

## THEATRE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: MANAGING INTERNATIONAL THEATRE COLLABORATION – AN EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

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**Purpose:** The aim of the study is to determine the importance of international cooperation for contemporary theatres, and the key elements determining its effectiveness, in the opinion of theatre sector experts.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Qualitative study. Empirical data was collected during an expert panel discussion entitled ‘Theatre on the world stage: Managing contemporary theatre: International cooperation’. Focus group interviews were used. An important aspect of the study is the combination of the expert perspective with the management practice of theatre managers.

**Findings:** The analysis of the research results made it possible to determine the importance of international cooperation for contemporary theatres, and the key elements determining its effectiveness. The focus was on the possibilities of internal theatre organisation, planning processes, financial challenges, legislative and organisational barriers, and the role of the theatre organiser.

**Research limitations/implications:** The limitations of the study may include the number of experts participating in the discussion and the limitations of the interview technique used. Furthermore, the deliberate selection of the research sample suggests caution when making claims about the entire population. At the same time, the results obtained may be useful in the context of designing quantitative studies on the general population.

**Practical implications:** The results of this study could inform the development of strategies for the internationalisation of artistic institutions. Long-term international partnerships may be more effective than one-off projects. Another practical implication of the study is that theatre managers can use its findings to argue for support from the organiser.

**Originality/value:** The research conducted explores a topic that is rarely addressed in the context of theatre management. The presented research results may be directly useful for theatre managers, other theatre executives, cultural organisers, researchers dealing with theatre and cultural management, as well as for artists themselves, enabling them to understand the conditions of cooperation in international projects.

**Keywords:** Theatre management, arts management, theatre internationalisation, artistic mobility.

**Category of the paper:** Research paper.

## 1. Introduction

Theatre as an institution operating on the market is an important subject of research in the field of management sciences, particularly in the context of arts management (Volz, 2017) and public management (Szulborska-Łukaszewicz, 2024). The traditional approach treats theatre as an artistic and cultural activity aimed at creating theatrical works. It is worth emphasising that theatre is an organisation whose main resource is its theatre ensemble, which faces problems with financing its activities (Gałecka, Smolny, 2017) and is subject to processes of digitisation and technologisation (Khattab, Elmeligi, 2023). Theatre therefore combines artistic, organisational, and business aspects.

Contemporary theatre management is based on a holistic approach to solving problems related to various aspects of these institutions' activities. In order to survive on the market, a theatre must produce artistically valuable products, often with limited financial resources. Theatre managers must effectively lead their employees (artistic, technical, administrative, etc.), which, in a situation where artistic and managerial dimensions are combined, is one of the key challenges of contemporary theatre management.

Furthermore, in the context of global intercultural interaction, artist mobility (Duester, 2014), the resulting intensification of intercultural exchanges, as well as the dynamic development of new-generation technologies and artificial intelligence (Karcz-Ryndak, 2025), the topic of the internationalisation of cultural activities (including theatres) is becoming increasingly relevant. The openness of theatres to international cooperation and adaptation to the operating models of other European institutions brings opportunities, but also possible tensions related to cultural differences or the specific nature of the work of teams due to the need to adapt to a multicultural environment on a daily basis (Byrne, Brugha, McGarvey, 2019). Consequently, there is a growing need to reflect on the strategic importance of the internationalisation of theatre activities and the management of this process.

Researchers indicate that long-term international cooperation can contribute to increasing the innovativeness of teams by enhancing their creativity (Somerville et al., 2015). The internationalisation of artistic practices can encourage the inclusion of controversial, global topics (e.g. armed conflicts), thereby prompting audiences to reflect on these issues (Walden, 2019).

Globalisation is directly linked to the issue of internationalisation, which is a more complex concept than internationalisation and also concerns a larger scale (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2009). Globalisation is understood as the growing interdependence of world economies, their cultures and populations, further stimulated by international trade (in goods and services), the widespread movement of people, investment and information (Schilirò, 2020). Globalisation is increasingly affecting various areas of life, including the culture and arts industry, thus creating new opportunities for development but also new challenges (Yuliia,

Al-Ababneh, Symonenko, 2025). Internationalisation promotes cultural exchange and the emergence of new forms by combining local traditions with international influences, while enabling the promotion of local projects around the world (Chung et al., 2025).

At the same time, despite the growing importance of the internationalisation of the cultural sector, the literature on the subject reveals a lack of research into international cooperation between theatres from a management studies perspective. Most of the research to date has focused primarily on the general conditions of the broadly defined cultural sector (Mandel, Lambert, 2020), local conditions (Grenda, 2023), case studies of specific institutions and theatre companies (Fillis, Lee, 2011), and the mobility of artists (Saro, 2015).

To a limited extent, this research focuses on the determinants of the effectiveness of the internationalisation processes of theatres, particularly regarding organisational and managerial conditions. There is also a lack of research incorporating the views of practitioners and experts in the theatre sector.

In view of the above, this study aims to determine the significance of international cooperation for contemporary theatres, as well as the key elements that determine its effectiveness, according to theatre sector experts.

In the context of this aim, the following research questions arise:

Q1: How important is international cooperation for theatres?

Q2: What elements determine the effectiveness of international theatre cooperation?

Answering these questions and achieving the intended objective are intended to serve as a starting point for further research on the internationalisation of theatre activities, from a management science perspective. Given the incomplete state of research in this field, the authors have adopted a qualitative approach and formulated the research questions in a more generalised manner.

## 2. Methods

This study presents research based on a qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with experts from the cultural sector and theatre managers. The data was collected during an expert panel entitled 'Theatre on the world stage. Managing contemporary theatre: international cooperation', which took place during the 16th International Scientific Conference 'Knowledge – Economy – Society' CMQ2024 on 21 May 2024 at the Krakow University of Economics.

The study applied a qualitative approach (Aguzzoli et al., 2024; Jemielniak, 2012; Lune, Berg, 2017) using a focus group interview with experts (Gillham, 2000; Kvale, 2023). The aim of the expert panel was to identify the factors influencing international cooperation among contemporary theatres, from a management studies perspective. The expert panel lasted 90 minutes and was led by two moderators with experience in conducting qualitative research.

The moderators supervised the dynamics of the conversation and structured the discussion, enabling each participant to respond to the topics raised.

The expert panel comprised four experts recognised within the theatre sector, each with many years' experience in theatre management and international artistic activities. The experts were selected deliberately (Palinkas et al., 2015), based on the knowledge of theatres cooperating on the international market. This approach allows for the elimination of problems related to the availability of the research sample, and at the same time, enables access to experts who are distinguished in the field of internationalisation.

The study was conducted based on a pre-prepared scenario that covered the main areas of research, which could then be explored in greater depth. The research questions concerned the internationalisation of theatre activities, with particular emphasis on the significance of international cooperation for contemporary theatres and the key determinants of the effectiveness of such cooperation. The event was recorded and transcribed before being coded and analysed. Coding was performed using the 'snowball' rule as new content emerged.

Among the methodological limitations of the study, the relatively small number of experts should be highlighted, although this is offset by the selection of a sample comprising representatives of organisations with outstanding achievements in the field of international cooperation. Furthermore, given the qualitative nature of the study, particular caution should be exercised when attempting to generalise the study's findings to the wider cultural sector.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. The importance of international cooperation for theatre institutions in the experts' opinions

In today's reality, international cooperation between theatres is a natural necessity. Experts view theatre as part of a transnational cultural circuit in which artistic, scientific and educational exchange form the basis of development and identity formation. Theatre operates within a global network of relationships and exchange, which continually requires cross-border collaboration:

*„For several years now, we have been designing a lot of international activities in the fields of art, education, and science, because one conference is behind us and another is just ahead (...). Polish theatre, but also theatre in Europe, is of great importance. We are in a global village, we are connected, we feel it, we cooperate, and we want to continue doing so” [E1].*

*„From the very beginning, we have also focused on an international audience, which means that our activities and our team have always included representatives of other nations” [E2].*

In some cases, international cooperation is a conscious strategic choice that forms the basis of an institution's existence and is closely linked to the mission and values of a given organisation. However, it is neither an obligation nor a universal model of activity.

*„As far as [our] theatre is concerned, since its foundation (...) it has been conceived as an international institution, as an international entity, and this is based on several fundamental pillars. (...) certain universal values to which we refer (...) have been enshrined in our statutes. So this is, let's say, an element of our strategy” [E2].*

International cooperation between theatre communities not only serves to convey a specific production, but also contributes to the transfer of approaches to theatre and artistic practices. Furthermore, it brings together transnational theatre cultures for joint thinking and creation.

*„You don't travel just to tick a trip off your list. You don't travel with a spectacle. The spectacle is merely a vehicle. You travel with the theatre, with the entire theatre culture” [E3].*

The internationalisation of theatre activities contributes to a better understanding of interpersonal relationships and enriches one's identity. The essence of international cooperation is breaking down barriers through the universal languages of theatre, physical presence and music.

*„In order not to lose one's identity in international cooperation, but rather to enrich it, it is very important to me not to lose oneself by imitating anyone or anything” [E4].*

In relation to the statements of the experts cited, international cooperation between theatres should be considered, in particular, from the perspective of:

- enrichment of the artistic programme – by proposing international productions, there is an opportunity to enrich the repertoire through the exchange of experiences with other institutions, participation in international festivals, and broadening creative horizons;
- presenting their own theatrical productions – this helps to build their own brand and position in the theatre industry, which is an important part of theatre image management. At the same time, theatres fulfill their mission of presenting the cultural achievements of the country they represent;
- integration with the global cultural network – cooperation with theatres in other countries enables the creation of international networks that promote the exchange of ideas and the creation of performances. Globalisation forces theatres to function efficiently and participate in major cultural processes;
- development of theatre staff competence – this should be understood more broadly than just development resulting from theatre co-productions. Theatres can also improve their teams through research and educational activities (e.g., workshops, conferences, seminars);

- axiological dimension – International cooperation can be an effective tool for realising the values to which theatre itself refers, such as intercultural dialogue, invoking folk or even archaic traditions, searching for a supra-local dimension of cultural experience. In this sense, locality is not the opposite of internationalism, but merely a starting point for creating content that can benefit a wider audience.

In the statements of the experts surveyed, international cooperation between theatres is presented as a complex and important element of the functioning of contemporary theatre. Its role goes beyond the ad hoc promotion of institutions or simple artistic mobility. The respondents emphasise the importance of international cooperation as a tool for deepening artistic reflection and perceiving theatre as a space for intercultural encounters that enable the breaking down of linguistic and organisational barriers.

### 3.2. Key factors determining the effectiveness of international cooperation between theatres in the experts' opinions

Engaging in international cooperation is a multifaceted managerial challenge, especially when it comes to cultural institutions, due to the specific nature of their activities, complexity, and diversity of their missions. A qualitative analysis of the collected empirical material allowed us to identify the key determinants of the effectiveness of international cooperation between theaters, understood as factors determining their ability to initiate, implement, and sustain international projects. The identified factors include external and systemic conditions, as well as internal factors related to the organizational aspects of the theatre and its strategic orientation.

When analysing the factors that determine the effectiveness of international cooperation between theatres, particular attention should be paid to their **internal organisational capabilities**.

*„Another one is the organisational preparation of the institution itself. If we have over 100 people in the theater team (...) then the organization itself, the logistics of the work (while maintaining permanent work on site, i.e. at the theatre itself), is also another barrier, which, in a way, may not prevent, but does mean that this cooperation could not be on as many levels as I, or the people from this theatre who work with me, would like to see” [E1].*

*„(...) and there is nothing wrong with the fact that the international cooperation does not exist in some theatres. There may be a small theater for the local community that works great and fulfills its mission, but it's a matter of (...) what we want to do and why we do it (...) we also focus on an international audience from the very beginning, which means that our activities and our team have always included representatives of other nations” [E2].*

*„From the very beginning, i.e. from the theatre association, (...) at the institute [Jerzy Grotowski Institute – author's note], it found its (...) entire studio facilities (...), logistical and administrative resources, to put it simply, (...) without the institute, this activity would not have been possible” [E3].*

*„We are a small theatre. Our team consists of 31 people, which means that everyone has to be very compatible and very flexible when (...) we do host a lot of foreign groups, but welcoming them (...) is easier for us because each of us, whether we are actors, technical staff, or work in audience organisation, is able to take care of them. We don't have to involve other people to take care of these people” [E4].*

The study participants point to work logistics, which becomes more important as the size of the managed organisation increases [E1, E3]. The implementation of an efficient work logistics system is crucial to ensure that international projects do not interfere with the theatre's daily activities, and that the team can effectively fulfill its duties and objectives. Respondent E3 links work logistics with the concept of agency, emphasising the role of internal organizational factors as determining the very existence of international activity. In the case of smaller entities, the compatibility and flexibility of the theater team, as well as its readiness to accept visiting teams, becomes more important [E4]. In this context, respondent E2 emphasized the importance of foreigners in theater teams. Theater teams are the basic resource of these organizations. It can therefore be concluded that the key determinant at the level of the internal capabilities of theatre organisations is the competence of the theatre company necessary to conduct international activities, including language skills, cultural competence, and, more broadly, international competence (Bieniek, Steinerowska, 2014; Słaboń, 2019).

At the strategic level, respondents emphasise the importance of proper **planning and an awareness of the mission and goals** set for the theatre.

*„(...) exchange at various festivals, (...) ensuring that residents (...) stay with us and create. These are the areas we are currently working on, but when designing such a task, we must first and foremost have a plan, a schedule, and, consequently, a cost estimate” [E1].*

*„A fundamental question to ask ourselves is: “what do we want to do, and for whom do we want to do it?” (...) and when it comes to [our – author's] theatre (...), since its founding (...), it has been conceived as an international institution. As an international entity, it is based on several pillars. The fundamental one is that certain universal values, to which we refer, which we even have, have been enshrined in our statute. So, this is also an element of, let's say, strategy. It does not necessarily have to be developed as a separate document, but these certain strategic provisions must always be there, and we must be aware of them and of our mission. Hence, our activities include the development of unconventional cultural forms, mainly through theatre, but also through other forms of activity. It also involves linking artistic activities with the natural environment and referring to traditional, archaic cultures. These things are not just local. They are something that connects locality with certain elements of cultures, including folk cultures and archaic cultures” [E2].*

*„In short, apart from the prospect of presenting one's own artistic achievements abroad, cooperation involving co-productions is certainly very important in the strategy (...), and these are very long processes. Of course, in the sense that it takes time to achieve such cooperation (...)" [E3].*

*„When going abroad, it is very important for me not to lose my identity (...), but to enrich it, not to lose myself by imitating anyone or anything (...), this internationalism has always been close to our hearts (...) as a way and a desire to reach out to other people" [E4].*

As can be seen in the above statements, respondents emphasise the need to ensure conditions for creation (including for visiting theatre companies), which requires an appropriate planning process and scheduling and budgeting, particularly in the case of festival organisation [E1]. A similar situation applies to foreign performances, including co-productions, where the duration of the project determines the need for strategic planning [E3]. Effective international cooperation requires defining the target group to which the theater's offer is directed, which, in the case of foreign activities, requires appropriate profiling of the theater. Respondent E2 directly refers to the statutory provisions in this area. It is worth emphasizing here that the inclusion of international cooperation at the level of theater statutes is a common phenomenon in the theater industry, but this does not always translate into real action. At the same time, respondents point to the need to preserve their identity [E4] (including artistic identity), which requires consistency between the internationalization strategy and the mission and objectives of the theatre, as well as the search for a platform for cooperation, including at the cultural level [E2].

Among the key factors determining the effectiveness of international cooperation, survey participants also mention **financial challenges**.

*„(...) if the municipal theatre does not have the funds, (...) if we do not have the funds for our core activities, and our operations and cooperation with the city only provide a basic operating budget, which is 75%, then the remaining 25%, i.e., all core activities, must be based on additional activities. I apologize for the colloquialism – on activities carried out on an ad hoc basis, so to speak. What can I say about our own contributions to EU projects, to projects that we are working on very intensively. We simply do not have these funds, and this is a very important issue" [E1].*

*„(...) as far as financial problems are concerned, they do exist, of course, but they can be overcome (...). In 2021/22, we implemented a large international project under the 'Culture' programme, financed by the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism, worth PLN 2 million, with a Norwegian partner, our long-standing friends (...) the Stella Polaris group" [E2].*

*„(...) please imagine that most of this (...) was actually possible until 2016 (...). I never received any support from the Ministry. Literally not a single penny, either for my own work, or, even less so, for trips. Now, we can breathe for the first time, because we are actually preparing a very large project, a very large presentation” [E3].*

*„(...) of course, there are grants. It must be made clear that nothing can be done without them (...)” [E4].*

Effective international cooperation in theatre requires stable funding for theatre institutions in terms of their basic statutory activities related to the preparation and presentation of theatre performances. Due to the sector-wide problem of underfunding of cultural institutions and economic paradoxes concerning the cost dimension of artistic activity, in particular Baumol's cost disease (Baumol, Bowen, 1965), there is often a lack of funds for activities outside the country [E1, E2, E3, E4]. Theatres have to undertake additional activities to balance their budgets [E1], rely on foreign partners [E2] and funds from grants and international programs supporting cultural activities [E3, E4].

Limited resources prevent the realisation of ambitious international projects, due to the large financial investments required at the stage of applying for funding. It therefore seems reasonable to single out a particularly important factor among the financial aspects - **the barrier of own contribution in international projects.**

*„One very important factor that hinders our international cooperation. We wrote a huge project that was formally approved and received a lot of points. It is the ‘Creative Europe’ project, which was based on cooperation with over 10 locations, theatres across Europe. The project was worth PLN 2 million. We needed PLN 400,000 of our own contribution and, unfortunately, we failed because such costs are unimaginable in budgets. I think that (...) this is the first (...) barrier in the importance of internationalising an institution such as a theatre” [E1].*

*„The history of the place, which I have been running for over 20 years now, makes it possible to collaborate with such prominent figures of European theatre as Eugenio Barba or Peter Brook, and it is not entirely about money, in the sense that these budgets are, of course, much, much larger. Our financial contribution may not be symbolic, but it is “complementary”. (...) I was unable to collaborate on an international scale, for example by co-producing Krzysztof Warlikowski's play, because the amounts involved were at least five times higher. And this remains the case to this day” [E3].*

High thresholds for the required own contribution can be a significant barrier, particularly for small theatres. Even highly rated projects may be rejected due to the inability to make a contribution [E1, E3]. This situation highlights the importance of diversifying funding sources for activities and of direct cooperation between theatres and non-governmental organisations and international institutions.

**Legal and organisational barriers** should also be mentioned among the determinants of the effectiveness of a theatre's international activities.

*„(...) as I said, we are a municipal institution, so there is a legal barrier. The very fact of (...) concluding agreements or any copyrights, the diversity of approaches in different places and countries is perhaps a smaller but equally important factor” [E1].*

*„Previously, we were simply a municipal cultural institution, categorised as (...) ‘other’ — neither a library, nor an archive, nor a theatre. Now we are a theatre (...)” [E3].*

As the above statements show, the problem lies in legal regulations, particularly those concerning the conclusion of international agreements, as well as the diversity of regulations in other countries, which generates delays in project implementation, and also in the legal status of a given cultural institution [E2] and its related activity profile [E1]. Furthermore, effective international cooperation requires the development of clear and consistent rules on copyright, the conclusion of agreements and data protection [E1], and for this, the theatre's organisational situation must be clear.

In the context of effective international cooperation, **the role of the theatre organiser** (e.g. municipal and provincial authorities) in overcoming barriers to such cooperation is also important. In particular, this concerns the financial involvement of entities organising cultural activities. Financial support from organisers, although not in every case, can be a temporary solution to the previously mentioned problem of own contribution to international projects. Furthermore, cooperation between local governments at the level of organising joint cultural projects is important. This is confirmed by the statements of respondents E1 and E3 below.

*„(...) the Silesian Voivodeship in several places – Katowice and the main leader, the city of Sosnowiec. We are applying for the title of “European Capital of Culture” and let us hope that by 2029, all financial barriers, as well as the organisational preparation of all institutions (...), including theatres in this area, will have been cleared and we will have enough money to visit all cities in Europe” [E1].*

*„Fortunately, as a municipal cultural institution, I have the opportunity to use municipal funds for this kind of collaboration. The amounts are not large — sometimes maybe PLN 100,000 — but this contribution is substantial nonetheless” [E3].*

This section presents the respondents' statements, which outline the key factors of international theatre cooperation while also highlighting potential barriers to such activity. It should be noted that these are mainly systemic in nature. They primarily concern insufficient and unstable funding for theatres' fundamental activities, meaning these entities encounter difficulties in securing the required contribution to participate in international projects. Additionally, extensive legal and administrative regulations surrounding contract conclusion, copyright and settlements present challenges. The organisational complexity of international cooperation requires theatre managers to demonstrate strong leadership competence, implement flexible human resource management models and engage in long-term planning, all while maintaining stable local and national operations.

## 4. Discussion

Experts' statements highlight the multidimensional nature of international cooperation between theatres. In particular, one can identify artistic, image-related, integrative, developmental and axiological contexts. It can therefore be concluded that the significance of international cooperation for contemporary theatres should be considered in terms of these organisations' identity, rather than solely in economic terms. The artistic, image-related and integrative dimensions are a natural consequence of its core activities, the classical social functions of the theatre (Karcz-Ryndak, Zapata-Aguirre, 2025; Wilk, 2015) and its marketing activities (Krawiec, Szymańska, 2016; Wróblewski, 2012). The axiological dimension warrants separate comment. It would seem that this aspect should be particularly important for auteur theatres; however, the results obtained suggest that this phenomenon may be more universal, which presents an interesting avenue for further research. A similar situation applies to the developmental function of international cooperation. This can be considered at the level of individual units (e.g. individual competence development) and at the organisational level (e.g. organisational competence development). Therefore, it is evident that the surveyed experts perceive the international activities of theatres as a field for experimentation aimed at improving the entire organisation.

Furthermore, the findings clearly highlight the identity-related dimension of these international activities. To a lesser extent, theatres perceive economic opportunities in this regard. This situation fits into the narrative found in the literature concerning organisational paradoxes occurring in theatres, such as the manager–artist dichotomy (Szostak, Sułkowski, 2021), where the artistic identity of the theatre manager may conflict with their managerial role.

Regarding the key factors determining the effectiveness of international cooperation, they highlight: the internal organisational capabilities; planning and an awareness of the mission and goals; financial challenges; barrier of own contribution in international projects; legal and organisational barriers; and the role of the theatre organiser.

Therefore, it can be concluded that theatres' participation in international projects is primarily determined by their organisational capacity and the resources at their disposal. It should be noted, however, that whilst theatres are able to compensate for certain shortcomings at the organisational level, at the financial level, they are largely dependent on external factors. The financial aspect of the present study forms part of a broader body of research on approaches to the financial management of cultural institutions (Gałęcka, Smolny, 2017; Trzeciak, 2011). At the same time, it is worth noting that artistic aspects were not included among the factors identified as determining the effectiveness of theatres' international cooperation. This can be explained, amongst other things, by the high artistic standard of the organisations represented by the experts. In their case, artistic resources are not critical resources and therefore play a lesser role in determining the effectiveness of activities on the international stage.

Theatres possess production capacities (human resources, technical resources, artistic concepts, etc.), but these are limited by the costs of participating in international projects.

The above narrative reflects the financial paradoxes associated with theatre operations, in particular Baumol's cost disease (Baumol, Bowen, 1966; Last, Wetzel, 2011). At the same time, there are indications in the literature that the globalisation of theatre operations may help mitigate these effects (Sibora, 2014). On the one hand, the theatre faces financial problems associated with undertaking international activities, thereby exacerbating financial paradoxes; on the other hand, the high effectiveness of these activities may lead to their mitigation. This mechanism operates on the principle of a positive feedback loop, although an inhibitory effect may occur in the initial period (e.g., limiting development by committing significant resources whilst failing to yield financial benefits). The dual nature of the internationalisation processes of theatres at the financial level is thus evident. Consequently, activities on the international stage should form part of theatres' strategic analyses.

In practical terms, the findings suggest a need to introduce mechanisms for funding theatres' international activities at both the level of cultural policy and within the theatres themselves. In particular, theatres should diversify their revenue streams further, which will allow for the allocation of a budget for international activities. At the same time, given the dual nature of the processes of internationalisation of theatres at the financial level, these should form part of the theatres' strategic analyses.

When considering the limitations of this study, one must keep in mind the shortcomings of the qualitative method employed. Furthermore, the relatively small number of experts surveyed poses a problem. Consequently, caution should be exercised when attempting to generalise the results to the theatre industry as a whole, and, more broadly, to the entire cultural sector.

These limitations point to potential avenues for research into the internationalisation of theatres. In particular, it is worth considering quantitative research with a larger sample of respondents and international comparative studies. Furthermore, the aforementioned feedback mechanism from the perspective of theatre financial management presents an interesting research topic. It is also worth considering further research into the relationship between the axiological dimension of theatre activity in the context of management processes and its impact on organisational paradoxes.

## **5. Conclusion**

International cooperation is an important element of the theatre's activities. Due to its multidimensional nature, the level of internationalisation influences not only the development of artistic practice, but also the way it is managed. International cooperation can be a tool for long-term development, enabling the exchange of experiences, broadening artistic expression,

and creating relationships that are not affected by language or cultural barriers, while maintaining institutional identity.

From a management perspective, the internationalisation of theatre requires full awareness of strategic planning, a clearly defined mission, high organisational skills and the ability to function within complex financial and legal structures. The research revealed barriers that affect the scope and accessibility of international cooperation opportunities, especially for theatres with limited financial resources. Key limitations identified include insufficient funding for activities and barriers related to securing own contributions to participate in international projects.

When assessing the impact of the research, it is important to emphasise its contribution to both the theory and practice of contemporary theatre management. In terms of theory, new insights have been provided into the importance of international cooperation for the operation and development of theatres. According to the authors, this is particularly valuable due to the direct confrontation of cultural management theory with operational practice, taking into account the realities of the functioning of cultural institutions. In turn, the practical dimension of the research concerns primarily the usefulness of knowledge in the context of planning and implementing international projects, managing a multinational team, overcoming legal and organisational barriers, and securing sources of funding for such activities.

The knowledge provided may be useful for theatre managers, persons performing other managerial functions in theatres, cultural managers, theatre organisers, festivals and other theatre initiatives. It can also serve as a point of reference for researchers addressing the topics of theatre management and cultural management, international cooperation and third sector organisations whose activities are related to the theatre industry.

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