of the research and the research questions. It provides an overview of the contribution of the study along with limitations and ethical considerations. Finally, the structure of the thesis is presented.

The second chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the study which includes the concept of a festival and the sense of community. Thirdly it introduces the Collaborative Value Creation (CVC) framework along with the explanation of the research gap. The chapter ends with the conclusion.

The third chapter presents the research design and chosen methods. It will shed light on qualitative methodology and the reason for choosing this. The chapter will continue to introduce the data collection and analysis process. Then it will introduce critical reflections on the research process. The chapter will end with an introduction to the case of the Finfringe Festival.

Chapter four presents the analysis and discussion of the research. The analysis is presented according to the research questions and discussed with consideration of the theoretical framework.

Finally, chapter five draws together the conclusion of the research. It introduces the managerial implications of the study. Then it continues to share future suggestions for research and acknowledges limitations. Finally, the thesis ends with a summary.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the main concepts and theoretical framework of my thesis. The concept of a festival and its relation to cities is shed light on. It will present the definition of a sense of community and define the value creation framework used in this thesis. Different aspects of collaborations will be displayed. Simultaneously, it will discuss existing empirical research on the topics of festivals, a sense of community, value creation and collaborations.

I use the terms collaboration, cross-sector collaboration, cooperation, and partnership to describe an agreement between two or more organizations that have been formed to serve a specific purpose. Sponsoring is not included in the definition, as it is defined more purely as a marketing tool, in which money is given to an organization in return for visibility (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998). With collaborators or business collaborators, I mean the partners of the studied festival.

2.1 Festivals

The case study is on a small arts festival and therefore it is good to understand what festivals are considered to be and what are their special traits. According to literature festivals are celebrations offering a place of communal creativity where special experiences are created and shared (Quinn, 2005; Morgan, 2008). As Morgan (2008) puts it, they offer a space and time away from a mundane life by offering an extraordinary range of choices out of the normal. Furthermore, festivals are seen as a unique phenomenon of a special interaction between the setting, people, and management systems such as design and program (Getz, 2007). They happen at specific places and locations at specific times, and they need an audience and stakeholders (Rust, 2019). It is a place for collaboration, exchanging and comparing experiences and

ideas (Quinn, 2005). The charm of a festival is that it is never the same, it is always evolving and to experience it you need to be there (Getz, 2007).

Morgan (2008) suggests in his research, that an important factor influencing a good festival experience for the attendees is creating a space where interactions and personal experiences can take place. He continues to say that satisfaction with the experience is formed by the cultural values the attendees share with the performance, the sense of community shared with other attendees, and personal achievement, which may surprisingly sometimes be enhanced by discomfort or difficulties felt during the festival. Likewise, Rust (2019) found in her research on small-scale cultural events, that a holistic experiential value is created by a sense of community and place, the atmosphere the festival creates, and its reputation, yet it is also important to note that these key factors can separately improve or decrease the value of the event.

A successful festival provides a place where attendees can socialize and share experiences with other participants (Morgan, 2008; Rust, 2019). Research has found that the festival experience is improved with the creation of off-programs (Morgan, 2008) and places where people can meet and socialize (Morgan, 2008, Rust, 2019).

Researchers (Morgan, 2008, Rust, 2019) emphasize that an equally significant aspect to enhance the festival experience value is the cooperation of collaborators. Festival organizers should aim to increase good communication and engagement with all stakeholders. The development of a sense of community between visitors, organizers, and all collaborators adds to the co-creation of value (Rust, 2019).

2.1.1 Festivals and cities

Festivals have a long history of being associated with cities and have historically played an important social role in the community (Quinn, 2005). Even today according to Tarjanne (2020) festivals have an important role in making a city attractive for inhabitants, future inhabitants, and tourists. As the competition between regions grows the community needs to provide conditions for a good life which also includes experiences.

A vibrant cultural scene creates meaningful content to create attractive and functional communities. As Forsblom (2023) writes in his article on cities, culture is seen to stimulate the regional economy. Also, the event and its collaborations with local service providers and businesses are expected to enliven city centers (Tarjanne, 2020).

Cities have shifted towards a service economy, and festivals are seen to attract more capital, people, and services (Quinn, 2005). Often the success of a particular festival from the city's point of view is measured by the number of visitors it has attracted, how much revenue was generated, how it has been able to extend the tourist season, and how much visibility it has gained in the press. In 2005 Quinn noted with concern that the aims of generating economic growth, building a city image and the use of festivals as ways to market the city to tourists can override the social value festivals could bring to the inhabitants. The social impact that festivals can create has since been recognized better as it has been seen that festivals can "build up a shared identity and pride in a city" (Forsblom, 2017, p.55).

2.2 Sense of community

My main interest is to analyze how collaborations can enhance a sense of community. To do this it is important to define what is meant by the concept. In 1986, after reviewing existing articles on the matter, McMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed a definition for a sense of community, that I find appropriate for this thesis. They proposed to define a sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan, 1976, as cited in McMillan & Chavis, 1986, page 9) This definition was built on four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection.

Of the four elements that McMillan & Chavis (1986) build on, membership consists of the feeling of the right to belong to a group because of the personal investment made to become part of it. They continue to explain that influence consists of two aspects: The aspect of the member being able to have some influence over what the group does and how the group influences its members. According to the definition, integration and fulfillment of needs mean that being part of the group is rewarding and supports its members. Shared emotional connection means that the group members have a shared history or at least they recognize it as something they can identify with (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

McMillan and Chavis (1986) acknowledged that a sense of community is a powerful tool and that it can also be associated with negative connotations. They proceeded to

wish that people would learn to use the sense of community as a tool to promote being considerate and collaborative towards each other.

My thesis studies the sense of community in a festival setting and there are several studies, based on McMillan and Chavis's (1986) framework, on how festivals impact the sense of community. The findings of Schwarz and Tait's (2007) study confirmed that the researched festival developed a sense of community in each element mentioned by McMillan and Chavis (1986) but stated that the results did not reveal the level at which the different elements should reach for the sense of community to be at an optimal level.

In 2013 the impact of a festival on the sense of community was researched by Van Winkle and Woosnam (2013) by sending a questionnaire to the inhabitants after a local festival was over. They wanted to see if and how the sense of community was enhanced by the festival. In their research, they found that of four previously mentioned elements of a sense of community, needs of fulfillment and influence were positively related to the impact of the festival, but to their surprise, they found that membership and emotional connection did not seem to interrelate to the impact factors.

In past years several studies have confirmed the positive influence that festivals have on the sense of community. When visitors to four different festivals were interviewed Derrett (2003) found that festivals and events cater to the sense of community by uniting people, fostering a sense of belonging, offering support, encouraging participation, and ensuring safety. Likewise, Brownett (2018) stated in her research when interviewing eight different festival organizers, that participation in festivals forms and strengthens social bonds, and builds a connection between the festival and its community. Similarly, Zhao and Wise (2019) researched how an event can reinforce and shape the sense of community in the local community. They concluded that events enhance social interactions and the sense of belonging. Lefrid and Torres (2022) also confirmed in their research that experience elements, authenticity, entertainment, and social interactions of a festival positively influence the sense of community. Further on, Hassanli, Walters and Williamson (2020) continued that events can enhance cross-cultural understanding and tolerance between different communities.

Interestingly when Holopainen and Maukonen (2016) interviewed five organizers of small festivals in Finland, they found that a huge motivational aspect of running a

festival was the sense of community it creates. The interviewees noted that the built sense of community benefits relationships, caring for others, a positive work attitude, learning and productivity. The research concluded that festivals have social benefits: they grow community pride.

Even though multiple studies show that festivals and events can create and enhance the sense of community, there is still some dispute over how the sense of community is experienced. Studies have shown that festival volunteers and attendees experience the impacts of festivals most positively (Small, 2007; Stevenson, 2016), however those who do not participate may see the festival in a more negative light due to, for example, costs and the disturbance it causes (Van Winkle & Woosnam, 2013; Stevenson, 2016). This is why it is important to find ways to engage the local inhabitants in a festival or event in a way that strengthens the sense of community within the whole surrounding community.

2.3 Value creation and collaboration

Researchers widely agree that collaborations create value. Understanding value creation is important for gaining insights into collaborations, as it helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately guiding the development and enhancement of the collaborations.

My thesis aims to understand what types of value are created in collaborations and therefore, this thesis's theoretical framework is largely based on the Collaborative Value Creation (CVC) framework (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012 a, 2012b, 2016). The CVC is based on the cross-sector collaboration framework presented by Austin (2000) and further developed by Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b) into the Collaborative Value Creation framework. I chose to use Austin and Seitanidi's framework as it offers a detailed method for analyzing how value is created and the types of value found in collaborations. It consists of a structured way to assess the benefits that arise from collaborations and offers a systematic way of categorizing the different types of values.

Even though the CVC framework was created for non-profit and business collaborations with a societal focus, it can be used for arts organization and business collaborations as, for example, the research by Knight (2015) has shown. Le Pennec and Raufflet (2015) found in their research that the CVC framework can be utilized in many different collaborations because the framework is generic. It focuses on different types of value

with a wide range, and it is not distinct of what kind of organizations participate in the collaboration. Therefore, I have seen it plausible to utilize it in the setting of an arts festival and business collaboration.

Many frameworks could be utilized for understanding value creation in cross-sector collaborations. For example, Bryson, Crosby and Stone (2006) created a framework for understanding cross-sector collaborations. It aims to understand the conditions that affect the collaborations, but not so much the value that is created. Giving the beneficiaries of a collaboration a voice is important in the framework introduced by Le Ber and Branzei (2010). Even though these frameworks look at cross-sector collaborations and value creation, they are on a more theoretical level. My thesis seeks tangible results on specific collaborations and therefore the CVC framework serves my purposes better, as it is a very concrete and structured framework for understanding and categorizing value creation in cross-sector collaborations.

2.3.1 Value creation in a collaboration

In the past two decades, the research on cross-sector collaboration focusing on value creation has multiplied. Simultaneously collaborations between non-profit organizations and businesses are increasing and they are focusing more on the value created through partnership.

Collaborations can create value depending on how they are designed and managed (Austin & Seitanidi, 2016.) Research finds that collaborations have many ways of creating value and different motivations to embark. Value is seen as created with the culmination of everything that takes place during the relationship (Tyrie & Ferguson, 2013). Additionally, for collaborations to flourish and be successful it is important to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of possible partnerships beforehand and to define the possible value created (Austin & Seitanidi, 2016; Backer, 2002). It is important to remember that the best value is expected when collaborations build on self-interests and characteristic strengths of the organizations while finding ways to decrease possible deficiencies each partner may have (Bryson et al., 2006.)

For the best results collaborators should continuously reassess and discuss what type of collaboration they currently have, how the relationship is evolving and what they would like to see it grow into. To continue having a flourishing collaboration it is important to renew the value on the way and if deterioration is showing it is good to search for new

activities and asset exchange to renew the value (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). Al-Tabbaa (2023) in his research on non-profit and business collaborations found that unfortunately, many non-profit organizations consider that the non-profit – business collaborations provide no more value than merely funding benefits. This attitude may explain the high rate of failures of these collaborations.

2.3.2 Types of value

Admitting that value creation can be reviewed from the general economic, social, and environmental point of view, Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012 b, 2016) suggest that value creation is examined by four different value types: associational, transferred, interactional and synergistic value. They continue that internal and external value is created on three different levels: the micro level is for individuals, the meso level is for organizations, and the macro level is for society. Notably a deeper and more precise analysis contributes to a greater understanding of value creation in a collaboration.

Firstly, Austin & Seitanidi (2016) defined associational value as the value organizations get from being associated with each other. It consists of the reputation, desirability, and legitimacy of the partner. The collaboration gives visibility and can affect employee recruitment, productivity, and motivation within the organization.

Secondly, transferred assets are a value that is exchanged, such as money, goods, and products, or equipment, buildings, and skills. The first are one-time assets that will run out, the latter are assets that can continue creating value for a longer time after the transfer (Austin & Seitanidi, 2016). The researchers continue that once the asset has been transferred it does not count into the value chain anymore, and therefore transferred assets need renewal.

The third value, interaction value, is created from the process of having a collaboration. This appears as trust and communication skills (Austin & Seitanidi, 2016) in collaborations. All interactions can be linked to this value, such as access to partner networks, shared problem-solving, shared leadership, and risk management the researchers explain.

Lastly, synergistic value comes from the realization that combined resources create more value than if each organization would work separately. According to Austin and Seitanidi (2016), innovation is a key factor in synergistic value. They continue that societal value created together will give economic value and this will feed into more

societal value and so on. They conclude that this becomes a “virtuous value cycle”, where one type of value creates another type of value.

2.3.3 Stages of collaboration

To better analyze the value that is created in a collaboration it is good to also look at the stages the collaboration is at. Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) suggest that different stages of collaboration be examined through the collaboration continuum theory (Austin, 2000). The theory divides collaborations into four different stages: the philanthropic, transactional, integrative (Austin, 2000) and the transformational stage (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b).

A lot of the collaborations in the arts field are still philanthropic. Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) call the philanthropic stage a stage where value expectations and investments are relatively low, and the value exchanged is mostly generic. Generic resource transfers are benefits, that any organization could offer, for example, money, credibility, and a positive image. An example of this is a basic charitable donor-recipient situation: businesses giving money and non-profit organizations providing a good image. Not much engagement is required on the philanthropic level, but the collaboration can migrate to a deeper level along the collaboration continuum (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016).

The second stage is called the transactional stage, a relationship that is mutually beneficial to both parties. Austin (2000) and Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) explain that this is characterized by exchanges of specific resources on exact activities. They continue that core competence exchange uses the unique strengths of each organization to benefit the cooperation, and these strengths have a greater potential for value creation, as organizations make use of their specific expertise and resources.

Joint value creation exhibits the benefits that come out of the action of combining each organization’s competence and resources. This is typical in the integrative alliances stage. It is of higher value, because without the collaboration, these benefits would not exist and therefore, they cannot be replicated (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016; Bryson et al., 2006). In the integrative stage, the collaborator’s missions, people and work begin to merge into a more collective action and organizational integration, Austin (2000) and Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) highlight the

important dimension that the parties distinctly imprint each other's organizational culture, and the value created.

Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) added to the collaboration continuum theory the transformative stage. This shifts the collaboration focus to a larger societal problem that the collaborators tackle in cooperation. Innovative solutions that create significant change to the said problem are found in this stage, and more institutions and sectors join in the collaboration (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016).

The collaboration continuum works as a framework for the stages of the collaborations, but these stages are not separate but blend into each other. Austin (2000) and Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) remind us that not all collaborations start from the philanthropic stage and evolve to the integrated or transformative stage, as some collaborations can start from the transactional stage but never evolve further. Likewise, one needs to keep in mind that collaborations don't necessarily progress to the deepest form but can also regress to a previous stage (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016).

Austin (2000) states that movement on the collaboration continuum is based on conscious decisions and actions. He points out that research has found that usually as partners get to know each other, trust and confidence grow, and the collaboration deepens. There are significant gains when deepening the collaboration, but it will also require more resources and effort. The level of engagement increases, the collaboration becomes more important, resources used for the collaboration grow, and the activities broaden, Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) continue that the interaction level intensifies, managing the collaboration becomes more complex, and the strategic value of the collaboration grows. How well the collaboration succeeds depends on its ability to generate value for the partners. Deeper level collaboration is more than just about receiving and giving money, it is about the capability to generate benefits and value for each partner and society (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016).

Austin and Seitanidi (2016) propose that as a collaboration evolves to a deeper level it becomes stronger and the value it creates greater and knowledge and understanding of how maximum value is generated together strengthens. As the alignment in the collaboration increases it creates more value and beneficiaries shift from the

collaborating partners to the surrounding society. (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2016.)

2.3.4 Factors that enhance collaboration

Many elements determine how strong a collaboration will be. My third research question seeks to explore the factors that strengthen collaboration. From literature, several factors can be found that influence the success of cooperation and the value it can create.

For a collaboration to succeed it must fit with the goals and strategies of each partner (Soteriadis, 2016; Langeveld et al., 2014). Austin and Seitanidi (2016) found that as the cooperation evolves, mission and values alignment become more connected, and the more the purpose of the collaboration aligns with the strategy and mission of each partner, the more important and vigorous the relationship is. Also, this alignment ensures that efforts in the collaboration are directed towards beneficial outcomes.

Austin and Seitanidi (2016) continue that the more compatible the values of each partner are, the stronger the alliance. Murphy, Arenas and Batista (2014) confirmed in their research that mission and strategy alignment are important in a collaboration, but the researchers argue that the alignment of values is not, as their research demonstrated successful collaborations despite the different values of participating organizations.

All collaborations are created by people therefore personal connections and relationships are important when establishing and maintaining partnerships, and the engagement will increase as collaborations expand. Research supports this and Austin (2000) claims that partnerships are motivationally fueled by the emotional connection that people have with the mission and each other. One could say that the mission connects, and the positive personal relationships are the glue of the collaborations. One needs to remember that good relationships won't ensure the success of the collaboration, and bad personal relationships can destroy it.

Austin (2000) found in his research that relationships between the key individuals in the participating organizations are important for the prosperity of the collaboration. A strong and rooted collaboration requires focused attention, and as it deepens, managerial demands grow. The cooperation should be seen as an important relationship and have high visibility within the organization. Top-level involvement (Austin, 2000) and formal and informal roles engaging in the collaborations are vital (Bryson et al., 2006).

Furthermore, research emphasizes that clearly defined responsibilities affect success and therefore it is important to find competent people for the right roles to handle the collaboration (Backer, 2002). Austin (2000) explains that this is especially true when the structure of collaboration becomes more complex, and more organizations join in.

As the collaboration grows stronger involvement expands and interaction becomes more frequent. Research has found that good communication keeps stakeholders informed and engaged in collaborations. Adequate communication establishes expectations and helps in resolving possible conflicts. For a flourishing collaboration, communication needs to be effective and efficient, and many formal and informal channels should be used both internally in the organizations as well as between the partners (Austin, 2000; Backer, 2002; Daellenbach, Davies and Ashill, 2006; Soteriadis, 2016).

Open communication is also essential in building trust between stakeholders. Behaving respectably toward each other increases trust (Soteriadis, 2016). Backer (2002) suggests that building trust requires that the stakeholders understand each other's cultures and the way that they conduct business. In their research Langeveld et al. (2014) state that a strong and continuously evolving collaboration is built on trust. They continue to say that if trust is broken between the parties, in the ultimate scenario, it can lead to the ending of the collaboration. This is true in any kind of human connection.

Previous studies highlight that the leverage of the collaborations is how well collaborators take advantage of the available resources. The collaborations are strengthened when available resources, skills and experiences are shared between the organizations (Soteriadis, 2016). Typically, as the type of resources used changes from generic to more specific, synergism grows stronger. Continual learning is also important when building a stronger collaboration. Soteriadis (2016) continues that in a successful collaboration, partners are interested in sharing and learning more about each other's processes and ways of doing things. They are eager to find new ways of engaging more effectively in the collaborations. Greater innovation in finding solutions rises, and in this way, internal change drives greater levels of external change (Austin & Seitanidi 2016).

Another important factor that enhances collaboration is systematically planning it together. Interestingly, Langeveld et al. (2014) found in their research that often collective aims of the collaboration are more important than individual ones. Backer

(2002) states that as partners are planning their collaboration, they set objectives and activities that members of the collaboration can support. Additionally, experiences of previous collaborations help in the planning. Flexibility and adaptability also contribute to the success of a collaboration. Lewandowska (2015) explains that partners should welcome each other's needs and be open to adjusting plans if necessary.

It is important to acknowledge the different capacities the collaborators bring to the cooperation. This will enhance mutual accountability and motivate the execution of responsibility as each partner should be fully committed to the collaboration (Langeveld et al., 2014). Accountability is proved when partners can demonstrate how well they have produced the expected benefits (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016) and the better one can define the expected benefits, the better probability the collaboration will have in succeeding.

2.3.5 Benefits of collaboration

To be able to justify collaborations, it is good to understand what benefits companies hope to gain. This is one reason I wanted to study the benefits of my fourth research question. Often companies see collaborations with an arts organization as more of an act of philanthropy with intangible outcome expectations rather than financial benefits that can be indicated by return on investment (Smith, Pitts, Litvin and Mack, 2016). This does not exclude that companies have expectations of benefits, but businesses were found to prioritize internal emotional links (Smith et al., 2016) and altruism toward the community (Smith et al., 2016; Daellenbach, 2012) when deciding on collaboration with an arts organization.

A large body of literature has found that cross-sector collaboration offers multiple ranges of benefits to its partners. A considerable number of studies (e.g. Parkinson & Kahn & Peck & Cohen, 2018; Murphy et al., 2014; Langeveld et al., 2014; Oesch, 2008; Backer, 2002; Cornwell & Maighan, 1998) have been published on the benefits of collaborations to the business partners. These benefits include for example brand enhancement, community engagement, gaining new audiences and networks, increased visibility, marketing possibilities and publicity, possibilities to improve business-to-business relations, gaining new knowledge, networking opportunities, demonstrating corporate social responsibility, increasing creativity, enhancing employee engagement and development, and advancing corporate goals and profitability.

Stronger and more sustainable collaborations have a balanced exchange of value within the cooperation structure as benefits flow both ways. This is especially seen in collaborations where partners actively seek ways to advance the other's agenda and where there is a deep understanding of each other's businesses (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016).

Research mentions (Austin, 2000; Backer, 2002) that alongside the benefits of a collaboration, it is important to take into consideration the possible costs and risks of the collaboration. This involves considering how much time and energy is needed to have a successful collaboration versus putting the invested time and money into something else. Most often the collaboration takes up management and staff time and therefore the collaboration should be carefully examined for both advantages and disadvantages. A major risk lies in the possible damage to the name and reputation of the partners (Austin, 2000). That means that the deeper the collaboration is, the more each partner is exposed to what will happen to the other partner (Austin, 2000). It is important to have a positive benefit-cost ratio in the collaboration, but this is not easy to calculate, since not all benefits and costs are translatable into monetary value.

2.3.6 Forms of collaboration

Contributions to art organizations made by businesses have significantly increased in the past years (Kirchberg, 2003). Research on the different forms of collaboration that exist between businesses and art organizations shows that the most important form is still financial support (e.g. Šain & Bestvina Bukvić & Haršanji, 2019; Parkinson et al., 2018; Suomen Kulttuurirahasto, 2015; Kirchberg, 2003), but as the forms of collaborations diversify, different forms of in-kind support are growing.

Most in-kind contributions consist of products, volunteer work, usage of facilities, marketing aid or pro-bono services provided by the collaborators (Kirchberg, 2003; Parkinson et al., 2018). Kirchberg (2003) also mentions that collaboration with a business can help raise the profile of an art organization in the same way as a corporation may benefit from collaboration. Interestingly, Parkinson et al. (2018) continue, that pro bono services are most often provided by smaller companies rather than larger ones.

2.4 Research gap

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on festivals of the social impact that they have, for example on the sense of community. A sense of community has been considered one of the important traits that a festival can bring to its community as Derrett (2003) found in his research. There is much research on the benefits of building a sense of community (e.g. Derrett, 2003; Holopainen & Maukonen, 2016; Brownnett, 2018; Hassanli et al., 2020), but not on concrete ways to implement it. Therefore, this research aims to identify how a sense of community can be built.

Value creation is fundamentally important in collaborations as it contributes to the success and sustainability of the partnership (Austin, 2000). Value creation in cross-sector collaborations is highly researched in many different fields. Nevertheless, research on the value creation in small arts festivals and business collaborations is scarce. As a result, existing research is inadequate in addressing the value creation of a small-scale festival and business collaboration.

My research analyzes the findings in the light of value creation for a better understanding of what types of value collaboration can produce. To be able to analyze the type of value created it is important to first understand the benefits of cooperation and factors enhancing different forms of collaboration. These different aspects have been widely studied (e.g. Smagina & Lindemanis, 2012; Murphy et al., 2014; Langeveld et al., 2014; Oesch, 2008), especially from the business collaborators' point of view (e.g. Parkinson et al., 2018; Šain et al., 2019; Kirchberg, 2003). Although a considerable amount of research has been conducted on collaborations between businesses and arts organizations, the research is mainly conducted on established arts organizations. The same can be said for the research on festivals that have mostly been conducted on established large or middle-sized festivals and their collaborations. Only seldom the collaborations on emerging small arts festivals (under 5000 participants) have been researched.

Often the found studies on festivals take the festival managers' perspective. This thesis aims to fill in the research gap by concentrating on a small arts festival's business collaborators' point of view. Therefore, this thesis is set to unravel this deficiency.

This thesis seeks to fill in the research gaps by studying the collaborations of a small arts festival from the business collaborators' point of view. The research is conducted

on a grass-root level to produce tangible concrete information on how collaborations can build a sense of community through value creation. Furthermore, it sheds light on the factors that contribute to a successful collaboration alongside the benefits and the different forms a collaboration can take.

2.5 Conclusion

Festivals are places where experiences are created and shared (Quinn, 2005; Morgan, 2008). Much research confirms that they enhance the sense of community, that is built on the elements of membership, influence, integration and emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Even though many studies have shown the correlation between festivals and a sense of community there is still some dispute about whether and how a sense of community can truly be measured as it is a very subjective feeling.

Research on value creation in cross-sector collaboration has multiplied in the past years. Research on the matter is desirable since the value collaborations can create has a huge impact on the favorable outcome of collaborations. Much research has concentrated on non-profit organizations with a social call, but value creation in the art field collaborations have increased as well. Since many studies have focused on large arts organizations, cultural events, and festivals, collaborations of small arts organizations and businesses are yet to be researched. This thesis aims to provide knowledge to this gap of research through a single-case study on the collaborations of the Finfringe Festival.

The theoretical framework of this study is largely based on the collaborative value creation (CVC) framework (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016) and its view on different aspects of collaborations. I have also provided findings from previous studies on value creation. My thesis concentrates on value created in a small arts organization – business collaboration and I have chosen to use the CVC framework as the base of my analysis. The framework offers a clear concept of different stages of collaboration and the type of value they create, the factors that enhance collaboration, and the benefits that can be sought out of different kinds of forms of collaboration.

According to value creation, research collaborations can be divided into different stages: the philanthropic, transactional, integrative (Austin, 2000) and the transformational stage (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b). Collaboration becomes deeper at each stage as engagement increases.

Research has found many factors that can either strengthen or erode collaborations. Enhancing factors include goal, strategy and mission alignment, on the other hand, opposite results concerning the need for value alignment in collaboration have been reported. Many factors influence the quality of cooperation, for example, the level of engagement and personal connections of key individuals in the participating organizations. Furthermore, good communication, flexibility and accountability were found to be key factors.

Collaborations are found to benefit participating parties in many ways. These benefits can be categorized according to the CVC framework (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012 a, 2012b, 2016) in four different types of value. These values are associational, transferred, interactional and synergistic values. The value can be created internally for the collaborating parties and externally for parties outside the collaboration. The internal and external value can be created for individuals on the micro level and organizations on the meso level. The value created for the surrounding society is external.

In my analysis, I will examine the data for factors, benefits and forms found in the collaborations. The findings will then be examined and categorized according to the CVC framework (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012 a, 2012b, 2016). Finally, I will review all findings from the sense of community point of view using the definition by McMillan and Chavis (1986) and research on the subject as a basis for my analysis.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study aims to understand in the ways value creation in collaborations of a small arts festival can build a sense of community. To assess this, I need to analyze what types of value the collaborations create. I will narrow the types to consist of the value created on an organizational level. To establish them, the objectives are to identify the factors that strengthen the cooperation, the expected and perceived benefits of the collaboration, and recognize the different forms of collaboration with a small arts festival from the business collaborators' point of view. To gain an in-depth understanding the research concentrates on one real-life event; the performing arts festival Finfringe, based in Turku, Finland.

This thesis is qualitatively driven research in the interpretative paradigm with a single case study approach. The primary data was collected by semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the data analysis is supported by data collected from literature and articles. In this chapter, I will go into detail about the chosen research design and aim to shed light on the choices made. I will also introduce the case of the Finfringe Festival.

3.1 Qualitative research methodology

Researchers use qualitative strategy when they want to explore and learn about a phenomenon to build a depth of understanding, Leavy (2017) states that it is a good strategy when your primary purpose is to explore, describe or explain a phenomenon. As I wanted to seek an understanding of how the collaborators see the cooperation with a small arts festival and what type of value it creates, I chose qualitative research as my methodology. Even though some researchers argue that quantitative research is more scientific or objective, the qualitative research methodology allows digging deeper into a specific topic. It focuses on exploring the issue in detail and aims to produce an intimate understanding of the said subject (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006; O’Leary, 2010).

Qualitative research collects and analyses data that is in non-numeric forms, mostly language and texts (Blaxter et al., 2006; Gibbs, 2002). Therefore, Gibbs (2002) continues, the consequence of this focus is that the philosophical framework of qualitative research is often based on interpretivism, and researchers tend to take a holistic view of what they are researching. In other words, the researcher cannot interpret words and actions without them being related to a wider context in which they have been used. On the other hand, it can be said that if the researcher is only trying to find out the interviewee’s point of view or experience, the model used is a positivist one, as often used in surveys (Silverman, 2010). Based on this, I would claim that my research leans toward the holistic interpretivism paradigm, with a twist of positivism.

Originally, I was thinking of a mixed research design that would have included a quantitatively driven method of a general survey sent to businesses in the Turku region. As the process evolved this option was left out due to my interest in focusing on a real-life case. The focus of the thesis shifted. Rather than research why companies, in general, do not collaborate with small arts organizations, it moved towards gaining a deeper knowledge of the value creation in collaboration and ways in which the collaboration can enhance a sense of community. Alongside these aims, it was

important to research factors that deepen collaborations, and the benefits collaborators have gained or expected to gain. This desire to perceive insight also determined the selection of the case-study approach.

Due to my interest in the Finfringe Festival and curiosity to understand the views of the festival collaborators, I decided to use the case study approach. This strategy is best used when the research aims to understand a phenomenon in a real-life setting (Flick, 2005; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2003). Simons (2009) continues that using a case study is good when the intrinsic intent is to gain an in-depth understanding of a single case. However, case studies often allow generalizations to more general issues as well (Blaxter et al., 2006).

The best way to understand the value creation and different views of the collaborators was to narrow the research down to one arts organization and its collaborators. Therefore, my choice was to conduct a single-case study on the topic. The natural choice was to research Finfringe, as I work as the executive director of this festival and have an intrinsic interest in it. Stake (1995) comments that it would be good to choose a case that is typical or representative of other cases, but that the first obligation is to understand this one case. Nevertheless, I believe that the findings of this thesis if not generalized, at least can give insight to small arts organizations into the factors that enhance collaboration and the possible benefits they could offer along with the value the collaborations can create.

3.2 Data collection

In case study research, the main methods to collect data are interviewing, observation and document review (Simons, 2009). Interviews allow the interviewees to speak freely, letting their ideas run unrestrained and possibly disclose information that they may see as significant to the topic, and the researcher can ask questions freely, dig deeper into the subject and follow up on important topics (Peer et al., 2012). Peer et al. (2012) continue to divide interviews into three different categories: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. They go on, that in a structured interview, the interviewer takes the lead and in an unstructured interview the informant talks freely without guidance. The semi-structured interview is a mix of both, with a set of questions but room for spontaneous conversation.

I chose interviewing as the method for this case, as qualitative research is about discovering and portraying multiple views of a topic and “interview is the main road to multiple realities” (Stake, 1995 p.64). Along with deciding on the structure of the interview, O’Leary (2010) stresses that the researcher should decide if the interview is formal, or informal where rules and roles are bent to build rapport, create trust, and accelerate communication. Also, O’Leary (2010) continues, that the researcher needs to decide if the interaction will be a one-on-one or a group interview. In my interviews I wanted to have some control over what was talked about, so I chose the model of semi-structured interviews, but in an informal manner, that gave interviewees room to talk freely. All interviews were held one-on-one as the interviewees represented different bodies of collaborators.

If the main aim is to produce a descriptive case study the questions used in the interview should be open (Simons, 2009). Due to this fact, the questions were constructed openly to enable a wider range of answers. The aim was to find out the collaborator’s views on the cooperation with the festival. The set of questions evolved around the research question and the main concept of collaboration. The concept of a sense of community was addressed at the beginning of the interviews, and interviewees were asked for their views on the concept. The questions formed a preliminary frame for the interviews and changed slightly as the interviewees were allowed to talk rather freely about the topic. Based on the answers given by the interviewees not all questions listed (APPENDIX A) were asked. Also, depending on the course of the interview, some additional questions were placed.

The data was collected from six interviews. The interviewees represented a range of different collaborators. This was to ensure that the research would shed light on multiple perspectives on cooperation. Three of the interviewees represented different forms of venues of the festival; CEO of the Turku City Theatre Arto Valkama, Theatre Director Jukka Aaltonen from Åbo Svenska Teater, and Sauli Virta the co-owner of Ravintola Torio with whom the festival shared a venue in the Turku Market Square. The three other respondents were Marketing Manager Mirva Järvinen from the local shopping mall Hansakortteli, Antti Kirkkola, Director of Major Events for Turku City, and Kirsi Eronen the Executive Director of the Turku Center Association.

The interviewees were contacted by email or phone to arrange a date for the interviews to take place. All interviews were held in June 2023 at the locations chosen by the

interviewees. The interviews were held in person except for one interview that was held online via Zoom. All questions were read or sent to interviewees before the interview. The length of the interviews varied from approximately 45 minutes to one hour (see APPENDIX B for more detailed information on the interview outline). Due to the native language of the interviewees, all interviews were conducted in Finnish so that they would be able to express themselves freely and thus ensure the best quality of the data collected through the interviews. All interviews were recorded with permission and later transcribed. In the case of quotations used in the written thesis, the interviewees were given the possibility to read them beforehand to make sure they agreed with what had been said. All quotations used have been translated by the researcher and approved by the interviewees.

3.3 Data analysis

The collected data was first analyzed right after the interviews were held in the summer of 2023. As the research process proceeded, I found that the analysis I had done was not sufficient and served more as a grouping of the answers given to different questions. A more detailed analysis was done later in the fall.

I carefully read through each transcription of the interviews and highlighted all the parts that I found interesting and that were related to my research questions. These points of interest regarded factors that enhance collaboration and benefits of collaboration, either perceived or expected and different forms of collaboration. I highlighted how the interviewees defined a sense of community and when interviewees mentioned a sense of community alongside other information.

After highlighting the text, I copied these parts and moved them into a separate Microsoft Excel sheet, each in its row. Further on the texts were simplified and labeled according to which question they answered: factors or benefits. I then labeled them according to the themes that came up.

To get a bigger picture of the whole I used colorful Post-it pads to differentiate factors, benefits and different themes. Similar themes were then grouped into different categories either under factors or benefits. With this grouping, I ended up with seven factors that enable successful collaborations and five perceived or expected benefits of the collaboration. I finally selected the quotes that would best support my findings,

translated them, and sent them to each interviewee to check and comment, before the thesis was published.

I then grouped the forms of collaboration found. After determining all the findings, I analyzed them from the value creation point of view, as my second research question evolved around what kind of value is created in the collaborations. This analysis was done solely keeping in mind the value creation framework.

Finally, I analyzed the definition of the sense of community that the interviewees gave and recognized whenever they used the expression. To answer my first research question on how collaborations can strengthen the sense of community I looked at all the findings with the definition of the term in mind.

3.4 Critical reflections on the research process

Reflecting on the research process I would like to highlight three points that have influenced this study. Firstly, my position as the researcher of this study, secondly the interviewees and thirdly the data collected. Finally, I will examine the overall process of the research.

I'm the co-founder and executive director of the chosen case-study festival and at the same time, I am acting as a researcher who is studying the collaborations of the festival. There are benefits to my double role as all the knowledge of the Finfringe Festival I have obtained as one of the founders of the festival and from my position as the executive director. Information can also be found in the activity reports and action plans of the organizing association Finfringe and on the festival webpage. There is also the flip side of my double role; I may be biased due to my close relation to the festival. In my research, I have tried my best to keep an open mind, and I have tried to approach the research as subjectively as possible.

The second point that has influenced this study also derives from my double role. The interviewees know me very well, which has possibly led to a relaxed and trusting atmosphere in the interviews. I hope that the interviewees have been able to talk freely about the collaboration but at the same time, I acknowledge that as our collaborations are still ongoing and I represent the other party to the cooperation, this may have affected the answers given.

This research consisted of six interviews and the data collected from these interviews. Six interviews are not enough to generalize, but as the idea was to focus on one case, I consider this amount enough. In addition, interviewees represented different collaborating organizations and, in that way, gave different perspectives to the research.

The overall process of the research went well. Contacting the interviewees was easy and they were willing to participate in the study. They found the topic interesting and wanted to share their views on the collaboration openly. If I had the opportunity to go back in the process, I would put more consideration into the formulation of the interview questions to better focus on the research questions. Now there were also many irrelevant topics discussed. Overall, I believe the research process served most of the research questions I set out to study.

3.5 Introducing the case: The Finfringe Festival

To better understand the case I will explain the history of the Fringe festival movement. I will also share the objectives and other aspects of the Finfringe Festival alongside the networks and collaborators.

After World War II in 1947, the Edinburgh International Festival was founded with a vision to bring audiences and people around the world together through performing arts (Edinburgh International Festival, 2023). Eight theatre groups that were not invited to perform at the festival showed up in Edinburgh anyway and decided to show their work to the public at the same time, thus creating the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2022). Compared to existing conventional festivals Edinburgh Fringe was radical in rethinking programming, the use of different venues and how it engaged audiences (Quinn, 2005). Over the years more and more performers showed up so that today the festival is the world's largest performing arts festival with more than 2.2 million tickets sold in 2022. (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2022.)

The Fringe festival is not a brand but a movement, as anyone can organize a Fringe festival. For this reason, Fringe festivals come in all different shapes and sizes worldwide. Most of them are grassroots festivals that are characterized by freedom, creativity and innovation. They serve as a platform and marketplace for established and new artists and art forms and offer audiences captivating and unique artistic experiences. The festivals have a strong sense of community between artists, volunteers, management, and audiences. (World Fringe Association, 2023.)

After 1952 the number of established festivals grew each year so that today there are over 300 Fringe festivals around the world (World Fringe Association, 2023). In 2019 Finfringe Festival joined the movement. The idea of organizing a Fringe festival in Finland came from one of the founders who had visited several festivals in the United States of America.

The founders wanted to establish in Finland a new form of a performing arts festival that would introduce to the audience many different genres of performing arts within a few days. It would also serve as a platform for international and local artists to network and get inspired by each other (Finfringe, 2023).

There are three important objectives of the Finfringe Festival. The main one is to create a space for artists to explore new innovative and creative ways to put on unique, unconventional and even experimental performances (Finfringe, 2023). The second objective is to help Finnish artists build a network and offer a route to perform abroad at other Fringe festivals. The third objective is to establish an international festival that presents shows that would most likely not be otherwise seen in Finland. The idea is to introduce productions that usually serve a smaller audience and cater them to a larger audience. At the same time, the audience can explore different performing art genres in an easy and digestible way.

The festival aims to attract many kinds of artists and audiences due to its easy accessibility. People of different ages and from different backgrounds are welcome at the festival. Anyone can apply to perform at the festival. This means that there is often a mix of amateur and professional performers applying through the Artist call. When selected for the fully curated festival the amateur artists will be able to perform their shows alongside the professional artists with no indifference. By keeping ticket prices reasonable and providing free shows the festival is accessible to a large range of people, despite their economic situation. Also, the vast variety of different kinds of shows caters to a larger audience. In this way the festival can celebrate that art belongs to everyone.

The Finfringe Festival is socially responsible. Gender diversity, equality, and inclusiveness are seen in both the festival program as well as the members of artists, staff, and volunteers. People performing and working at the festival represent different ages, and ethnicities and come from many different backgrounds: represented are e.g., sexual, and linguistic minorities and different family and professional backgrounds. The

festival thrives to be a safe space for everyone, and the volunteers sign a non-discrimination commitment. The venues are accessible to all audiences. The Finfringe association follows good association practices and annually donates box-office revenue to charity of a selected performance.

Finfringe has had very strong values from the beginning. It thrives for openness, building a sense of community and being environmentally friendly. Openness can be seen in the mere fact that anyone can apply to perform at the festival, work as a volunteer, and join the association. The festival publicly informs of its actions and wants to cooperate with other cultural actors. Its collaboration with organizations, companies and associations is also based on openness and sharing of information.

The basic ideological aim of the whole fringe festival movement is the sense of community it seeks to create. This can be seen in the many networks and collaborations that fringe festivals are a part of. The aim is to learn and help each other in as many ways as possible through sharing information and in this way create a strong sense of community. Building a sense of community is also important to Finfringe. It has a community program that aims to create meeting and networking possibilities for artists, staff, and volunteers. Also, the festival is building collaborations with different organizations and companies to enhance the sense of community in the collaborations and the City of Turku.

Finfringe has been conscious of ecological matters from the beginning. This can be seen for example in the use of recycled materials, venues are located close to each other so that they are accessible by walking, the enlivening of empty city spaces, using multi-year advertising materials and paying special attention to the sustainable operating models of the performance infrastructure. For its actions, the festival is now part of the Ekokompassi environmental management system and has been given the EcoCompass certificate to prove actions of sustainability and environmental friendliness.

Finfringe is a member of the global World Fringe Association. It was created to unite the Fringe Festival industry. It is a network of fringe festivals where festivals can connect, share ideas, and learn from each other by exchanging concrete information about operating methods and so forth (World Fringe Association, 2023). The Baltic Nordic Fringe Network in which Finfringe is also a member, aims for close cooperation of the countries around the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Nordic Fringe Network (BNFN)

consists of festivals from Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Estonia, and Lithuania. It implements annually a joint artist call where with one application artists can apply to several festivals. One important goal is to promote and make touring the region's festivals easy for artists. (Baltic Nordic Fringe Network, 2024.)

In the past years, Finfringe has had various collaborators. One of the most significant ones is the City of Turku, even though the festival is not an official partner. From the beginning, the city has provided a yearly grant to organize the festival, and it supports the festival in many other ways as well. Three main professional theatres in Turku have been the official partners of Finfringe right from the start. During the festival, there are performances in each theatre. Besides serving as venues, the theatres offer various in-kind support to the festival.

As the festival is in the city center, it is natural for the festival to work in cooperation with the local shopping mall and the Turku Center association that represents the city center businesses. In the history of the festival, it has had collaborations with a grocery store, clean dryers, a cleaning company, a goldsmith and a home electronics store. In 2023 the festival cooperated with a local restaurant and event organizer as they shared a tent venue in the market square.

The directors of the collaborating theatres are part of the steering group of the festival. On the steering group, there are also representatives from the Turku University of Applied Sciences and HUMAK University of Applied Sciences. These schools provide the festival with trainees and volunteers and help inform students about the artist call and festival program.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze and discuss the findings of my thesis, which aims to offer insight into a small arts festival's collaborations on a grassroots level. The chapter is divided into six sub-chapters, of which five align with my research questions.

I present the findings and analysis of the semi-structured interviews in three different categories: factors that enable a successful collaboration, the expected and perceived

benefits of the collaboration from the business partners' point of view and the different forms of collaboration. I then analyze the findings and categorize them by the type of value they create. Finally, I examine the collaborations from a sense of community point of view. All five subchapters include a discussion, in which the findings will be discussed in relation to my research questions and theoretical framework. The chapter ends with a summary.

4.1 Factors enabling successful collaboration

In my research, I found many factors that interviewees mentioned as essential for a successful collaboration. The most prominent of these factors were communication, collaborative planning and development, flexibility and adaptation, trust and transparency, people, continuity, accountability and goal alignment. I will present all these factors in more detail in the following.

Communication was emphasized by all interviewees to be a very important factor of collaboration. It was interesting to find how many aspects revolve around it, such as expressing the needs of both partners, planning together, sharing information openly, or being flexible in scheduling. A relevant finding was that most collaborative efforts seem to build around good communication between individuals and the trust it creates. When seeking collaboration, it is necessary to remember that as in all interactions, good communication is essential.

Clear communication ensures that the needs and desires of both parties are heard. They can then be discussed and mutually agreed upon, as both Valkama (2023) CEO of the Turku City Theater and Järvinen (2023) Marketing Manager from Hansakortteli shopping mall highlighted. Often poor communication creates problems. This was recognized by Valkama, who indicated that it is necessary to make sure partners are on the same page to prevent assumptions, which could lead to misunderstandings.

There are always two sides to cooperation, it is more challenging because it is not under your control, and operating cultures always collide. Some assumptions are not said out loud and then it results as "Oh I THOUGHT it would go like this". (Valkama, 2023.)

Eronen (2023) Executive Director of the Turku Center association emphasized the significance of face-to-face meetings, saying that they improve collaboration. In addition, Turku City's Director of Major Events Kirkkola (2023) mentioned that

maintaining a positive and continuous dialogue is crucial for effective collaboration. One can conclude that knowledge is better than assumptions and therefore seeking good and informative communication is essential.

Collaborative planning and development of the partnership and the festival were mentioned by all interviewees. This was a bit surprising to me as I had not expected it to be relevant. Theatre Director Aaltonen (2023) from Åbo Svenska Teater articulated the importance of mutual development of practices over the years, which can be seen for example in improved festival scheduling and resource allocation. When expressed like this the importance of this factor makes perfect sense.

Both Eronen (2023) and Järvinen (2023) mentioned the relevance of creating diverse ideas together, as it supports the goal of creating an event that enlivens the city center. Eronen underlined that collaborative brainstorming not only provides valuable ideas but also contributes to the gradual building and deepening of the collaboration. This opened my eyes to understand that enthusiasm for developing something together is an asset that should not be forgotten when creating and sustaining a flourishing collaboration.

It is also essential to communicate one's goals so that collaborators can understand where your organization is headed. Valkama (2023) pointed out that understanding the festival's own goals helps discussions on how the theater can better assist and support the festival. Likewise, Kirkkola (2023) brought up the city's willingness, together with the festival and potential collaborating entities, to explore suitable forms of cooperation and reciprocity to find mutual benefits for all. In summary, the study revealed surprisingly that all interviewees shared a desire to actively engage in the development of the collaboration and the festival itself.

Flexibility and adaptation came up in many ways in the data. Järvinen (2023) from Hansakortteli emphasized mutual flexibility as a fundamental aspect of collaboration. Turku City Theater's Valkama (2023) saw flexibility in the festival's capacity to adapt to existing working models of the theatre. Both findings seem very natural and expected. Being flexible and willing to adapt to the challenges that a cooperation may pose contributes towards the success of the collaboration. This was particularly clear when looking at the collaboration of sharing a venue in the Turku Market Square with the Ice Hockey World Championship screening tent when the events partially overlapped.

The collaboration went well, considering the starting point. You wanted to approach it from one side, and our event was from a completely different side. Somehow, common ground was found, even though it was challenging sometimes. (Virta, 2023)

According to Virta (2023), the ice hockey event manager and co-owner of Restaurant Torio, flexibility manifested in the ability to coordinate schedules and use of technical equipment, and in an adaptation to the prevailing conditions, including those introduced by a third party. When seeking collaboration, I think it is vital to remember that there will be inevitable situations where these skills are needed for collaboration to work.

Trust and transparency were also mentioned in the research data. Sharing of information and transparent communication help in cultivating trust among partners, as Eronen (2023) emphasized. These elements are relevant for a successful collaboration, yet it is not always easy to know how much information to share. As a rule of thumb, one may say that for the sake of trust and transparency, it is better to share too much rather than too little information.

It has been nice collaborating with you because you operate transparently. I appreciate you sharing information and telling me where you are at. In that way, trust is created. (Eronen, 2023.)

People engaging in the process have a large role in the collaborations. Interviewees mentioned the importance of trusting the individuals responsible for organizing the festival. Kirkkola (2023) noted that a criterion set by the city of Turku for collaborations is to engage with events led by individuals possessing strong professional skills and knowledge on how to build an event. Finding the right people, from both collaborating entities, is essential for the partnerships to not only thrive but also evolve into something greater. Valkama (2023) and Aaltonen (2023) elaborated that collaboration involves selecting individuals who share a common language for example in areas such as technical issues. This seems obvious, but I feel safe to say that it is not necessarily easy to find the right people for a position.

Continuity of the collaboration was seen as a significant factor to enhance collaboration. This not only allows ongoing improvement but also, as habits and processes become familiar, avoids the need to start from scratch, resulting in better usage of time as Järvinen (2023) commented. Eronen (2023) expressed a similar opinion and continues that not everything needs to be accomplished in the first year.

Continuity also affects the outcomes of the collaboration, with Kirkkola (2023) saying that it generates increased validity, effectiveness, and overall quality. Continuity is also valuable for the arts festival organization itself because finding and developing new collaborations takes up time and resources. Therefore, nurturing the ongoing collaborations to make them continuous is favorable.

Accountability and goal alignment were additional factors influencing collaboration. These findings were expected and natural. Interviewees mentioned that being accountable and operating responsively also creates trust, which is at the core of all collaboration as was previously mentioned.

We talk about cross-disciplinary accountability. It's important to us. We consider those values when contemplating how and with what kinds of events we collaborate with. The principles governing event content and organization are ethically sustainable. For example, taking responsibility for obligations and debts, and similar matters – these are the values we respect. (Kirkkola, 2023)

Moreover, the alignment of goals was seen as an influential element in fostering effective collaboration. This could be seen as a natural factor, but again I have found that I have not paid enough attention to it.

When the goals of a partner and the event are not in conflict and are aligned in the same direction, that is when it [the collaboration] has the best chance to succeed. (Kirkkola, 2023.)

Of my two main research questions, one was to assess what types of value are created in the studied collaborations. To be able to answer this question I formulated three research questions to give relevant information on the collaborations. The first of these three questions set out to understand what factors facilitate the collaborations between a small arts festival and its business collaborators. The data identified seven different themes as the most critical ones: communication, collaborative planning and development, flexibility and adaptation, trust and transparency, people, continuity, accountability and goal alignment.

What stands out is the fact that strategy alignment was not mentioned as an important factor even though research emphasizes it as being essential for a successful collaboration (Soteriadis, 2016; Langeveld et al., 2014, Austin & Seitani, 2016,

Murphy et al., 2014). However, interviewees considered that the festival supporting their organizational strategy was a valuable benefit of the collaboration, so we can assume that it has been a contributing factor as well. On the other hand, goal alignment was seen important just as Soteriadis (2016) and Langeveld et al. (2014) have mentioned.

Unlike in the literature (Austin and Seitanidi, 2016; Murphy et al., 2014), interviewees did not highlight mission alignment as vital for a successful collaboration. This can be because even though most organizations have defined it, it is not consciously in active use in everyday operations. Likewise, value alignment was not mentioned. When asked about the organization's values most of the interviewees had trouble singling them out. Contrary to the research by Austin and Seitanidi (2016) that found value alignment important, this study supports the Murphy et al. (2014) research in which they found that value alignment was not necessary for a successful collaboration.

Many studies have indicated that top-level involvement (Austin, 2000), personal connections (Austin, 2000) and finding competent people (Backer, 2002) for collaborations are important. The found data supported these factors. Top-level involvement can be concluded because all interviewees were in top-level positions in their organizations and were in favor of the collaboration. Personal connections were seen as vital because collaborations are created and maintained by people. Also, finding competent people for the collaboration was seen as a necessary factor for it to succeed.

The most significant factor that the interviewees saw in collaboration was communication. Many previous studies support this finding (Austin, 2000; Backer, 2002; Daellenbach et al., 2006; Soteriadis, 2016). The other factor that all interviewees mentioned was the planning and development of the collaboration and festival. This factor was also found in many studies (Langeveld et al., 2014; Backer, 2002).

Flexibility and adaptation along with accountability are also found in alignment with studies such as Lewandowska (2015) and Austin and Seitanidi (2012 a, 2012b, 2016).

Trust and transparency were seen by the interviewees as a relevant factor in the success of a collaboration, just as Soteriadis (2016) and Langeveld et al. (2014) found.

Literature also mentions that understanding the culture and how the collaborator conducts business (Backer, 2002) is crucial for creating trust. Even though understanding of culture and how the festival conducts business was not specifically

mentioned in the data analyzed, the fact that the festival openly shares information was seen relevant.

To sum it up, all factors that the data revealed align with previous research. This indicates that no matter the size of an organization, collaborations seem to be enhanced by the same factors as found in this and previous studies. This could be explained by the fact that collaborations are created and nurtured by the people who engage in them, and interactions between people are essentially very similar, regardless of the size of the organizations they work in.

4.2 Benefits of collaboration

Given that the festival is reasonably new, I presume that not all benefits can be measured yet. Therefore, the findings gathered from the interviews are a combination of the expected and the perceived benefits of the collaboration. The interviewees also touched upon the reasons for wanting to engage in collaboration. Some of these reasons overlapped with seen benefits, in which case, I categorized the answers under benefits.

I believe having a mission and interesting concept for a festival are important. When establishing a collaboration, it is good to communicate them to the partners. This belief was proven correct by the interviewees who mentioned that they wanted to help and engage in the collaboration with the festival because they felt it was an interesting concept and had a credible vision for the future. Director of Major Events Kirkkola (2023) from Turku City put it in business terms by saying that he saw investing in an emerging festival is like acting as a business angel who invests in the potential of a business. In this way the city can help the festival fulfill its credible vision.

The interviewees said they believed in the collaboration and saw that if they joined, this example would encourage others to join in too. Valkama (2023), Eronen (2023) and Järvinen (2023) all noted that they felt it would be awkward if they did not participate in something that would seem to benefit the whole local community. This was something I had never thought would matter to a collaborator, but it made perfect sense. It can also be understood that the collaborators expect the festival to grow in the future into a relevant player in the event setting of the city.

The interviewees identified five substantial benefits arising from the cooperation. These benefits included the ability to get support for their strategy, gain higher visibility, add diverse content to their offerings and reach new customers, partake in the positive image

of the festival, and through cooperation, enliven their own activities and contribute to the overall vitality of people and the city.

Support of strategy was seen as a valuable benefit. The partner's organizational strategy may vary, but achieving the objectives set by the organization was identified as one of the main benefits of cooperation. Even though they have different strategies, all interviewed partners want to be identified as an organization that welcomes different kinds of individuals. The festival supports this goal by offering a diverse and inclusive program that attracts many kinds of audiences with a broad scope.

Understanding the collaborator's strategy is important when seeking a way to convince partners of the potential benefits of the collaboration. The primary objective of the Hansakortteli (2023) shopping mall strategy is to be a place for everyone. Due to its central location in the heart of the city, the mall actively contributes to the revitalization of the city center. They aim to nurture their social responsibility and build a sense of community by developing the shopping mall into an inclusive place for all inhabitants to enjoy, Järvinen (2023) explains and continues, that one must not forget that the shopping mall is a commercial operator, and its objective is to make customers stay longer on the premises and thereby consume the offered services. One way to achieve these objectives is to have a diverse offering of events, as Järvinen (2023) indicates. Consequently, their strategy includes the goal of hosting a specified number of events annually. To fulfill this aim, the mall engages in collaboration with various events, big and small, offering its premises and technical resources to them (Järvinen, 2023). By attracting people to the mall by offering various free programs the collaboration with the festival contributes to the fulfillment of the shopping mall strategy.

This benefit could be found in the data elsewhere as well. For example, Valkama (2023) illustrated that the organizational objective of the Turku City Theatre, as a public institution, is to be a theatre for everyone. Its guiding principle is to be a "house of happenings". The strategy involves optimizing the usage of their facilities by providing any empty space they may have, to diverse events and cultural happenings. The theatre has implemented a functional operational model, designed to adapt to different kinds of events, that serves the theatre as an easy and practical way to expand its offerings (Valkama, 2023).

I see that it's an opportunity to be part of something that we are not ourselves. We are a large cultural institution, and to be part of a small festival, that's something we cannot be on our own. (Valkama, 2023.)

The other theatre collaborating with the festival is Åbo Svenska Teater. According to Aaltonen (2023), the festival aligns seamlessly with the theater's vision. Like Turku City Theatre, Åbo Svenska Teater's strategy is centered on being an inclusive theatre that welcomes all individuals (Aaltonen, 2023).

Our approach involves keeping our doors open to everyone, we are not solely a stage for the Finnish-Swedish community. We are aligned with the current times and look forward to the future. We want to encourage spontaneity in the people coming to the theatre. (Aaltonen, 2023.)

Importantly both Aaltonen (2023) and Valkama (2023) recognize that their goals are further reinforced through their collaboration with the festival. The Turku Center association is on the same line as their strategy states that they want to cooperate with events that are in the city center area because enlivening the city is the fundamental purpose of the entire association (Eronen, 2023). Since the festival is in the center of the city, easily accessible and open to everyone, it suits well the realization of this strategy.

Emphasis on benefits for the support of strategy was found in all interviews. Turku City aims to engage in collaborations with events that align with its strategy, established objectives, and core values (Kirkkola, 2023). The strategic themes of the city are the well-being of city residents, enhancement of the city's competitiveness, promotion of tourism, promotion of an active cultural environment, and cultivation of an attractive city with international interest serve as guiding principles when determining the types of events the city wants to collaborate with. These themes arise from the seven Turku City Strategy goals: “Sustainable future, Smoothly running everyday life, Residents having a life of well-being, Dynamic and growing city, Turku a nature city, High-quality education, Active city of culture and International Turku” (Turku City, 2023). Finfringe fits well with these strategic goals Kirkkola (2023) clarifies. He continues that the benefits of the cooperation are seen in the success of the event, if the event succeeds, the city succeeds.

Higher visibility benefits the collaborators. Despite slight variations in emphasis among the partners, all but one interviewee mentioned higher visibility as a benefit stemming from the collaboration with the festival.

I presumed that visibility in general is an important benefit for collaborators, and therefore this answer did not come as a surprise. Although, as a manager of a small event, I did not think we had the means to cater to this expectation. The data has proved me wrong. Even a small visibility is considered good, for example, Eronen (2023) specifically pointed out that raising awareness of the Turku Center association is essential for them and that is why she welcomes any, even slight displays of their logo or mentions of the association. She clarifies that such visibility not only enhances recognition within the association's entrepreneurial community but also asserts the significance of the association in general. Moreover, she emphasized the importance of consumer visibility, particularly considering the recent launch of their new consumer webpage. The collaboration with the festival and the visibility it can offer aligns with amplifying the association's presence (Eronen, 2023).

Järvinen (2023) mentioned the general view, that any form of visibility is beneficial. Both Aaltonen (2023) and Valkama (2023) perceived the increased visibility as a valuable way of introducing the theatres they represent to a bigger audience, international artists, and visitors, as well as the local community. By offering a venue for the festival Aaltonen also saw the collaboration as a way of presenting new aspects of the theatre. Kirkkola (2023) saw the potential to enhance the visibility of Turku City through the international networks of the festival.

What fascinates me about it [Finfringe] is its internationality and the international network behind it, which has potential for international cooperation. ...its growth has potential for international growth. Also, since the product is known in other parts of the world, it can be easier to get people to come to Finland for a fringe [festival] compared to a purely local brand. (Kirkkola, 2023.)

Diverse content and new customers the festival could offer were considered relevant benefits by the interviewees. In this way, they could broaden their existing content offering and reach out to possible new customers. This point that surfaced was interesting since I had not thought of it beforehand.

Both Åbo Svenska Teater and Turku City Theatre welcomed the versatile content that the festival had to offer for broadening their repertoire program (Aaltonen, 2023; Valkama, 2023). The festival program was seen to expand their main program offering for existing customers as well as to new customers, who may not have found any interesting shows from the theatre's program, but instead, the festival program offers something they were looking for.

The festival brings diverse content with an element of surprise to it, since beforehand one can truly never know what the festival's programmed shows will be like. Aaltonen (2023) saw this as a good way to stir up new thoughts on how to consume theatre, as not everything needs to be known and carefully planned. This idea is something that should be cultivated more in the theatre world in general, he hopes.

It is a benefit, that someone who has never found anything in our program, might resonate with the festival's program. ..., and then we also get interesting content for our existing customers, ... it's an expansion of our service offering that we have this [festival program] as well. (Valkama, 2023.)

Åbo Svenska Teater has had a challenge in attracting new audiences, partially because people may have an unnecessary fear of having to use the Swedish language when visiting the theatre Aaltonen (2023) explained. The festival offers shows in many different languages or no language at all, so it offers a way to lower this barrier. Aaltonen continued that the multilingual aspect of the festival program could also attract residents of Turku with international backgrounds to visit the theatre.

The dream is to also attract people who are neither Finnish nor Swedish because there are more and more people walking the streets of Turku whose mother tongue is Arabic or Russian or whatever. If we can get those people plus, we can get young people plus we can get people who don't go to traditional theater performances...then this is a great thing. (Aaltonen, 2023.)

Likewise, Järvinen (2023) from Hansakortteli welcomes the diverse content the festival offers, as it sends their customers a message that there is always something interesting happening at the mall, and therefore, it is worth spending time there. Hansakortteli also hopes they will get new customers and in that way increase sales. In the future Järvinen (2023) would like to see deeper cooperation, in which both parties could benefit even more; the festival would get visibility and the mall interesting content.

Turku City on the other hand is keen on attracting visitors, both from various regions within Finland, but especially international visitors (Kirkkola, 2023). This contributes to economic growth and generates increased demand for services thereby creating, for example, more work, Kirkkola clarifies and continues that the benefit of the collaboration is also in the activation of Turku residents and in that it has the potential to generate more tourism.

Every time a tourist comes to our city, he stays here and eats here. A domestic tourist is good, and if there is an international guest who comes from outside the borders, then that is export income for Finland. It is also important for the national economy. (Kirkkola, 2023.)

The positive image provided by the festival was seen as a benefit that caters to an organizational level as well as to a vast city level. Eronen (2023) found it is good for the Turku Center association to get its share of the festival's positive image. Likewise, Valkama (2023) saw it strengthening the image of Turku City Theatre as being a familiar and safe place to visit and Aaltonen (2023) hoped that the positive atmosphere would encourage customers to see shows without preconceptions.

Creating a good atmosphere for the festival, where people dare to go see anything, without any preconceptions, will benefit not only the theater world but the whole art world. (Aaltonen, 2023.)

Enlivening and enhancing vitality were expected and perceived benefits of collaborating with the Finfringe Festival. The festival was seen as a means of enlivening and enhancing the vitality of the people, organizations, and, on a societal level, the City of Turku.

The festival aims to bring performing art closer to the average citizen. This is done by ensuring that ticket prices are affordable, the program offering is wide and there is a free street program. Especially the street program caters to the enlivening of the city. Three interviewees mentioned that a valuable benefit arising from the collaboration is a vivid cultural environment that improves the overall image of the city. Interestingly Eronen (2023), Kirkkola (2023) and Valkama (2023) all voiced that building the festival together contributes to the image creation of a lively and positive city that benefits everyone, therefore, they wanted to engage in the collaboration with the festival.

Our benefit is not a priority, we are now building something that affects the whole image of this city. (Valkama, 2023.)

The two major strategic goals for the City of Turku are promoting the well-being of city residents and increasing the competitiveness of the city against other regions Kirkkola (2023) explains. Events are one way in which Turku can achieve these goals. He continued that he believes that enlivening the city with events promotes the vitality of its citizens.

We have two goals in the city: one is to promote the well-being of the citizens and the other is to promote competitiveness. When we talk about well-being, it means that we create experiences, contents and services that generate activities that increase the activity of the citizens and the perceived physical and mental well-being. (Kirkkola, 2023.)

Furthermore, in addition to increasing citizens' well-being, vitalizing the city, by promoting collaboration with different kinds of events, such as the Finfringe Festival, increases purchases, and demand for services, creates jobs, and generates tax revenues within the city, Kirkkola (2023) said. This further promotes the vitality of the city and the well-being of its inhabitants. He also saw the benefits of the festival in that it promotes urban culture, making the city more attractive. People want more events in the city center to make it feel vibrant Eronen (2023) points out and continues that the retail sector and specialty stores are going through a transition, and momentarily the retail sector is declining. Therefore, the more time people spend in the city center, the more income it brings to entrepreneurs, which further contributes to maintaining the city center's vitality.

Aaltonen (2023) and Valkama (2023) both affirmed the benefits and stated that the festival enlivened their theaters when normal repertoire performances were already closing for summer and in that way made maximum use of the premises. From Hansakortteli's point of view, Järvinen (2023) saw the benefits in enlivening vacant spaces, as the festival Artist Hub was in the shopping mall and different performances were in empty shop spaces.

It's nice that things are happening, versus being empty [space], ..., it's better to enliven [spaces] than have them empty. ... We always have empty spaces somewhere; the cycle

is that tenants come and go. We use certain spaces that are empty for longer periods for exhibitions and things like that. (Järvinen, 2023.)

This thesis sets out to explore what benefits business collaborators perceive in collaboration with a small arts festival now and in the future. It is an important question because previous research is mostly on bigger arts organizations and often managers of smaller arts organizations feel they do not have enough to offer their collaborators and are reluctant to seek collaborations (Oesch, 2002). The data found has a direct impact on the value analysis of the collaborations, which I will return to later in this chapter.

The interviewees pointed out that they did not expect a financial benefit, which is aligned with previous research that found that businesses see collaborations with an arts organization more as philanthropic with intangible benefits (Smith et al., 2016). It is worth noting that even though many collaborators saw the benefits to be greater in the future, they wanted to collaborate with the festival from the beginning to show that they believed in it. Interestingly Aaltonen (2023) pointed out that small cultural operators can offer audiences new ways of consuming art and in that way change the whole art field in a way that prestigious institutions may have trouble doing. As Valkama (2023) reminded, collaboration enables a big institute to be part of something it cannot be: a small cultural actor.

The data indicates that collaborators see benefits also in collaborations with a small arts festival. Even though the Finfringe Festival is reasonably new and cannot offer a large audience base, huge visibility or take part in big collaborative projects, many benefits were identified: support of strategy, higher visibility, diverse content and new customers, positive image and enlivening and enhancing vitality. Findings are in line with previous studies on the benefits collaborators see in cooperation. It was notable that benefits did not vary very much from one collaborator to the other. This can be because the festival is small and at this point does not have the resources to engage in large collaborative projects.

What I thought was particularly striking was that partners felt that the most vital benefit was the support of their strategy. In literature, this is often identified as one of the factors in embarking into collaboration (Murphy et al., 2014; Austin & Seitanidi, 2016; Soteriadis, 2026). Yet this I did not expect to find. The finding indicates that knowing the strategy of potential collaborators is very important when seeking collaborations.

Knowing your organization's target audience also helps in convincing collaborators if they have an interest in reaching a similar audience.

Higher visibility and a positive image are very generic benefits that one would assume to find in all collaborations. These are the main benefits of collaborations of a philanthropic nature (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). Even though I knew that visibility is a generally expected benefit in collaborations (e.g. Parkinson et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2014; Langeveld et al., 2014; Oesch, 2008; Backer, 2002; Cornwell & Maighan, 1998), I still did not expect it to be significant to the collaborators because the festival is still small and cannot offer vast visibility. The Finfringe Festival has not deliberately thought about building a positive image so therefore this finding was also a surprise. Being conscious of what kind of image you are building is something worthwhile taking into consideration in the future as it is a meaningful aspect of collaborations.

The festival offering diverse content and attracting new customers were results for which no direct support could be found in the literature. This can be because the findings were quite specific. Nevertheless, the findings are in line with literature that describes festivals as places where special experiences are created and shared (Quinn, 2005; Morgan, 2008) and that a festival is always changing (Getz, 2007), and in that way, the diverse content and attracting new customers could be expected benefits.

Making a profit from the collaboration was not mentioned as a benefit. On the contrary, the collaborators mentioned that they did not expect to make profits directly, at least right away. Yet, the data did reveal that there were indications of hopes for indirect profits for example by customers staying longer at the premises (Eronen, 2023; Järvinen, 2023) or by opening the facilities to the festival would entice new customers to the collaborator's basic operations as well (Aaltonen, 2023; Valkama, 2023).

In contrast to the literature (Parkinson et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2014; Langeveld et al., 2014), the data did not find improved b-to-b relations, networking opportunities, gaining new knowledge, increasing creativity, enhancing employee development and engagement as perceived or expected benefits. This can be because the festival is still small and does not have a significant network of partners or, for example, a position as an event to bring b-to-b customers to. These benefits mentioned in literature can be probably found in the future if the festival grows and becomes a major event in the city.

In 2005 Quinn expressed the concern of cities undermining the social value of a festival. The interview with the Turku city representative Kirkkola (2023) disproved this and indicated that the city sees value in festivals and considers the social aspect they create, just as Forsblom (2017) concluded in his study. The research data also aligned with the findings that events are expected to enliven city centers (Tarjanne, 2020). This could be seen in the findings since enlivening the city and enhancing vitality were some of the benefits mentioned according to the data analyzed. Many interviewees mentioned that they saw the festival does good for the city of Turku, and this is in line with previous studies that suggest that wanting good for the community is one reason for engaging in collaborations with the art sector (Smith et al., 2016; Daellenbach, 2012, Parkinson et al., 2018).

The data answers sufficiently the research question of what kind of benefits collaborators see. The research data indicates that small arts organizations can also provide significant benefits to their collaborators. It seems like the problem is more in the cultural organizations themselves understanding the benefits and knowing how to present them to potential collaborators. Oesch (2002) highlighted that companies don't often get enough information on what the arts organization could offer in the collaboration. These findings suggest that benefits can be found in all sizes of collaborations no matter what the size of the organizations. Therefore, arts managers should aim to find greatness in their organization and seek collaboration without hesitation.

4.3 Forms of collaboration

The fifth research question sets out to identify the different forms of collaboration that exist between the festival and its collaborators. The answer to this question comes from my first-hand knowledge, as an executive director, of the different forms of collaborations.

Different forms of collaboration (TABLE 1) were identified in the study. Parkinson et al. (2018), found that 75% of the support given to the arts organizations was financial support. Contrary to previous studies (e.g. Šain et al., 2019; Parkinson et al., 2018; Suomen Kulttuurirahasto, 2015; Kirchberg, 2003), this study indicates that in-kind support is more popular than pure financial support in collaborations. Only one collaborator funded the festival with money as well as other support. Instead of money, the festival mostly received very valuable in-kind support.

The in-kind support for the festival consisted of staff time, the usage of spaces and free media with access to the collaborator's networks. These are aligned with previous research (Parkinson et al., 2018, Kirchberg, 2003). In contrast to previous years, products were not included in the collaborations in 2023.

TABLE 1. Different forms of Collaborations

Forms of Collaboration	Theatre 1	Theatre 2	Shopping mall	Association	Restaurant	City
Spaces	x	x	x	o	x	x
Staff	x	x	x	x	x	x
Access to networks via external and internal communication (Printed brochure, electronical newsletter, internal communication)	x	x	x	x	o	x
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)	x	x	x	x	o	x
Webpages	x	x	o	x	o	x
Digital and poster boards (Digital and poster boards, banner spaces, flagpoles)	x	x	x	o	o	x
Financial support	o	o	o	o	o	x

The biggest support the festival received from all the partners was staff time. The staff devoted time to marketing the festival, doing concrete working hours at the festival venues or providing other services. Allowing the festival to use spaces free of cost was

of huge monetary value to the festival. Another big form of collaboration was free media and access to the collaborator's networks. This included the external and internal communications of the collaborator organizations, social media exposure, webpage mentions and the use of digital or printed poster boards. The monetary value of this support is very substantial, as it enabled the festival to reach a larger audience.

Access to networks through external and internal communications was in the form of printed or electronic seasonal brochures, newsletters to the customer base of the partners, and internal communication within the participating organizations. Social media exposure included re-sharing and creating posts of the event and performances on the partner's Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok accounts. Also, some collaborators dedicated space for information about the festival on their web pages. Digital and poster board spaces included spaces next to the venues but also in other locations around the city. This provided valuable visibility for the festival in reaching a larger audience that would not have otherwise known about the festival but was now exposed to marketing.

4.4 Created value

Collaboration creates value by nature. To understand better what kind of value is created it is good to break down the different elements of a collaboration and define the actual value created. This understanding will help in developing and establishing new collaborations. For this, I have chosen to use the Collaborative Value Creation (CVC) framework (Austin, 2000, Austin & Seitanidi 2012 a, 2012b, 2016). Even though it was developed for non-profit and business collaborations with a societal focus, I decided to use it to analyze my research material and assess the value created between the Finfringe Festival and six of its collaborators. Previous research has also proven this theoretical framework suitable for an arts festival and business collaboration (Knight, 2015).

The value creation was assessed by looking at what stage the collaboration is at, and the types of value that could be found for those affected on an organizational level. To determine what stages the collaborations are at I have used the collaboration continuum theory (Austin, 2000). The theory consists of the philanthropic, transactional, integrative (Austin, 2000) and the transformational stages, in which the last stage was added later (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b).

All studied collaborations had mostly evidence of the transactional stage. This can be determined by the transferred assets and benefits gained, as the transactional stage serves mutually both parties as resources and activities are exchanged. According to Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b, 2016) this exchange uses the capabilities of each organization to enhance the collaboration, resulting in greater potential for value creation. This kind of exchange can be seen, for example in how Turku City Theatre and Åbo Svenska Theater make their facilities and expertise available to the festival.

When analyzing the data it is critical to remember that these stages are rarely pure but are more so blended into each other (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). The blending of different stages can be seen in that the collaborations also created generic value such as visibility, credibility, and positive image, typical to the philanthropic stage where the expectations and investments are relatively low (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016).

In the integrative stage the combined benefits would not exist without the collaboration, as the mission, people and efforts start to blend into mutual actions and organizational integration (Austin, 2000). In the fourth, transformative stage the focus of the collaboration moves towards a bigger societal problem that the collaborators work on together (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). Neither of these two stages was detected in the data.

According to the CVC framework (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016), value can be created simultaneously internally and externally on three levels: micro, meso and macro. On the micro level value is created for individuals, on the meso level for organizations and the macro level for the surrounding society. Furthermore, value can be categorized as associational, transferred, interaction and synergistic value.

As the external value and the micro and macro levels were not researched due to the scope of the study, I will present my analysis of value creation in the collaborations from the internal organizational level (TABLE 2). The value created on this level will be categorized by associational, transferred, interaction and synergistic value. Austin and Seitanidi (2012) defined that value created internally on the meso level is for the participating organizations. In this study, the created value is analyzed from both the festival and the business collaborators' point of view.

On the organizational level, the internally created value for the festival consisted of associational, transferred and interaction value. Associational value was created by gaining higher visibility through marketing aid from the collaborators. The main value was created by transferred assets such as financial support, provided venue spaces, allocated staff time and free media which consisted of social media and webpage exposure, and visibility on digital and poster boards. Interactional value was gained by having access to the collaborators' networks through internal and external communication.

In contrast to the festival, the value internally for the collaborators was mainly interactional with some associational value, but not transferred value. The collaboration's interactional value is determined by the provided support of organizational goals, exposure to diverse content and new customers as well as enlivening the premises. All collaborators also mentioned the importance of communication, which contributes to interactional value. Associational value can be seen created in higher visibility and the shared positive image. Innovation and combined resources are key factors in synergic value. This value was not found in any of the collaborations for the business collaborators or the festival.

TABLE 2. Value creation internally on the meso level

Type of value	Festival	Collaborators
Associational	- higher visibility	- higher visibility - positive image
Transferred	- free media - venue space - staff time - financial support	
Interactional	- access to networks	- support of organizational goals - reaching new customers - added new content - enhanced enlivening and vitality
Synergistic	not found	not found

External value on the meso level is created for organizations outside the collaboration (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). The external benefits of the collaborations

were not researched in this study, but it could be safe to say that when the festival thrives with the support of its collaborators it generates value on the meso level for the surrounding businesses, for example through increased sales and demand for food and accommodation services.

Even though the micro-level benefits were not researched, the data indicates the kind of value that could be created for individuals affected by the collaboration. On the internal level within the organizations, the possible value created can be seen by examining the factors that enhance collaborations. It can be said that value is created for individuals when good communication and interactional skills develop through collaboration. Also meeting new people and taking responsibility for the collaboration creates value for the individuals within the collaborative organizations.

External value creation is more difficult to verify, however, the research does allow us to make assumptions about the kind of value the cooperation could create for individuals outside the collaboration. One of the assumptions is that bringing new content to the collaborator's offering serves established customers as well as new customers and, in this way, creates external value on the micro level for individuals.

Macro-level value creation is external to society in general (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). Again, as this level was not researched, we can only make assumptions on the value creation. The data suggests that the city perceives to benefit from the collaboration with the festival through the increase of well-being in its residents and, on the other hand, by the strengthening of the city's image, which contributes to the city's competitiveness and attractiveness. Also, a thriving event contributes to the city's vitality and generates income in the community and therefore through taxes to the city itself. These are values that the researched collaborations could potentially create externally at the macro level.

I find it safe to say that inherently every collaboration creates value, but it is necessary to break it down to understand the actual value created. By recognizing the created value collaborations can thrive and succeed better (Austin & Seitanidi, 2016; Backer, 2002). These findings answer the research question as to what type of value is created in the researched collaborations. As the data was analyzed, it highlighted that value can be found in collaboration, even with a small organization. The findings also confirm that

the stages of the collaboration can blend into each other as research has found (Austin, 2000).

Realizing what kind of value can be created in collaboration helps arts organizations understand what they can bring to the table. This analysis of value creation at a very concrete level offers grassroots-level insight into the collaborations. Even though this study consisted of only one case, it offers valuable information. It depicts what a collaboration can look like and gives concrete information on what type of value a small arts festival can create for its collaborators.

4.5 Sense of community

The main research question was to study how collaborative value creation can build a sense of community. This was researched by asking interviewees for their definition of it and the data was analyzed for the use of a sense of community within the interview. I also analyzed the overall data from the sense of community point of view using the definition of the sense of community introduced by McMillan and Chavis (1986) and other research material as my framework.

Building a sense of community was seen as important in a collaboration. Directly from the data emerged two different contexts in which the interviewees used the term. The collaborators mentioned that working together towards the same goal (Aaltonen, 2023; Järvinen, 2023; Valkama, 2023) and the feeling of belonging to a group (Eronen, 2023; Järvinen 2023; Virta, 2023) enhance the sense of community.

Sense of community is one of Hansakortteli's aspects of company policies (Hansakortteli, 2023) and Järvinen (2023) clarifies that this justifies their readiness to support and work together with organizers planning events on their premises, even though it may not generate any income for them. She continues that they believe this will benefit the greater good and enhance a sense of community. Valkama (2023) had the same line of thought, he explained that even if the Turku City theatre did not benefit monetarily from the collaboration with the festival, they would want to continue it because he believed the festival creates a sense of community within all operators and benefits a greater cause of enlivening the city. He clarified a sense of community as seeing the common good above your direct interest and being part of something greater than oneself. Further, Kirkkola (2023) expressed that a sense of community could be created between the event organizer and its audience, amongst the audiences, and

between partners, the event can also contribute to a sense of community within the surrounding environment.

As a genuine cultural city, I think that this [festival] is something that must be made to succeed and these people want to do it, so how can we help? Helping is a part of the sense of community. (Valkama, 2023.)

The interviewees perceived, that working towards the same goal, helping the festival succeed and the feeling of belonging enhances a sense of community. These findings are in line with the definition that a sense of community is built on four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and a shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) and previous research that suggested that festivals can build a sense of community by fostering a sense of belonging, offering support and encouraging participation (Derrett, 2003).

The feeling of belonging to a group through personal investment creates membership (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). All collaborators helped the festival in many ways, for example by investing their organization's resources to help the festival flourish. The staff invested their time, and collaborators gave vacant spaces for the festival to use. These can be interpreted as an investment that enhances the feeling of membership.

The second element consists of how the member can influence, as in for example this case, the collaboration and how the collaboration influences its members. The interviewees expressed their willingness to participate in the development of the collaboration and the planning of the festival also they expressed a hope for deeper co-operation. This kind of involvement creates a feeling of influencing the collaboration. The data also showed that the interviewees felt that if they would partake in the collaboration this would influence others to join in too. Both aspects feed into the definition of the sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Derrett, 2003).

The interviewees expressed how the collaboration supported their strategy and organizational goals and as the festival offers diverse content and new customers to the collaborators, this can be seen as fulfilling their needs which is the third element of the definition alongside integration (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Van Winkle & Woosnam, 2013). Research found that uniting people and encouraging participation (Derrett, 2003) cater to the sense of community. The interviewees felt that being part of a group was rewarding, and even compulsory as Valkama (2023) mentioned, since they felt that they

were part of something that would generate towards the greater good for the city. This too can be seen as an element that enhances the sense of community.

Lastly, the final element of the definition of a sense of community is about shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Emotional connection can grow as there is a more shared history. One could also argue that accountability, trust and transparency in the collaboration can also generate an emotional connection and therefore, a sense of community. Although according to Van Winkle and Woosnam (2013), emotional connection is not necessarily needed to create a sense of community.

In reflection on the research question as to how value creation in collaboration can build a sense of community, one can identify that working together towards the same goal and fostering a sense of belonging strengthens it. Furthermore, the analysis of different stages and types of value created in the collaborations suggests that collaborations in a transactional stage have elements that fit in with the definition of a sense of community. Also, the transferred and interaction values consist of elements that fit in the definition as well.

The study revealed that collaborators articulated building a sense of community within the city as important. As this research did not cover how the collaborations affect the surrounding community, it cannot confirm that the festival collaborations build a sense of community within the area (Zhao & Wise, 2019). Yet, reflecting on previous studies it is safe to say that a sense of community could be enhanced by collaborations of the Finfringe Festival. If creating a stronger sense of community is considered when developing the festival further, we can most certainly see in the future the impact on visitors and collaborators as well as other stakeholders and the surrounding society.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, the analysis and discussion of the findings from the collaborations between a small-scale festival and six of its collaborators were introduced in three different categories. These categories were factors, benefits, and different forms of collaboration. I then analyzed the findings for the internal value the collaborations created on an organizational level. The sense of community was then researched by analyzing the data from the sense of community point of view.

All interviewees believed in the power of collaboration even if it was only born out of necessity. Collaboration is not always easy, but worth it. The study showed that the

reasons for wanting to participate in a collaboration with the Finfringe Festival were the interesting concept and credible vision, a desire to help, and a belief in working together.

The main findings of the factors enhancing the collaborations were communication, collaborative planning and development, flexibility and adaptation, trust and transparency, people, continuity, responsibility and goal alignment. Benefits for the collaborators were support for their organizational goals, gaining higher visibility, adding diverse content to their offerings and reaching new customers, partaking in a positive image, and through cooperation, enlivening their activities and contributing to the overall vitality of the city. The study found that the main forms of collaboration, instead of money, were the very valuable in-kind support granted: Staff time, free media, access to networks, social media and webpage exposure, and banner space. The findings answered the set research questions sufficiently. The findings also aligned with previous studies.

One of the main research questions sets out to understand the types of value created in the collaborations. The internal value created was only analyzed on the organizational level because the research data did not cover the micro or macro level. For the festival, the collaboration created associational, transferred and interaction value, and for its partners, it created associational and interactional values. Synergistic value was not found in this research. The external value on the organizational level was also not analyzed because the data did not cover that aspect. The research was able to answer the set research question adequately.

The main research question was to find out how collaborations can build a sense of community. The findings highlighted the importance of a sense of community. The interviewees saw the sense of community as an important part of collaborations which is enhanced by working together towards the same goals and feeling a sense of belonging.

The analysis answers the research question by finding features that support the definition of a sense of community and therefore can be seen as elements that build a sense of community internally within the collaborations. These features were helping, developing and planning together, investing time and resources in the festival, getting support for strategy and goals, and actions of accountability, trust, and transparency.

Furthermore, the analysis of the created value in the collaborations showed that the transactional stage and the transferred as well as interaction values strengthen a sense of community.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I will provide a summary of the findings, the theoretical contribution, managerial implications, suggestions for further research and limitations of the study.

A sense of community can enhance tolerance and unite people (Derrett, 2003; Hassanli et al., 2020). With all the uncertainty in the world, these should be fostered. Therefore, I believe all people should strive to enhance a sense of community. Collaborations between arts organizations and businesses can promote it as well. Overall, building a sense of community deepens collaborations and can benefit the surrounding society.

Research has found that often small arts organizations, such as small arts festivals, may not form collaborations with the business sector because they lack resources, or because they are small-scale or new and feel that they do not have anything to offer potential collaborators (Oesch, 2002). Therefore, it is important for those working in small arts festivals or other cultural organizations to understand their organization's assets and recognize the value it can provide in cross-sector collaboration. Furthermore, engaging in collaborations is important as it may help with problems that the declining fundings create, and it also responds to the funders' desires for more cooperation in the cultural field.

Many studies have been conducted on the collaborations between arts organizations and businesses, yet much of the research is on large and mid-sized cultural organizations. Even though there are many small arts organizations, they are underrepresented in literature. The same can be said for arts festivals. The body of research lacks information on small arts festival collaborations, value creation and building of a sense of community, yet the small outnumber the large. Thus, I chose to contribute to the existing research gap by studying a small arts festival and its collaborations.

I set out to answer five research questions. Most importantly I wanted to find out how collaborations can build a sense of community and what types of value are created in

collaborations on an organizational level. To answer these questions three specific questions were formed of factors that strengthen collaboration, expected benefits now and in the future, and the different forms of collaboration from the business collaborators' perspective.

To explore a real-life phenomenon in detail and gain a deep understanding, a qualitative single-case study on a grassroots level was conducted. Even though the chosen methodology of a single case study does not often allow generalizations of the results, the approach gives a detailed insight into the collaborations that were sought after. The methodology proved to serve well the research questions, as it allowed the interviewees to bring up subjects that they thought important and, in that way, give information that I would not have known to ask.

5.1 Main findings and theoretical contributions

A sense of community is a result of members feeling a sense of belonging and importance, while their needs are met (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In a collaboration, this can be fostered by value creation. The value created is determined by the different forms of collaboration and the benefits it brings to the participants. The desired outcome of the collaboration is supported by the factors that contribute to a flourishing collaboration.

This research identified seven different factors that enhance collaborations. They were communication, collaborative planning and development, flexibility and adaptation, trust and transparency, people, continuity, accountability and goal alignment. As these findings align with previous studies, it can be concluded that whatever the size of the organizations involved, similar factors influence the success of a collaboration. This may be because in the end, collaborations are built between people, and the same laws apply to human relations regardless of the size of the collaborating organization.

The five benefits that were acknowledged aligned with previous studies. The found benefits were the ability to get support for strategy, gain higher visibility, add diverse content to offerings and reach new customers, partake in the positive image of the festival, and through cooperation, enliven activities and contribute to the overall vitality of people and the city. The research proved that collaborators found it beneficial to collaborate with a small arts festival. The findings did not differ from the benefits found in cross-sector collaborations between bigger cultural organizations.

Contrary to previous studies, the forms of collaboration were mostly in-kind support, instead of financial. Only one collaborator provided also financial assistance. The found forms of collaboration were allocated staff time, free media, network access and marketing contributions.

The value creation was analyzed from the organizational level. Of four different types of value, associational, transferred and interactional value were found in the collaborations, only synergistic value was not identified. The collaborations were found to be mostly in the transactional stage. The chosen CVC framework proved to serve in analyzing and categorizing the data adequately, as it is a very concrete framework. The findings suggest that all collaborations create value for collaborators, even small festivals.

The results indicated that a sense of community is a relevant part of collaborations. Working towards the same goal and the feeling of belonging were themes that emerged from the data. Findings that build a sense of community within the collaborations were identified in four categories: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection. The sense of community was seen as important, and it can be built in small collaborations as well.

I believe I have succeeded in answering the research questions sufficiently. I have provided insight into the collaborations of a small arts festival and have been able to produce tangible knowledge to implement in collaborations. Even though I presumed that small arts festivals are valuable for their collaborators, I could not have imagined the many benefits the interviewees saw in the collaboration. I had presumed that they were not expecting to gain anything from the collaborations and that the collaboration was more of a philanthropic nature to them. Another interesting observation was that the findings did not differ much from the findings of previous studies on bigger organizations.

The interviewees mentioned many important reasons to collaborate. Of the factors that foster collaboration, the biggest surprise for me was the importance of collaborative planning and development of the festival and collaboration together. One of the fascinating findings of benefits was how the collaborators saw that even a small arts festival was able to support their strategy. I would not have expected this. Another interesting fact was that even though the interviewees did not expect financial gain, and

some expectations of benefits were for the future, they still wanted to participate in the collaboration from the beginning. They felt it was important to join in something that has the potential to help enliven the city and contribute towards enhancing a sense of community in society.

I am generally satisfied with the research, however, if I were to redesign the study, I would revise it partially. I acknowledge that I made beginner's mistakes, especially in the formulation of the interview questions. Several of the questions were irrelevant to this study. Additionally, the management of the interview process could have been better because sometimes the interviewees strayed too far off-topic.

During this research, the topic of building a sense of community in collaboration proved most interesting. Looking back on the research I wish had focused on this topic more. I could have had more precise questions, for example, how the interviewees think a sense of community could be built so that it would benefit both the collaborations and the surrounding society.

The cultural field needs cross-sector collaborations and to flourish the collaborations should focus on how the sense of community can be built stronger. Even though many of the cultural operators are small there is not enough research on them. Lack of research can be said also about small arts festivals. To answer the research gap, this study has provided insight into a small arts festival's collaborations, the types of value created and the building of a sense of community within these collaborations. In this way, the thesis has contributed to the body of knowledge in the field of arts management.

5.2 Managerial implications

The thesis set out to understand and produce tangible information on the collaborations of a small arts festival. The aim was to obtain information for art managers to utilize when establishing and conducting collaborations. Even though the research was on a small arts festival, the findings may also apply to other cultural organizations no matter the size. The results of this study offer concrete information to contemplate.

Business collaborators have indicated that the reason why they find it hard to form collaborations with the arts sector is that they do not understand what the cultural operators can offer. Before contacting a possible collaborator, arts managers are encouraged to explore all possible assets their organization may have to offer. The

research indicates that the offering does not have to be financial gain but can have intangible benefits as well. Therefore, it is good to think of all the benefits and value an arts organization could provide now as well as in the future.

Additionally, the research data suggests that small arts organizations should have a strong vision and mission for the future that they can communicate vividly to possible collaborators. This may contribute towards establishing a collaboration as well as the current collaborator's commitment to the cause. The evidence also suggests this may promote a sense of community.

In collaborations, it is good to think about how the arts organization can help the collaborating organization. Considering this research, firstly knowing the business collaborator's strategy and goals is essential since support of these was seen as an important benefit in a collaboration. Secondly, managers are encouraged to think not just about how to differentiate the organization from competitors, but also from possible collaborators. In this way, they may be able to offer something that collaborators cannot achieve by themselves. Thirdly, it is good to know the target audience of the organization, because it could be the audience base that the collaborator wants to seek.

Even though the arts festival was small this study showed that collaborators appreciate even slight visibility. Therefore, it is recommended to think about how visibility could be offered as well. When engaging in collaboration, arts organizations should try to get top-level involvement and find the right people to work in the collaboration, since the study shows that this is crucial, for the collaboration to succeed.

Collaborators are moving more and more towards working together on joint projects. The problem is that small arts organizations do not necessarily have the resources to participate in a collaborative project, but rather need financial aid to be able to run their basic operations. On the other hand, when money is not the form of support, there may be a lower threshold for the business collaborators to join the collaboration. The study indicated that in-kind support was the common way of supporting a small arts festival. Although this research was based only on one case and does not reflect collaborations of the whole cultural field, it does suggest that for a small arts organization, seeking in-kind collaboration may be the right way to approach potential partners. In-kind support is very valuable even though it does not fully resolve the problem that arts organizations may have in financing their basic operations.

The research shows that even a small arts festival can create value for its collaborators. Understanding and knowing how to present the value an arts organization can offer, may improve the chances of obtaining a collaboration. When it is established, it is recommended to continue to think about value creation as recognizing the created value contributes to a prosperous collaboration. Also, it can help determine if the collaboration is deteriorating, in which case necessary measures can be taken.

Based on the findings I would recommend arts managers study the collaborations the organization has or has had, from the value creation point of view. When thinking of how value creation can build a sense of community it is good to strive for the collaboration to evolve past the philanthropic stage to the transactional stage or further. Likewise, transferred assets and interactional value cater to the building of a sense of community, therefore these should be strived for in collaboration.

Considering the data, it is suggested that managers together with their collaborators think about what actions may enhance a sense of community both internally and externally. Practical examples of how it may be built internally within a collaboration include asking the collaborators for advice and receiving their help, planning and developing the collaboration together and finding ways to support the strategy and goals of the collaborator.

Communication was found essential throughout the collaboration. A continuous, open and transparent sharing of information as well as being accountable, creates trust which caters to the strengthening of a sense of community. This is important knowledge because I believe that the first step is to enhance a sense of community within the collaboration, then find ways to engage other stakeholders and finally the surrounding society. I hope these findings will help arts managers in taking the first step.

Most of all it is essential to remember that when building a collaboration, one is dealing with people, not an organization, and all the qualities required to foster good human relations also apply to establishing and maintaining a prosperous and continuous collaboration.

5.3 Future suggestions and limitations

This research was conducted from the festival's collaborators' point of view and the findings were on an organizational level, which limited the analysis of value creation to the internal, meso level. For a better understanding of value creation in a cross-sector

arts collaboration, future research could address what kind of value the collaborations create internally on the micro level for individuals. This would consist of interviewing the personnel of the participating organization. Likewise, a suggested proposal for future research is to study the value creation for individuals, organizations and society, that are externally affected by the collaborations. This could include, for example, researching customers, the surrounding organizations or residents of the community for the value created or expected value.

To overcome the limitations of a single case study, future research could consist of a larger sample of festivals and include other small cultural organizations in the study as well. This would give a broader understanding and provide more generalizable information on collaborations. Also, a quantitative study could be conducted to gain broader information on the factors and benefits of collaborations. Furthermore, the business's reasons for engaging and especially for not engaging in collaborations would be interesting to explore and beneficial information for the whole cultural sector.

The main finding of this thesis was that a sense of community is seen as an important part of collaborations. The study found tangible examples of how a sense of community can be built within a collaboration, but examples of how it could be fostered in a collaboration to strengthen the surrounding society were not addressed. This could be something that future research could focus on. It would also be interesting to know how collaborating parties could benefit from a stronger sense of community and how it can be seen in the collaborations.

I believe everyone in the cultural field wants deeper collaborations, but often the means and tools are missing. Too often collaborations follow traditional tracks. Even though the information gained in this research was valuable, I cannot deny that the findings were reasonably traditional. What could be new and innovative ways to conduct collaborations? How could the collaborations be developed in a way that would benefit both collaborators in the long term? These are interesting questions that should be researched in the future.

This research has potential limitations. Firstly, this study was a single case study and therefore, it is not possible to draw broad generalizations of the findings. Secondly, the lack of previous research limited the reflection and discussion of the findings. Even though value creation is largely discussed and a relevant topic, research material in the

arts festival setting was limited. Contributing to this could have been that access to the material was restricted and I was unable to locate them or that there has not been much research on the topic, in which case the novelty of this study would be emphasized.

5.4 Summary

Collaboration with businesses is something worth striving for. The collaborations would help cultural organizations tackle financial issues and raise the appreciation of arts to its rightful level in society. Thinking about collaborations from the value creation and sense of community points of view gives more depth to collaborations. This thesis aimed to understand how value creation in collaborations can build a sense of community. The research was on the collaborations of a small arts festival. To better understand the partner's point of view, business collaborators were interviewed. The single case study was chosen to get tangible results on a grassroots level.

This chapter concluded the study by summarizing the key findings relating to the research aim and questions. Seven factors that contribute towards a good collaboration were identified, five benefits the business collaborators perceived to gain now or in the future and different forms of in-kind collaboration were detected. The findings were analyzed according to the CVC framework, and the types of value created on an organizational level were determined. The sense of community was explored in comparison to the definition established in previous research and factors that build a sense of community in a collaboration were found. Based on the findings, suggestions for managerial implications were made. Finally, suggestions for future research were introduced and the limitations of the study were acknowledged.

The study gave a good understanding of the small arts festival collaborations on a grassroots level. It can be concluded that understanding value creation helps to deepen existing collaborations and lays the groundwork for establishing future ones.

Furthermore, the importance of building a sense of community both in the collaboration and the surrounding society was acknowledged.

My initial interest in engaging in the subject is my involvement in the studied case, the arts festival Finfringe. I have overseen the collaborations but have suffered from the feeling that our festival is too small to have anything to offer in collaborations and therefore I have not actively contacted possible collaborators. Before researching the case studies' collaborations, I suspected that our collaborators were supporting the

festival purely for philanthropic purposes without expecting real benefits. I was amazed at how important the collaboration with the festival was perceived to be. Many of the findings were in line with studies of large organizations, so I was pleasantly surprised to find that small actors do not differ as much as I had expected, even though the scale is smaller.

Conducting this study has inspired me to think more closely about our festival's assets and how we can better articulate them when seeking collaborations. Fostering value creation and building a sense of community in collaborations is something I will strive for in future collaborations. I hope these tangible examples will inspire and encourage other arts managers to seek collaboration boldly, regardless of the size of their organization.

I hope this thesis will contribute towards a future where collaborations between arts organizations and businesses are seen as natural and treasured, where the value that small arts organizations can bring to collaborations is recognized and where arts organizations and businesses together contribute towards building a sense of community in society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Interview questions

The interview questions have been translated into English to serve the purpose of the APPENDIX A. All interviews were held in Finnish.

Basic information on collaboration with the festival:

What forms of collaboration do you have with the festival?

Starting points for the collaboration:

Why did you want to collaborate with the festival?

What kind of expectations did you have for the collaboration with the Finfringe Festival?

Thoughts on the collaboration:

How have you experienced the cooperation with Finfringe?

What factors affect collaboration?

What positives have you seen in the collaboration?

How does the collaboration benefit your organization?

What challenges have there been in the collaboration?

Future:

How could cooperation with Finfringe benefit your organization better in the future?

What opportunities do you see in collaboration in the future?

Background questions:

What are the values of your organization?

What does the concept of sense of community mean to you?

What size is your organization?

APPENDIX B. List of Interviewees and Interview Outline

Åbo Svenska Teater

Jukka Aaltonen, Theatre Director (2016-2023). The interview was held online (Zoom) on June 2nd, 2023. Duration 45 minutes.

Turku City

Antti Kirkkola, Director of Major Events (2016-). The interview was held face-to-face at Turku City conference room on June 8th, 2023. Duration 1 hour 5 minutes.

Turku City Theatre

Arto Valkama, CEO (2013-). The interview was held face-to-face at the Turku City Theatre on June 15th, 2023. Duration 55 minutes.

Turku Centre Association

Kirsi Eronen, Executive director (2022-). The interview was held face-to-face at the Turku Chamber of Commerce on June 16th, 2023. Duration 1 hour 12 minutes.

Ravintola Torio

Sauli Virta, co-owner of Ravintola Torio (2022-). The interview was held face-to-face at restaurant Torio on June 19th, 2023. Duration 42 minutes.

Hansakortteli

Mirva Järvinen, Marketing Manager (2016-). The interview was held face-to-face at Hansakortteli office space on June 30th, 2023. Duration 1 hour 2 minutes.