



## **Frozen in Finland: Festival and Risk Management Analysis of Hi-mos Winterfest 2024**

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## Abstract

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<p>The objective of the thesis was to examine the festival and risk management of Himos Winterfest 2024. The purpose was to study the key elements that affected the unfortunate incidents associated with Himos Winterfest 2024 and to what extent social media had further adverse effects on the outcome of the winter festival. Another purpose was to examine the interlinkage of an event's success while considering the organiser's brand image.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of the thesis was based on event management concepts and the background of Himos Winterfest and its organiser, Vola Events Oy. The information was backed by several sources created by professionals in the events industry. Other concepts in the theoretical framework include the risk management and assessment of festivals and media risk management in events like Himos Winterfest 2024.</p> <p>The methodological approach of the thesis was qualitative, employing methods such as ethnography, netnography, content analysis and thematic analysis. News articles and social media posts were analysed to reveal the reasons for the outcome. This allowed for a non-biased approach to the study of the festival and risk management analysis of Himos Winterfest.</p> <p>The results and findings revealed that the organisation of music festivals like Himos Winterfest, especially during the winter season in Finland, requires professional knowledge of the possible risks and the necessary experience to create the appropriate mitigation strategies. The results also revealed that the overwhelming social media response only increased the event's infamy, which eventually resulted in the bankruptcy of the organiser.</p> <p>In conclusion, the combination of the Himos Winterfest 2024 organiser's unpreparedness and the negative media feedback resulted in overlooking essential elements when considering risk and festival management. By analysing the outcome of Himos Winterfest, the event can be applied to create learning opportunities for future events professionals to create winter festivals with similar themes.</p>
<b>Keywords</b> Festival Management, Brand Image, Media, Content Analysis, Risk Analysis.

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# 1 Introduction

The internal operations and the structure of festival management are highly dependent on anticipating potential risks and ensuring a successful and safe event. Proper location, equipment, and crowd safety knowledge can allow festival organisers to ensure the project functions without unnecessary setbacks. Considering the amount of hazardous safety issues involved with festivals, the organisers must have completed concrete action plans for whenever a potential mishap. This thesis explores the complex risk assessment and management processes of festival events, with a focused analysis of a winter-themed festival in the Central Finland region, Himos Winterfest 2024. The topic will be examined from the perspective of social media and its impact on further creating and escalating challenging situations. This will be complemented by content analysis of different media.

Himos Winterfest is an alpine-themed winter festival organised in Jämsä, Central Finland. It is a newly created and developed festival by Vola Events Oy and its director, Kim Riuttamäki. The first event took place in 2023, and the most recent one in March of 2024. In the first event, there was negative feedback due to the poor organisation of the festival. Unfortunately, the second festival gained even further negative input from attendees, workers, and the media alike. The people in charge of the festival are novices in the event management industry, which might have affected the project's outcome. In a sudden development during the thesis process, Vola Events also declared bankruptcy on 23<sup>rd</sup> August. In this study, the conditions of the festival will be thoroughly analysed to determine the reasons for the outcome, finally ending in the company's bankruptcy.

Overall, the circumstances that resulted in the situation are an exciting approach for investigating how social media can significantly impact the modern events industry. As for the reasons behind choosing this research topic, there was plenty of media coverage on Himos Winterfest, which was overwhelmingly negative. Observing the infamy the festival and its organisers gained from experience was interesting. As a tourism and event management student, I wanted to create a case study of a local festival experience. Furthermore, as the author, I can have an impartial opinion on the topic as I have neither attended nor worked at the event. In summary, discussing how an event can be improved can allow other festivals to enhance their preparations, showing advancements in sustainability for event management.

## **1.1 Aim of the Thesis**

The thesis aims to investigate and understand the risk assessment and management applications in festivals and learn about the successes and mistakes of festivals such as Himos Winterfest in 2024. Additionally, the study is complemented by understanding the effect of social media on event management and the perception of social occasions. With the risks of organising an event in a cold and hostile environment, such as Finland, the teams involved with risk prevention will need to have well-prepared coordinated measures for any challenge. By analysing the mistakes made by the organisers and workers of Himos Winterfest, information can be applied to improve events, and appropriate preventative measures can be used to avoid challenging circumstances.

This qualitative study will employ a mixed-methods approach by combining social media content analysis with netnography. By focusing on the effect of social media, we can further understand how the success of an event is tied to the opinions and information given through social media. Naturally, an event organiser must be concerned with the views of its attendees and media as it will establish the event as a success or failure. If an event is claimed to be a failure, people will not attend further events, resulting in a loss of profit. Analysing the information on social media, newspapers, and forums can allow for a better understanding of the importance of a positive media opinion.

Overall, the responsibility attached to creating and developing a festival is paramount, and it requires the experience and expertise of professionals in event management to ensure a safe environment. For example, understanding the basic requirements to keep a crowd under control and satisfied in an unknown and new environment is vital. People may experience health risks, and professionals must be on the scene to help if necessary. A cold environment such as the Finnish winter is challenging, as people will need warm areas to avoid getting sick and for staying comfortable. The weather is a crucial element for festival organisers to consider, as the attendees' safety depends on the preparation done beforehand. Discussion of these types of risks and potential changes to the initial program will be included in the thesis to demonstrate counter plans for the occurrences at Himos Winterfest.

## **1.2 Disposition of the Thesis**

The thesis will be organised to present the research material effectively. It will start by covering the relevant theory to provide a better understanding of the topic. Understanding the Himos Winterfest requires a basic knowledge of event organisation, which will allow for a proper analysis of the festival. Following the theory, the methodology section will outline the research methods used in the writing and application for investigation. Next, there will be an analysis section of media, followed by the results and findings. Future improvements will be discussed in their respective sections.

Lastly, the research will be concluded, covering the crucial results and realisations of the thesis research on Himos Winterfest.

### 1.3 Overlay Matrix

The overlay matrix presented in this subchapter displays the research problems and juxtaposes the different elements of the collected data, enabling a comprehensive visual display of the different factors. The matrix also displays how the different factors interact and influence each other, like the brand image in association with the company's social media interactions and overall feedback for the brand.

Table 1. Overlay Matrix

Research Problems	Concepts (chapter)	Data Analysis (chapter)	Findings (chapter)
Investigating the interlinkage of brand image and social media of Himos Winterfest, as well as how this affected the success of the organiser, Vola Events Oy	2.3, 2.4, 2.5 4.1, 4.2	6.2, 6.3	7, 8
Recognising the patterns leading up to the incidents of Himos Winterfest 2024	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5	6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5	7, 8
Identifying the risk management and assessment of Vola Events Oy and what risk mitigation strategies could have changed the outcome of Himos Winterfest 2024	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	6.1, 6.6	7, 7.1, 8

## 2 Festival Management

We will start by examining the events industry with a particular focus on festival management. To further understand the internal operations of festivals and what goes into the planning of one, the theoretical framework needs to be established. As the thesis covers risk management and assessment, it is vital to understand the difference between the two, especially in the context of festival events. The background information of Himos Winterfest will be studied and clarified to create a perspective on the circumstances. As part of any festival event, social media significantly impacts the overall outcome, as customers rely on the information given to them through the media. To begin with, there will be a discussion on the importance and different qualities of festivals, as well as the functions that will be applied.

### 2.1 The Events Industry

The event industry's constant growth has led to the formation of a vast and profitable sector with its specific event professionals, business associates, and suppliers. Like any industry, events must adapt and develop according to the customers' needs to succeed in their operations. Business and social trends must be closely followed, and potential social issues must be considered. However, a notable aspect of events is the need for constant attention to the most minor changes, especially in cultural interests and attitudes. If an event organiser is not updated on what is considered appropriate, there can be significant setbacks, potentially leading to a decline in the brand image due to the media. (Bladen, Kennell, Abson, & Wilde 2012, 11; Lindner 2024)

To comprehend the scale of the events industry, it is critical to understand that it has several interlinkages with other business sectors. The rough estimation that has been given for the global value of the event industry is \$1.1 trillion (Lindner 2024), and another estimation is that there are around ten million people employed worldwide in the business. Estimating the exact scale and impact of the event industry is more complicated. Still, the estimates do, however, show the vast reach of the event industry globally and its profitability. As for the other sectors in the event, the industry would include event organising, programme and performer services, digital event services, and other event technology. In addition, events need to include construction services, different sales and rental services, venue and vehicle rental, and ticketing services to ensure a successful experience. The extent to which the event industry can be accounted for is vast and complex, which inevitably can be harder to show in the form of statistical data for industry research. (Lindner 2024)

The primary purpose is for the event industry to commercialise experiences that can be culturally impactful or aim to introduce a business service or item to solidify profits. Commercialising culture can be challenging to work on, as there is a fine line between showing respect and disrespect for

an experience, especially a more historically prevalent event. As the organisers need to show genuine respect and appreciation for any created experience professionally, different departments in the company will need to approve any event content. Moving forward with this process can be highly time-consuming, including increased material and intangible value associated with the experience. (Bladen et al. 2012, 8)

Overall, the event industry is a significant component of any country's economic composition and will create opportunities for local businesses to increase their value through the events. The reason for organising events varies, affecting the components included in making the experience itself. Events such as major music festivals can massively increase tourism in a country, incentivising potential customers to travel from all over to participate, as mentioned earlier. The industry is globally manifesting in the number of events created, attendee numbers, profitability, employment opportunities, and companies explicitly focusing on event management and creation. (Bladen et al 2012, 8-11)

### **2.1.1 The Finnish Events Industry**

The Finnish event industry accumulates generous profits for the economy and local businesses. Statistically, 3,200 companies from various sectors are associated with the turnover produced by the event industry. The estimated turnover of the industry in 2019 was EUR 2.35 billion, and it also directly employs around 20,000 people. As for the people not directly employed by the industry, the number of employees would be between 120,000 and 175,000. The event industry is profitable to Finnish businesses and people, confirming that the company has further potential to expand. (Jauhiainen 2021)

In Finland, the event organisers are occasionally limited due to weather limitations, primarily due to the effect of global warming. Organised events in open areas must consider the weather conditions and arrange them appropriately so the event can still be organised even during rougher conditions. The summer season is short compared to other European countries, which the festival organisers take advantage of, resulting in many festivals being arranged around the same time. This brings large groups of tourists worldwide to attend the festivals, increasing the profitability of many other industries. Overall, the Finnish event industry is increasing every year and showing a more significant impact on the economy. Local smaller festivals and larger international events organised in Finland attract new employment opportunities, new citizens, tourists, and business profitability. (Jauhiainen 2021)

## 2.2 Concept of Festivals

This chapter will examine the concept of festivals in further detail. Festivals are essential for society because they provide different possibilities for expressing and experiencing joy, cultural representation, and social development for various groups. (Don 2023) Festival events can range widely in size, subject, and intention, ranging from intimate neighbourhood get-togethers to even grand worldwide performances. The basics of festival events are given in this section, emphasising their individual traits, varieties, and the elements that add to their complexity and significance. Each festival has its speciality and twist, which undoubtedly results in any event. (ibid.)

Historically, festivals have been an ancient practice in many different cultures, marking a unique occurrence in people's lives or showing respect to a divine being or an important religious date. For instance, when harvesting season came around, people would prepare celebrations to show gratitude for a successful yield, hoping to extend the luck into future harvests. (Don 2023) These celebrations would often be intertwined with the religious beliefs of the specific area; a common recurrence was to show respect for deities through sacrifices. Each culture has a different understanding of sacrifices or other means of gratitude, as some would slaughter animals, and others would bring sustenance. While similar festivals and activities continue in some cultures, many events nowadays focus on spending time showing gratitude through musical, dance or theatrical performances. (ibid.)

Many elements can make a festival stand out, for example, the cultural background that inspired the event to be celebrated, which often leads to being an attraction point for tourism. As there is so much unique variety in festivals to experience, a festival may be the most sought-after activity for the people visiting and living there. Festivals can be different due to their scale and overall timespan. (Don 2023) Still, even the temporary events bring great opportunities to connect with the community as locals and tourists. People will travel from all over the world to experience different cultural activities which are often present in festivals. Local tourism grows exponentially in proportion to the events organised there, furthering the incentive placed on the importance of organising festival events. (ibid.)

As for the types of festivals that are organised today, these would include music, arts, film, religious, cultural, food and beverage, sports, and seasonal festivals. Many more prominent festivals are globally known and even filmed for the delight of other groups of people or archiving purposes. For instance, some festivals can be arranged for an exclusive group, which leaves out many potential customers, for example, the Solstice techno music festival organised in Ruka, which is organised for adults. (Solstice 2024) To further increase the event's profitability, access to the festival should be easily accessible through another form of communication, such as digital platforms. A

growing market for events to be organised either wholly or partially online has allowed the industry to expand its potential further. However, arranging festivals can be more difficult, as customers seek closeness with a community rather than experiencing things online. (Bladen 2012, 5-8) Simple activities can be placed digitally in the festival itself, but organising a festival entirely online is unlikely to show significant success. Overall, festivals are a vastly profitable section for a country or a specific community, allowing the economy to thrive further. International interest can rise through the celebration of unique festivals, which will increase tourism and hospitality. The rise in need for these services will allow for new employment opportunities and local business growth. (Don 2023)

Preserving the participants' safety and security is equally vital in festival environments. This includes coordinating with law enforcement, arranging security details, providing health services, managing crowds, and preparing for emergencies. Planning logistics is essential for trash management, venue setup, transportation, and lodging. Infrastructure needs to accommodate large numbers of potential users and activities. Festivals may have a significant environmental impact, which needs to be considered during development and planning. To lessen the adverse effects of festivals on the environment, sustainable measures like recycling, trash reduction, and energy efficiency are becoming increasingly essential to maintaining an event's sustainability. (Clopes 2023)

Collaboration amongst various stakeholders, including suppliers, sponsors, organisers, local government, and the community, is necessary for a festival to succeed. Stakeholder management and effective communication are crucial to ensure a safe environment at any organised event. Another essential part of festival preparation is identifying, evaluating, and reducing risks associated with inclement weather, health, safety, and operational disruptions. Thorough risk management techniques guarantee flexibility and resilience in the operations of festivals. (Clopes 2023)

In general, festivals are essential to social gatherings and communication as they are diverse activities promoting economic growth and cultural enrichment. The success of profitable events depends on careful preparation, efficient administration, and profound comprehension of the potential challenges that may provide obstacles for any event. The key to keeping festivals viable and relevant in a constantly changing world will be embracing innovation and sustainability as they evolve. (Don 2023; Clopes 2023)

### **2.3 Overview of Himos Winterfest**

After conducting an overview of various festivals, we will now shift our focus to examining the Himos Winterfest festival. Himos Winterfest is the first to bring an Alpine-themed festival to Finland. The event has been organised in Himos Jämsä, specifically the Himos Ski Jämsä area, with extensive winter activity opportunities and cottage accommodations located nearby. The nearby accommodations follow the Alpine theme as they are cosy winter cottages with a comfortable atmosphere

for relaxing outside the festival. The location was chosen due to its prospects of organising and developing a successful winter festival. As the theme of Himos Winterfest is Alpine, it was necessary that the area and the activities allowed there were related to the theme, which would further advocate the quality of the experience. As the Himos Winterfest takes place during the winter season, different winter resort activities can be practised at the event. What makes Himos Winterfest even more unique is that it combines components of skiing, live music, and various winter activities. Guaranteeing unique activities uses the potential growth and profitability, resulting in the general interest in similar festivals. (Emotion Zine 2023)

### **2.3.1 Background of Himos Winterfest**

The Himos Winterfest festival was developed by Kim Riuttamäki, an entrepreneur, a business student at Tampere University, and the CEO of Vola Events Oy. (Ikonen 2024). The history of Himos Winterfest is brief, as the festival was only recently developed by Kim Riuttamäki in 2023. (Vola Events 2023) The first Himos Winterfest was held from 23-24 March in 2023. The event organisation resulted in a satisfactory response from the attendees and media. As for incidents, there were minor issues with the area management and the speed of receiving tickets at the festival site. The press covered the incidents at the festival, with Riuttamäki guaranteeing a better-quality experience at the next Himos Winterfest. (Mattila, M. 2024) With the experience of organising Himos Winterfest once beforehand, the expectations for the second festival were inevitably much higher. Despite the promise for improvement, the second festival organised in February of 2024 resulted in a worse performance and a massive publicity storm in the media.

The company in charge of Himos Winterfest was Vola Events Oy, which Kim Riuttamäki established. Kim Riuttamäki is an entrepreneur with previous business endeavours, such as Rullis Oy, a rolled ice cream business founded in September 2022. More recently, Riuttamäki co-founded Blondify Oy, a hair salon focusing on blonde hairstyling and dying. While a still university student, Riuttamäki has shown admirable ambition in growing his business portfolio. His experience in entrepreneurship indicates that Riuttamäki has the creative potential to develop into a pioneer in the industry. Ambition in entrepreneurship can drive an idea much farther than money and resources alone could. Despite the setbacks with Himos Winterfest, Riuttamäki's journey is a testament to the potential for growth in entrepreneurship. (Riuttamäki 2024; Business Festival 2023)

Vola Events Oy was primarily composed of student entrepreneurs and aimed to improve the opportunities for young professionals seeking employment. As most employees lacked professional experience in the events industry, there were bound to be negative results in the preparation process. When Riuttamäki was asked about the incidents, he agreed there should have been an improved planning process, and the people collaborating with him should have been more experienced. The

setbacks with Himos Winterfest have provided valuable lessons for future event management, highlighting the importance of a robust planning process and experienced team members. Nevertheless, due to the significant setbacks, Vola Events Oy has recently, in August 2024, declared bankruptcy, with Riuttamäki also suffering from personal losses. (Emotion Zine 2023; Ylitie 2024)

## **2.4 Observing the Incidents at Himos Winterfest 2024**

This research focuses on the second edition of Himos Winterfest organised in 2024 and how the event's management inevitably failed to produce a quality experience. The organiser, Kim Riuttamäki, and his team at Vola Events showed clear signs of their lack of knowledge and expertise through their planning process and responses regarding the incidents at the festival (Hopi & Simoinen 2024). With more experienced workers, preventative measures could have been acknowledged and risks mitigated. However, studying the challenges of Himos Winterfest 2024 allows for understanding concerning creating potential events and case studies for reviewing.

Despite the innovative elements of Himos Winterfest, the second festival arranged in 2024 endured harsh critiques from attendees, volunteer workers, singers, and the media. Attendees were filming and posting on social media about the odd occurrences at the event, such as the lack of access to water and the unfinished state of the VIP area. People were left with little choice but to consume alcohol for hydration, resulting in increased intoxication of the attendees. Many people were surprised about the conditions of the VIP area, as people who purchased the VIP tickets saw that none of the promised elements were arranged. As for the volunteer workers at Himos Winterfest, some were not adequately trained to manage service, especially people working with alcohol. Some workers managing and distributing the merchandise were not properly licensed to manage alcohol, hence imposing a severe safety hazard. These were a few examples of the publicised incidents at the 2024 Himos Winterfest event. (Hopi & Simoinen 2024)

### **2.4.1 The Sanni Scandal at Himos Winterfest**

However, one of the biggest scandals included their partnership with the singer, Sanni. There were issues with spreading misinformation about who was collaborating and their unpaid dues to the festival, specifically Himos Lomat Oy. The company confirmed that all their business with Himos Winterfest had been managed, especially their transactions. (Roiha 2024) The singer Sanni and the organisers had an infamous interaction regarding the cancellation of her performance. It was stated on the Himos Winterfest social media that Sanni could not perform due to personal reasons. However, this was proven false information, as the management team of Sanni informed the public

that the reason was the lack of funds from the event organisation. This resulted in the organisation's credibility being questioned, only powering the mass media scandal. (Mattila, I. 2024)

The unpreparedness for these challenges only revealed the need for more professional risk management strategies and the planning process. By creating a concise planning stage with a Risk Assessment Matrix, an organisation can arrange and prepare appropriately for challenges and their solutions. The unsuccessful execution of elements in Himos Winterfest highlighted the importance of understanding event management standards and subsequently implementing the intertwined risk mitigation strategies to specific situations. Each event created has potential for improvements and can help increase the efficiency of the event management business. With every opportunity missed, there are learning opportunities for future event management professionals to improve upon. (Mattila, M. 2024; Payne 2022)

## 2.5 Future of Himos Winterfest

In this subsection, we present the future plans for Himos Winterfest based on the information we collected. In several news articles, there have been mentions that Riuttamäki will step down as the organiser and another person would consequently be taking over management of Himos Winterfest. (Lassuri 2024; Lippu 1 April 2024)



**Kim Riuttamäki** • 3rd+  
Blondify | Winterfest | Business student  
1mo •

+ Follow

The organizer of the chaotic festival was plunged into distress  
t. Helsingin Sanomat

\*There may be one more sequel to this story, but more on that later...

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Image 1. LinkedIn Post (Riuttamäki 2024)

Riuttamäki has endured much scrutiny for the outcome and performance of the Himos Winterfest in 2024, which has undoubtedly affected the image of his credibility. The position of Riuttamäki as the founder and CEO of Himos Winterfest resulted in his exaggerated vilification in the mass media. This was the case, even though many other workers could also be held responsible for the result. Riuttamäki has been made a target of internet cancel culture, which only highlights the importance of maintaining a positive brand image.

As for the plans for Himos Winterfest, the speculations were recently confirmed by Riuttamäki in a LinkedIn post, as shown in the screen capture image above. In the same post, Riuttamäki

responded to the recent article published by Helsingin Sanomat, which criticised his current status by describing him as having been plunged into distress. (Riuttamäki 2024) However, Helsingin Sanomat's article discusses new developments regarding the future of Vola Events Oy and Himos Winterfest. Vola Events Oy declared bankruptcy on August 23rd, 2024, with the CEO suffering personal losses, which Keski-suomalainen reported in June. After much speculation from the media, the bankruptcy only confirms that the future of Himos Winterfest will not continue with Vola Events Oy and Kim Riuttamäki. (Ylitie 2024; Roiha 2024)

### 3 Risk Management and Assessment in Events

In this chapter of the thesis, I will elucidate the theoretical framework for risk management and event assessment. Subsequently, the following chapter will expand on concepts such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the perpetual presence of extreme weather conditions in risk management in events. Risk management is an undisputed requirement for any event to ensure that proper precautions are taken into account and create an overall memorable experience. Risk management is defined as the "process of identifying, assessing and controlling financial, legal, strategic and security to an organisation's capital and earnings." (IBM 2021) This shows numerous possibilities for an event to face risks stemming from various sources, such as legal liabilities, financial problems, errors made in judgment. The organisers are responsible for the safety of attendees, personnel, and performers, which could easily cause a catastrophe. An extensive planning process is essential to an event to ensure any potential fallouts can be anticipated beforehand and problems themselves can be mitigated through strategies.

#### 3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In this chapter, we will examine Maslow's hierarchy of needs against risk management in events. Maslow's hierarchy of needs allows for a rendition of needs when considering an event's success based on people's experiences. Maslow created the theory that accounts for people's psychological motivation and needs in life, which is also present in festival environments. The three primary needs in Maslow's theory are self-fulfilment, psychological, and basic needs, which all have even more niche categories. Recognising and separating each category into a more niche area allows for a more specific and overall conclusive management strategy for an event like Himos Winterfest. By analysing the customers' needs, it is less likely that festival elements will be neglected or impaired judgment calls will be avoided. (McLeod 2024)

The diagram below shows that Maslow's hierarchy is shaped and organised in a pyramid with different levels of needs. Self-fulfilment needs include self-actualisation, which is achieving a person's potential, in this case, an event. Creating a unique and unforgettable experience can define the event as successful. The customer's esteem needs and feelings of belonging are included in psychological needs. People attending festivals will have friends with them and should be received positively by the workers at the event. The customers have spent a significant amount of money and expect to see a corresponding level of experience. This is imperative for a festival's success, as this can make a memorable and positive experience. As for the basic needs of customers, the festival needs to provide safety and physiological needs, such as water, shelter, and food. Himos Winterfest was lacking in some of the needs, such as basic needs, which affected the event's success. The relevancy of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is interlinked to risk management in events; it

allows for a clearer understanding of the expectations Himos Winterfest should prepare for. (McLeod 2024; Middleton 2023)

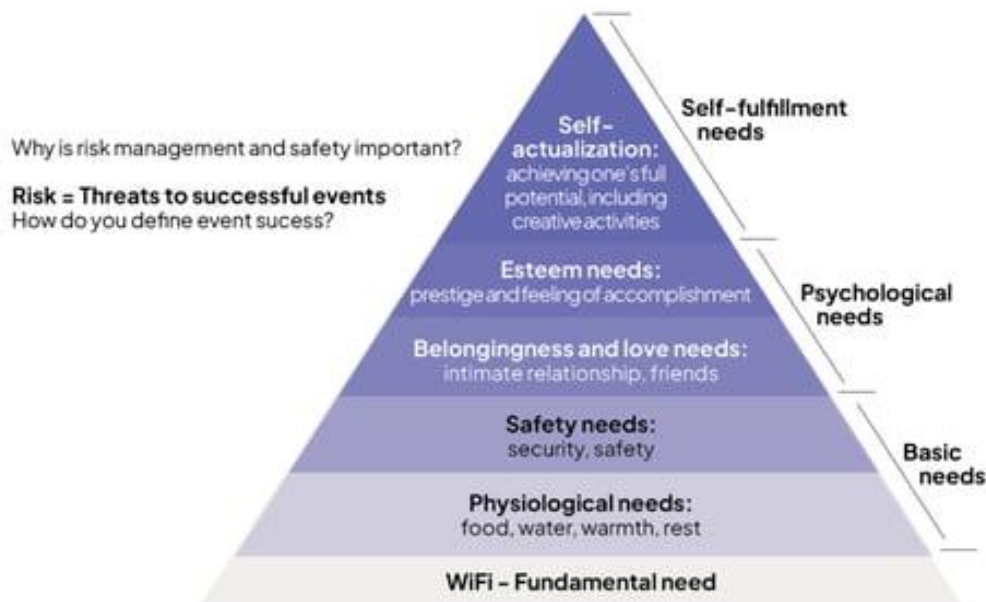


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Middleton 2023)

Prioritising quality and safety are fundamental for the success of any company, particularly when it comes to delivering a profitable product or service. Achieving sustainable growth requires unwavering attention to creating high-quality products that meet and exceed customer expectations, bolstering the company's reputation. Failing to deliver top-notch products can result in losing customers to competitors who meet these standards. The credibility of any company is intricately connected to the quality of its offerings. By thoroughly understanding customers' needs and identifying potential risks, such as those associated with an event like Himos Winterfest, the likelihood of a successful and seamless experience is significantly increased. (Middleton 2023; Payne 2022)

Each issue that can occur in an event is interlinked to another problem. Minor issues can often become unnecessary obstacles if not managed adequately and appropriately. A clear organisational plan, backed by the necessary resources, is the key to creating a successful event. The planning process, which relies on effective risk management, is crucial for companies like Vola Events Oy. Recognising and planning for potential risks is the first step towards a comprehensive planning process, leading to a safer and more successful outcome. (Payne 2022)

The diagram below illustrates the various risk management aspects of different event elements. These include financial risks, social responsibility, business operations, emergency planning, and

employment responsibility. Poor planning for health and safety can lead to economic risks and legal responsibility. Another example would be inexperienced human resources management, which has a direct effect on employment responsibility as well as quality of service. This demonstrates that risks that have not been adequately accounted for can result in the emergence of new issues. Developing a comprehensive risk management plan helps to minimise challenges before, during, and after the event. The diagram illustrates the possible connections between each potential risk and emphasises the importance of proper risk management for any event. By visualising the interlinkages through the diagram below, risk management becomes more straightforward in organising the process professionally. To conclude, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is aligned with risk management as it allows for a proper analysis of potential risks and the prevention of future challenges. (Middleton 2023; Ashwin 2018)



Figure 2. Potential Risks and their Interlinkage (Middleton 2023)

### 3.2 Risk Assessment in Events

Effective risk assessment in event planning necessitates using various techniques to assess safety and anticipate potential issues. By combining these strategies, event organisers can better detect and manage risks, lowering the likelihood of disruptions or dangerous circumstances. A thorough risk assessment contributes to an event's success and safety by laying the groundwork for developing preventative measures and contingency plans. (Ready Gov 2024)

The risk matrix, a structured format that aids in categorising and prioritising hazards based on their likelihood and potential impact, is a prevalent risk assessment tool. These matrices can be adjusted to the specific environment of an event, such as Himos Winterfest, taking into account weather, crowd numbers, and the festival's technical requirements. A risk matrix typically examines each potential danger by assigning a probability and severity rating, allowing organisers to see

which hazards deserve the greatest attention. (Pollman 2023) Once the risks have been set out in a matrix, organisers can devise specific tactics to eliminate or mitigate these dangers. These could include improved safety standards, staff training, specialised equipment uses, or contingency plans for cancellations or delays. The risk matrix provides a clear overview of potential hazards and allows for a methodical approach to tackling them, ensuring that the most critical issues are addressed first. (Ready Gov 2024)

Furthermore, risk matrices are dynamic tools that should be updated as new hazards surface or the event progresses. By frequently assessing and updating the matrix, organisers may remain proactive and adapt to changing circumstances, such as a sudden change in weather or a new logistical difficulty. This adaptability is critical when organising live events because unexpected problems can emerge quickly. Risk matrices and other assessment tools allow event organisers to approach risk management systematically and thoroughly. (Ashwin 2018; Ready Gov 2024)

### **3.2.1 Risk Mitigation in Events**

Businesses typically focus on risk mitigation, especially for large-scale events like Himos Winterfest, which have enormous stakes for success. Risk management devises effective mitigation measures to ensure that any product, service, or event works smoothly and produces the expected results. These tactics assist in anticipating potential difficulties and developing action plans to mitigate or resolve them before they harm the event or its attendees. (Blerter 2015)

The absence of planning can lead to a substandard event experience, compromising the event's long-term viability and guests' enjoyment. Technical obstacles, safety dangers, and logistical issues can all significantly reduce the quality of an event. Meeting participants' expectations increases the likelihood of repeat business, which is crucial for festivals whose profitability is based on annual attendance. To be successful, an event must provide participants with a rewarding, long-lasting experience that entices them to return. (Blerter 2015)

In the case of Himos Winterfest, the festival's issues increased the negative outlook of the organisers' credibility. These deficiencies have put doubt on the event's future, whether due to poor planning, weak answers to obstacles, or a failure to manage specific risks properly. Negative media coverage and unsatisfied guests can swiftly tarnish a brand's reputation, making it difficult to re-establish public and sponsor trust. The organisers' credibility is critical to producing a successful event and guaranteeing its long-term viability. With adequate risk management and prompt response to challenges, the festival's future is protected, as stakeholders and partners may wonder if it can continue to meet expectations in the coming years. The impact of risk mismanagement goes beyond one poorly performed event; it has long-term ramifications for the festival's brand, making it

more difficult to recruit future attendees and sponsors. To recover from these losses, Himos Winterfest must address the failures openly, demonstrate a commitment to improvement, and implement assertive risk mitigation techniques in future editions to regain credibility and maintain its long-term success. (Blerter 2015)

### **3.3 Risks with Extreme Weather Conditions**

Organising events carries inherent hazards, but extreme weather circumstances add extra complications. Events held during different seasons necessitate radically different planning methods, with winter festivals providing distinct problems compared to summer festivals. Festival timing, conducted on the exact dates each year, helps establish brand recognition and consumer loyalty because participants identify the event with the season. This repetition can create a sense of nostalgia, luring clients back year after year, assuming their previous experiences were positive. However, high weather hazards can jeopardise the event's operations and the overall attendee experience, necessitating cautious planning to avoid potential disruptions. (Ashwin 2018)

#### **3.3.1 Finnish Winter Event Risks**

Winter events in Finland, such as Himos Winterfest, are subject to extreme weather conditions, which might impact the festival's success. Unpredictable snowstorms, freezing temperatures, and ice conditions can severely influence essential parts of the event, such as sound systems, lighting, and structural equipment like tents and stages. Extreme cold can create technical issues or equipment failure, making outdoor setups particularly vulnerable. Detailed weather predictions and contingency planning are required to mitigate these risks and ensure the event runs successfully under extreme conditions. (Jauhiainen 2021; Ashwin 2018)

For example, strong winds or heavy snowfall can damage temporary structures or make pathways unsafe for guests, forcing alternative shelter and transit options. Poor vision and snowy terrain can also endanger personnel and spectators, necessitating event planners to devise safety and accessibility plans. Beyond the physical hurdles, excessive cold can harm visitors' comfort, potentially diminishing overall enjoyment and satisfaction with the festival, resulting in negative feedback and decreased future participation. Furthermore, winter festivals in Finland must address the influence of reduced daylight, which can reduce the time available for outdoor activities and necessitate more sophisticated lighting installations to preserve the atmosphere. Such limits necessitate detailed planning to ensure that the event fulfils its promise despite the challenges offered by winter weather. (ibid) To address these problems, all organisers of Finnish winter events must be well-prepared to deal with unexpected weather changes and ensure that their infrastructure and operational plans can endure extreme circumstances. Adequate preparation, real-time monitoring of

weather conditions, and adaptable contingency plans can ensure the event's success, resulting in a memorable and positive experience despite these elements. (Ashwin 2018)

## **4 Media Risk Management in Events**

The upcoming chapter will explore the impact of media risk management on events. In today's event industry, effective social media communication plays a pivotal role in the success of any event. This is particularly true for digitally arranged events, where traditional face-to-face marketing or spontaneous participation is not feasible. As a result, event industry professionals must remain informed about the constantly evolving media trends and the digital tools necessary for impactful communication. (Bladen et al. 2012, 387-388)

With the increasing potential for instant feedback in the global marketing industry, the expectations surrounding appropriate communication have become more revealing of a business's nature. This heightened expectation poses more significant risks for companies, necessitating more robust risk management strategies. The upcoming discussion will delve into understanding and implementing effective mitigation strategies. In this context, the significance of media marketing and brand image must be balanced for events like Himos Winterfest, mainly when orchestrating successful events. (Bladen et al. 2012, 387-388)

### **4.1 Social Media Marketing in Events**

Social media has become the cornerstone of marketing and communication for any successful company, including Himos Winterfest. Every company today employs dedicated specialists in social media marketing, which has revolutionised customer outreach and significantly expanded audience engagement. The platforms for social media marketing include Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and dedicated websites. Each platform offers unique features for content creation, audience interaction, and brand visibility, making them essential tools in digital marketing. Himos Winterfest had strategically concentrated its marketing efforts on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and its official website, demonstrating the marketing team's deep understanding of how to reach and engage its target audience through digital channels. The chosen platforms align with their goals of attracting a wide range of festivalgoers, including young adults who dominate platforms like Instagram and TikTok. (Bladen et al. 2012, 389-390)

Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, in particular, have shown to be quite successful in promoting events like Himos Winterfest because they facilitate the rapid and widespread sharing of visually appealing content like stories, videos, and images. Additionally, these platforms encourage real-time audience engagement, strengthening community bonds and improving the festival experience before, during, and after the event. By highlighting artist lineups, winter sports events, and promotions, Himos Winterfest used various platforms to build excitement and expectation. TikTok's viral nature facilitates the content; festival-related trends, videos, and challenges can quickly

reach millions of people, increasing festival visibility and ticket sales. The festival's website is also critical, serving as the central hub for event information, ticket sales, and customer service. It is essential for providing a seamless user experience, enabling visitors to learn about the event, book tickets, and access detailed information about performances, accommodations, and activities. However, as of now, the Himos Winterfest website is inaccessible due to the outcome of the experience. (Bladen et al. 2012, 389-391)

Digital advertising and technology improvements are inextricably linked to the rise of digitalisation and media coverage, primarily through social media marketing. These advancements have altered how businesses publicise, oversee, and run events. For example, event planners can monitor user participation, preferences, and behaviour patterns in real time with the help of data analytics tools provided by social media platforms. Furthermore, digital advertising has become more targeted and personalised through tools like paid social media ads and influencer partnerships. Collaborating with influencers and content creators who resonate with the target demographic can extend their marketing reach beyond traditional boundaries. Influencers attending the festival can share their experiences in real time, encouraging their followers to engage with the festival's content and even attend the event themselves. This creates a powerful word-of-mouth effect that drives engagement and increases ticket sales. (Bladen et al. 2012, 398-400)

Understanding these technological advancements and the shift towards digital marketing is crucial and empowering for event industry professionals. The transformation of marketing and event management in the digital era requires a multifaceted approach that blends traditional event planning skills with digital marketing expertise. Professionals armed with this knowledge can navigate these platforms, use data analytics to inform their strategies and embrace the fast-paced nature of digital advertising. The evolution of digital marketing, therefore, not only increases audience reach but also enhances the overall management of events, leading to more successful and well-attended festivals. (Bladen et al. 2012, 389-390)

## **4.2 Brand Image of Himos Winterfest**

The brand image of businesses is the connection that can increase profitability and, therefore, result in customer growth. A company relies on its positive image, which the public perceives, to reinforce the idea of purchasing or using a service from that business. When the brand image of Himos Winterfest and its organisers were harshly scrutinised due to the failed components at the event, various news outlets quickly picked up the stories, furthering the negative image. Brand image is a vital connection between the company and its customers, influencing profitability, customer loyalty, and overall market success. A strong, positive brand image builds trust, creates emotional connections, and encourages consumers to purchase products or services. This

perception, shaped by the public's experiences, opinions, and media coverage, reinforces the idea that engaging with the business is reliable and desirable. For festivals like Himos Winterfest, maintaining a robust and favourable brand image is critical to sustaining long-term success, ensuring customer retention, and driving growth. (Williams 2021)

In the case of Himos Winterfest, the brand's image was central to attracting festivalgoers, sponsors, and media attention. However, when unforeseen problems arose during the event, such as organisational failures, safety concerns, or logistical issues, the positive perception of the festival began to deteriorate. Such missteps at a highly anticipated and marketed event quickly snowballed into a crisis threatening the brand's reputation. Organisers need to monitor and respond to negative comments and feedback on social media and other platforms promptly and respectfully. (Hopi 2024)

A company's brand image is critical, influencing profitability and customer loyalty. When that image is compromised, as seen with Himos Winterfest, the consequences can be far-reaching and complex to reverse. However, through effective crisis management, transparency, and a commitment to quality improvements, organisations can recover from negative media coverage and regain the trust of their customers and stakeholders. The lessons learned from such incidents are invaluable for strengthening future brand resilience and safeguarding against similar issues. Future professionals can anticipate these circumstances through these real-life examples while developing better planning processes. (Williams 2021)

#### **4.2.1 Cancel Culture in Media**

Social media plays a significant role in shaping public perception, particularly concerning events like Himos Winterfest. When issues arise, such as organisational failures or inadequate mitigation strategies, social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok amplify the situation in real time. These platforms facilitate the rapid spread of adverse reactions, allowing complaints to go viral quickly. This real-time reactivity often escalates minor issues into significant crises, impacting the event's image and the brand's overall reputation. In the case of Himos Winterfest, the negative responses were compounded by traditional media coverage, with news outlets like Iltalehti, Helsingin Sanomat and YLE continuously reporting on the situation, further spreading, and intensifying the negative narrative. (Hopi 2024)

This quick criticism spread is linked to "cancel culture," businesses, events, or persons suffer widespread public condemnation, frequently culminating in boycotts. The surge of negative criticism immediately impacted Himos Winterfest's public image and sparked discussions about future boycotts, which could jeopardise ticket sales, collaborations, and long-term success. Boycotting has

become famous for unsatisfied customers, who use social media to mobilise support and influence a company's financial bottom line. (Lindholm 2021)

The constant media attention, fuelled by social media and news outlets, creates a feedback loop of negativity. As the story continued circulating, the festival's brand suffered further damage, making recovery even more difficult. For event organisers, managing this type of media risk requires swift and transparent communication strategies, addressing concerns head-on, and engaging with the public to rebuild trust. Proactive crisis management and long-term reputation strategies are essential to counteract the lasting effects of negative social media phenomena and safeguard the event's future. (Blerter 2015; Bladen et al. 2012, 398-400)

### **4.3 Defining Traditional Printed Media and Social Media**

In this subchapter, we will explore and define both traditional printed media and social media to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework. Traditional printed media refers to forms of communication that are disseminated through physical formats, such as newspapers, magazines, and brochures, which have historically served as primary sources of information for the public. The main income of the revenues is through direct sales, and the main income comes from advertising. However, printed media have adjusted to the digitalisation of the world, by having an online version of the media available to their customers. (Bladen et al. 2012, 388-389)

On the other hand, social media encompasses digital platforms that facilitate the creation, sharing, and exchange of content among users, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These allow for a faster form of communicating with the target groups and stakeholders. By examining the characteristics, functions, and impacts of both media types, we aim to provide a thorough understanding of their roles in contemporary communication. Both traditional printed media and social media play important roles in the event management industry by informing customers about events. (Bladen et al. 2012, 389)

## 5 Methodology

The study's methodological approach will be introduced in this thesis chapter. As the thesis focuses on media articles, posts, comments and textual analysis, the common denominator is each methodology's qualitative approach. To fully ascertain the risks associated with event management and organisation, focusing on Himos Winterfest, an informative outlet of data comes from media coverage. Hence, the research relies on analysing all the methodologies, such as ethnography, netnography, and thematic and content analysis.

### 5.1 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research involves systematically collecting and analysing non-numerical data to gain insights into various concepts, opinions, and situations. This type of research is valuable and instrumental in generating new ideas to address research problems and obtain a deeper understanding of complex issues. It is instrumental when examining the dynamics and processes of events like Himos Winterfest, where understanding human experiences, behaviour, and interaction is crucial and the very essence of the research. (Silverman 2017, 18; Bhandari 2020)

In qualitative research, data collection methods may include interviewing relevant individuals, making observational field notes, and analysing textual materials, such as media reports or social media posts. These diverse methods allow for a holistic understanding of the participants' experience and perception of the event. Through this, the patterns, and themes of Himos Winterfest are more evident than if in a quantitative analysis. For example, the feedback given by the attendees on social media can be observed through the interactions and communications. This can allow further understanding of what aspects of the festival induce a positive or negative effect. (Silverman 2017, 7-12; Bhandari 2020)

Preparing for qualitative research analysis is crucial, as the quality of the collected material directly impacts the study's outcomes. High-quality data collection requires a well-thought-out research design, including selecting participants and materials that provide a broader perspective on the research. Additionally, careful consideration of the research environment is essential to evaluate the potential for external influences and their potential effects on the findings. For example, in events, the weather conditions and physical setup of the space can impact the participants' behaviour and experience, which can then be analysed through qualitative means. (Silverman 2017, 10-18)

By combining the different data collection strategies with a reflective and systematic analysis, qualitative research can offer deeper insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants,

volunteers, artists, and media outlets. Overall, qualitative research is needed to analyse the occurrences and outcomes of festivals like Himos Winterfest. (Silverman 2017, 18)

### **5.1.1 Justification for Choosing a Qualitative Approach**

The justification behind choosing a qualitative approach for this thesis is rooted in recognising that the intricacies of Himos Winterfest and the risks associated with its events management can only be adequately grasped partially through numerical data. The diverse and multifaceted challenges encountered during Himos Winterfest 2024 prompted a notable shift in the perspectives of attendees, artists, volunteers, and the media. This necessitates a thorough investigation to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the stakeholders involved. By delving into the various challenges and elements influencing the festival's outcome, I aim to gain a more nuanced understanding of the contributing factors. Overall, the qualitative research approach provides the opportunity for a comprehensive analysis and strategic discussion of risk management in the context of Himos Winterfest, offering valuable insights for future event management practices to navigate and overcome similar challenges.

## **5.2 Content Analysis**

In the following chapter, I will examine a central tool for the research. i.e. content analysis. Content analysis is interpreting content from various sources such as books, magazines, messages, research articles, and other media. It plays a crucial role in uncovering underlying themes and meanings. This versatile research tool can be used with both qualitative and quantitative data. In qualitative research, it aids in the identification of repeating themes, narrative structures, or discursive patterns in a text. Quantitative research enables data coding and categorisation to uncover trends and linkages within more extensive datasets. (Luo 2019)

When conducting content analysis, the text's literal meaning is frequently the initial layer of interpretation, emphasising what is stated. However, to go beyond this, academics must investigate the subtext—implicit signals or underlying assumptions that disclose more about the creator's aim, cultural context, or societal standards inherent within the text. For example, in media coverage of events such as Himos Winterfest, the subtext could represent broader cultural attitudes on safety, entertainment, or consumer expectations. (Silverman 2017, 112)

Furthermore, content analysis seeks to comprehend the assumptions, ideologies, and values reflected in the material. Every content, whether a news article or a social media message, contains inherent biases and opinions. By carefully scrutinising these, researchers might understand how the material reflects or reinforces specific societal ideals or power dynamics. For example, media narratives about festivals like Himos Winterfest may reflect beliefs about what constitutes a

"successful" event and how logistical issues are interpreted and framed for the public. Overall, content analysis is an effective method for understanding what is said, how it is presented, and how it affects public perceptions and cultural norms. When applied to events such as Himos Winterfest, researchers can evaluate the media representation, audience reactions, and underlying narratives that define the event's public image. (Silverman 2017, 109-111; Luo 2019)

### **5.3 Thematic Analysis**

Next, we are going to examine thematic analysis as a research method. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research approach focusing on organising and identifying data into patterns and themes. This method is vital to research as it allows researchers to distil complex, subjective data into specific categories. By grouping data into different themes and patterns, thematic analysis can uncover the underlying patterns across various experiences. Thematic analysis can be used to investigate the shared experiences of participants, organisers, and other stakeholders in events such as Himos Winterfest. Researchers might uncover repeating themes such as logistical issues, attendance satisfaction, or safety concerns by analysing comments, social media replies, and media coverage. Patterns emerging from this data can demonstrate whether specific problems, such as poor weather or miscommunication, consistently impact the event's overall success. (Science Direct 2023)

Understanding the events and variables that lead to these patterns allows researchers better to understand the underlying causes of event-related difficulties or triumphs. For example, if many festivals in comparable locations experience weather-related issues, thematic analysis can show how specific mitigation techniques, or lack thereof, regularly result in particular outcomes. This knowledge can help event planners make better decisions in the future by allowing them to follow best practices and avoid common mistakes. (Science Direct 2023)

Thematic analysis, by focusing on these commonalities, provides insights into existing conditions and aids in forecasting future events. If particular themes appear repeatedly regarding festival events—for example, unhappiness with crowd control or acclaim for musical lineups—organisers can use this data to drive future event design. Finally, thematic analysis allows for a more in-depth knowledge of how seemingly unrelated components interact to produce comparable outcomes, paving the way for better event management and guest experiences. (Science Direct 2023)

### **5.4 Ethnographic Methods**

This thesis also draws from ethnographic methods as a qualitative approach. The ethnographic methodology is a qualitative type of research which focuses on collecting data through observations and interviews. The primary application of this methodology is in the social and behavioural

sciences, which allow for further study of cultural concepts from the perspective of individuals. (reference) Ethnography explores how people observe their surroundings and interactions with social and cultural environments. While ethnography allows for an immersive understanding of social dynamics, it can be difficult to draw specific conclusions due to its interpretive nature. However, when an event like Himos Winterfest is covered extensively in the media, ethnography becomes a beneficial method for analysing the events' social impact and people's perceptions. (University of Virginia 2024) (Silverman 2017, 104-108)

Ethnography is a long-standing method in anthropology and sociology that involves immersion research within specific cultural or social groups to understand their lived experiences and practices. Traditionally, immersion into these groups is long-term and used to observe daily practices, beliefs, and interactions accurately. Ethnographers aim to observe life without manipulating conditions, as this would result in distorted behaviours and false results. There should be no outside intervention, and the people should act how they usually would in that situation. By creating an environment for this, people can and will display their natural behaviours. (Silverman 2017, 108-109)

When applied to events such as Himos Winterfest, ethnography can better explain how the festival's environment, social interactions, and cultural factors influence the entire experience. Researchers can use participant observation to investigate how participants interact with the event, how they respond to the festival's organisation, and how the event reflects broader cultural trends. Furthermore, by analysing guests' real-time reactions and behaviours in an organic context, ethnographers might detect underlying tensions and cultural values that more structured data collection methods may miss. This comprehensive approach enables a thorough knowledge of the on-the-ground experience and the larger cultural narratives that arise with the festival. (University of Virginia 2024)

## **5.5 Concept of Netnography**

A hybrid of "internet" and "ethnography," netnography is a specialised research methodology to study virtual communities and cultures. (reference) Netnography, which Robert Kozinets created in the late 1990s, is an adaptation of traditional ethnographic methods for the digital age. The comprehension of online community behaviours, interactions, and social dynamics has grown essential as the internet becomes increasingly integrated into daily life. Researchers may examine these online phenomena with rigour and depth thanks to netnography, which offers a framework for studying digital social structures, behaviours, and meanings. (USC Annenberg 2018)

Netnography research uses a variety of data sources, such as interactional data (likes, shares, and comments), visual data (pictures, videos), and textual data (forum posts, blog entries, and social

media updates). In addition, researchers can use Internet questionnaires and interviews to supplement observational data. The multidimensional data collection makes this image of the online community under study possible. While visual data can highlight symbolic and artistic elements, textual data can disclose the community's language and communication patterns. Netnography is a marketing tool that analyses internet reviews and comments to assist firms in understanding consumer preferences, habits, and brand perceptions. It clarifies the dynamics of virtual connections, social movements, and online activism from the perspective of sociology. (USC Annenberg 2018)

The possibility of privacy abuses is one primary ethical concern. Online communities may only sometimes be aware that researchers are observing their interactions, which raises concerns about confidentiality and consent. Researchers must balance the necessity of data access and consideration for personal privacy and social standards. Furthermore, the dynamic and quickly evolving character of online settings might provide difficulties for data gathering and analysis, necessitating flexibility and adaptability on the part of researchers. (USC Annenberg 2018)

In conclusion, netnography provides a solid framework for examining the complex social dynamics of digital places, bridging the gap between offline and online ethnographic research. Netnography's relevance and value will only increase as digital interactions become increasingly integral to modern life. By adopting technological innovations and upholding ethical standards, scholars can use netnography to enhance our comprehension of virtual communities' dynamic, heterogeneous, and always-changing territory. (USC Annenberg 2018)

## **5.6 Research Ethics**

For any research to gain credibility, the ethical standards guiding information collection must be aligned with sound scientific principles. Ethical standards ensure that the research respects the rights and privacy of all participants involved and maintains integrity with data management. In qualitative research, where interpretation is vital for analysis, the process requires careful consideration as data relies on individual experiences. (Silverman 2017, 85-86; Research Council of Finland 2024)

As the researcher, my role as an interpreter of the qualitative data, personal biases or notions will need to be eliminated. This means carefully planning the analysis and conclusion from the data to stay factual. Maintaining objectivity is especially important as the data relies on observations from various stakeholders, which in the case of Himos Winterfest are the attendees, organisers, volunteers, and media outlets. Another important aspect is to respect the content used in research, as individuals' privacy needs to be managed cordially. This ensures that the collected data will maintain the confidentiality of the individuals associated with the incidents of Himos Winterfest.

A non-biased view of the circumstances is required to analyse and collect information accurately, and transparency is necessary. It is crucial to ensure that the information is not chosen through selective sampling but allows for the negative and positive aspects to be presented equally. An event like Himos Winterfest's successes and failures must be analysed from a non-biased perspective. By adhering to ethical standards, the research will contribute valuable and trustworthy findings for the events industry. (Silverman 2017, 85-86; Research Council of Finland 2024)

## 6 Results and Findings

In this chapter, the results and findings of the study will be presented. To analyse the risks associated with Himos Winterfest, I am introducing a Risk Assessment Matrix (Table 2) against which the risks manifested in social media and traditional printed media will be analysed. The collected data will be assessed using various qualitative research methods, including netnography, ethnography, content analysis, and thematic analysis. Each approach will allow for an in-depth understanding of Himos Winterfest 2024, primarily focusing on its unique characteristics, customer engagement and the overall experience the event offers the participants.

Netnography will enable us to explore online communities and social media platforms, uncovering how participants engage with the event digitally and express their experiences and opinions. Ethnographic methods will provide us with a contextual understanding of the festival by observing the behaviours and interactions of attendees in real-time. Content analysis will allow us to examine materials related to Himos Winterfest, including promotional materials, social media posts, and reviews, to identify recurring themes and sentiments. Finally, a thematic analysis will help us synthesise the findings into broader patterns that emerge across different data sources.

In today's digital landscape, perceptions shared online can significantly influence public opinion and an event's success or failure. By understanding these dynamics, we can better assess the factors contributing to Himos Winterfest's overall impact, success, and sustainability as an event in the competitive festival market.

### 6.1 Risk Assessment Matrix

This sub-chapter introduces the Risk Assessment Matrix based on Pollmann (2023) and expands upon the risks of Himos Winterfest. Potential hazards may be identified further based on the different qualitative research methodologies throughout the chapter, allowing for comprehensive risk mitigation strategies to be created, which would have benefited Vola Events Oy in organising Himos Winterfest 2024.

Table 2. Risk Assessment Matrix (Pollmann 2023)

	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
Very likely	Lost Items	Waste Management		Extreme Weather Conditions

Likely	Temporary Technical Issues	Financial Risks, Transportation Disruptions	Environmental Impact	Medical Emergencies
Possible	Communication Delays in Media	Supply Chain Disruptions, Staff Shortages	Security Threats, Food & Beverage Supply	Negative Publicity, Program Changes
Unlikely			Technical Failures, Safety Equipment Failures	Overcrowding, Legal and Compliance

### Likelihood x Severity = Risk Level

In the table above, the researcher created a tool, the Risk Management Matrix, that can be utilised in analysing the planning process for Himos Winterfest 2024 and the media coverage associated with it. This highlights the potential risks and the likelihood and severity of each topic. Depending on the intersection of the two categories, the risk level is determined by the relationship between the two. The colour of the section of each issue further indicates the risk level. Green indicates an unlikely risk level, a possible risk level is medium, orange is a likely risk level, and red indicates a very likely risk level. This matrix allows for straightforward visualisation of an event like Himos Winterfest. It provides a structured overview of risks that need urgent attention and can be monitored with minimal sources.

Among the very likely risks, lost items have a minor impact, as they are a common occurrence that can be managed with efficient lost-and-found services. Waste management is a moderate risk due to the large crowd, requiring regular waste collection and disposal efforts to maintain the event's environment. The most critical risk in this category is extreme weather conditions, which pose severe challenges that could disrupt the event or endanger attendees, necessitating a comprehensive contingency plan.

Likely risks include temporary technical issues, which have a minor effect but must be resolved swiftly to avoid inconveniences for attendees. Financial risks and transportation disruptions represent moderate concerns that could impact logistics and access, affecting the overall attendee experience. The event's environmental impact is a significant risk, potentially causing ecological harm that requires mitigation efforts. Medical emergencies, though severe, are a likely occurrence at large gatherings, making it essential to have adequate medical staff and resources on standby.

Possible risks include communication delays in media, which have a minor impact but can affect the flow of real-time updates to attendees. Supply chain disruptions and staff shortages pose moderate risks, potentially affecting service levels if supplies or staff numbers fall short. Security threats or food and beverage supply disruptions can significantly impact attendee satisfaction and safety, requiring proactive security measures and inventory management. Adverse publicity or program changes present severe risks to the event's reputation, emphasising the importance of a crisis communication plan to manage any issues.

Unlikely risks include technical or safety equipment failures, which, while less probable, could moderately impact operations and attendee safety if they occur. Though improbable, overcrowding, and legal or compliance issues are severe risks that could lead to critical safety concerns and legal complications, making crowd control and compliance with safety regulations essential.

Overall, the Risk Assessment Matrix provides a structured approach for analysing media coverage of Himos Winterfest 2024.

## **6.2 Social Media Analysis of Himos Winterfest 2024**

This subchapter analyses the social media presence of Himos Winterfest 2024, and information verified from news articles. The risk matrix can be applied when examining social media, as it will help create complementary risk mitigation approaches. Analysing the social media presence of Himos Winterfest 2024 involves utilising various qualitative research methods to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons for each incident at the festival. Of these methods, netnography stands out as the primary method of this analysis. This approach allows researchers to immerse themselves in online communities and social interactions, providing valuable insights into participants' perceptions and experiences. This comprehensive strategy aims to enhance risk management practices for future festivals by understanding how social media influences attendee experiences and event outcomes.

In festival culture, social media is pivotal in shaping attendees' narratives and overall experience. As mentioned in Chapter 4, platforms like Instagram and Facebook serve as crucial channels for communication, promotion, and feedback, and the reach and influence of these platforms can significantly impact the festival's success. Therefore, reputation management and a solid social media presence are critical components in forming a festival's brand image. They help determine how potential attendees perceive the event, influencing their participation decision.

### 6.2.1 Thematic Analysis

Extensive thematic analysis is employed to explore the common themes in social media regarding Himos Winterfest 2024 methodically. This dual approach will allow for the identification of prevalent themes within social media discussions, as well as an examination of the relationships between specific incidents and overall attendee sentiment. To systematically present findings, feedback regarding Himos Winterfest 2024 will be categorised into two distinct groups: negative and positive. After collecting and organising the data into these categories, thematic and ethnographic analyses will be conducted to extract supporting evidence and insights. Furthermore, content analysis may also be utilised to ensure a thorough examination of the data collected from various social media sources. This multifaceted analytical approach aims to provide a rich understanding of audience perceptions and experiences of the festival, thus informing better practices for future events.

Table 3. Common themes in social media

The common themes in social media regarding Himos Winterfest 2024:	
Negative Themes	Positive Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No access to water</li> <li>• VIP section uncompleted</li> <li>• Artist cancellation</li> <li>• Electricity issues</li> <li>• Unsuitable security person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique motif</li> <li>• Festival arranged in winter</li> <li>• Finnish people enjoy festivals</li> <li>• Good selection of artists</li> <li>• Organised by a young entrepreneur</li> </ul>

The table above outlines recurring incidents related to Himos Winterfest 2024 and the associated social media themes, enabling us to identify their underlying causes. The themes are organised into negative and positive themes to apply the thematic analysis to the collected data appropriately. The event faced significant backlash from national news outlets, Finnish influencers, and attendees on social media. This indicates that the festival's marketing could have been better developed through a more thorough planning process and a more experienced team at Vola Events Oy.

### 6.2.2 Basic Needs Overlooked

The negative feedback on social media regarding Himos Winterfest highlighted several key issues. A common complaint was the insufficient access to water at beverage points, which contributed to

increased intoxication levels among attendees. Additionally, long entry lines frustrated many participants, causing some to miss the first performance. This growing dissatisfaction prompted influencers to share negative content, further damaging the reputation of Vola Events Oy. Notable incidents that garnered extensive coverage included electrical malfunctions during performances, an unfinished VIP section, and the unexpected cancellation of artist Sanni, collectively leading to the festival being labelled the "Finnish Fyre Festival" (Himos Winterfest Instagram March 2024).

On a more positive note, Himos Winterfest was recognized as a unique Alpine-themed festival, the first of its kind in Finland, which generated considerable visibility. This event capitalized on the substantial potential for winter festivals in a country predominantly known for summer events, heightening attendees' expectations. While the impressive artist lineup initially boosted excitement and ticket sales, the challenges encountered ultimately led to disappointment. Furthermore, the festival's young organizer, Kim Riuttamäki, successfully engaged the young adult demographic, resulting in solid attendance (Emotion Zine 2023; Vola Events Oy 2023).

In summary, discussions on social media about Himos Winterfest revealed a notable prevalence of negative feedback. The interaction between businesses and social media can have significant consequences, particularly for organizations like Vola Events Oy. The negative reactions primarily stemmed from inadequate planning and a lack of effective risk mitigation, with many issues being avoidable through more comprehensive risk assessment. Ultimately, the organizer's inexperience contributed to deficiencies in the planning process.

### **6.3 Timeline of Himos Winterfest 2024 through Social Media**

In this subchapter, the timeline of Himos Winterfest 2024 is introduced through the events released regarding the incidents. By creating a concise timeline, the Risk Assessment Matrix in Chapter 6.1 can be fully utilised when risk mitigation strategies and analysing the risks connected to the events' incidents. The timespan of Himos Winterfest 2024 is essential to the investigation as many decisions resulted in the infamous incidents occurring during and after the event. The marketing plan of Himos Winterfest was focused on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, where most potential target customers would find out about the event. According to the marketing strategy, the target focus group of Himos Winterfest ranges from 18 to 30 years old. This assumption is based on their choices on the artist selection and the social media platforms used in their marketing campaigns. By investigating the social media platforms of Himos Winterfest, the reasons for the occurrence of the incidents are revealed and allow for a more detailed risk management analysis. This subchapter will cover the organisers' actions and incidents to ensure a thorough timeline analysis before, during and after the event. (Himos Winterfest Instagram 2024; Himos Winterfest Facebook 2023)

### 6.3.1 Security, False Promises, and Cancellations

Before the event, the Finnish national media outlets covered a topic regarding the harassment contact person at Himos Winterfest, Mika "Immu" Ilménin, an ex-crime boss of Cannonball in Finland. This decision could be considered a publicity stunt as it created a lot of conversation around the festival, which resulted in the growth of the event's reach. Many people on social media expressed concerns about the validity of the decision to assign Ilménin his position as a harassment contact person. (Nykänen 2024)

Another issue before the event was when there was a VIP package giveaway, and when the people who won were announced, they did not receive the complete package that was advertised. This package included VIP tickets to the event, a meet and greet with an artist, a helicopter ride and accommodation at the cottages nearby. Instead, the giveaway winners received only VIP tickets, access to the cottage accommodation, and a meet and greet with a different artist, unlike what was advertised in the giveaway. These incidents created a lot of negative and questioning feedback for the Himos Winterfest organisers. (Himos Winterfest Instagram March 2024)

The peak incident before the event began was the cancellation of artist Sanni's attendance at Himos Winterfest 2024. When the Himos Winterfest team announced the reason for Sanni's cancellation, the explanation included the reason being the artist's personal reasons. However, this was proven false, as Sanni's management team responded by clarifying the real reason, which was the lack of funds for Vola Events Oy, the festival organiser. At first, the organiser denied these claims but later acknowledged that they had been untruthful regarding the reason for the cancellations. The incidents were reported in the Yle, Helsingin Sanomat, and Iltalehti. Overall, these incidents created doubt in social media, which showed the early signs of the unfortunate outcome of Himos Winterfest 2024. (Lippu 1 April 2024; Mattila, I. 2024; Roiha & Kangas 2024)

### 6.3.2 Technical Problems

During the event, social media was filled with people who expressed their opinions on the adverse incidents, subsequently covered by national news media. There was a significant negative outrage regarding the incidents at Himos Winterfest 2024. These incidents included the power outage during the artist's performances. The artists tried to continue their performances, but these were challenging due to the sound systems shutting off. These moments spread through social media and increased the negative image around Himos Winterfest, building discussions around the organisers' preparedness. Another incident was when attendees were waiting to attend the festivals; the ticket station took so long that the first performance was finished when all the attendees could get

in. This resulted in customer dissatisfaction, further increasing the animosity with the organiser company.

### **6.3.3 Handling of Alcohol**

A separate occurrence would be when the beverage sales point ran out of water, increasing the attendees' intoxication levels. This is a significant safety issue and raises the possibility of unpredictable incidents to occur. Another safety issue was the need for more alcohol licenses with the volunteer workers handling the alcohol. This creates the possibility of mismanagement of alcohol and, hence, illegal selling of the beverage, as a majority of the workers needed the required license to sell and serve it. Lastly, an issue that created another social media outrage was the state of the VIP area, as it did not provide the promised elements advertised in the package. There was no heating in the area, and the area was only decorated by small tables, which did not differ from the non-VIP package. Overall, the incidents during the event further highlight the need for a more precise planning process and consistency in risk management for Himos Winterfest 2024. (Hopi & Siimoinen 2024; Lippu 21 March 2024)

### **6.3.4 Post-event Coverage**

After the event, journalists continued to cover the incidents of Himos Winterfest 2024 with an increased negative outlook, which created a bias about the event and its organiser, Vola Events Oy, and Kim Riuttamäki. While the event experienced setbacks, it was not a failure, as some people still enjoyed the alpine-themed music festival. However, due to the overpowering negative feedback, the situation can be classified as evidence of the current cancel culture. As the news outlets covered these incidents, more attendees revealed their honest opinions of Himos Winterfest, expressing their opinion, which resulted in further escalation of the suffrage for the brand image. As Himos Winterfest gathered negative commentary from influencers, attendees and volunteer workers, Kim Riuttamäki took action by contacting news outlets. In these news articles, Riuttamäki acknowledged his unpreparedness to organise such an ambitious event and stated he lacked professional experience. As Vola Events Oy is composed of a young entrepreneurial team, the experience of developing more prominent music festivals was less than desirable. However, Riuttamäki still commented that the continued negativity around Himos Winterfest 2024 was too much. Although Riuttamäki had previously stated that there were plans for another Himos Winterfest to be organised, Vola Events Oy declared bankruptcy in August 2024. This occurrence can mean that the event will be continued with another company or the journey of Himos Winterfest ends with the latest one. (Hopi 2024; Lassuri 2024; Lippu 1 April 2024; Mattila, M. 2024; Ylitie 2024)

To conclude, the timeline of Himos Winterfest 2024 shows the gradual but inevitable unfortunate outcome for the festival and its organisers. This is evident in the instant reaction that social media influenced whenever a questionable decision or incident took place. The several occurrences led to Himos Winterfest and Kim Riuttamäki being cancelled, a common occurrence in social media. Cancel culture resulted in the constant bash of the company Vola Events Oy and CEO Kim Riuttamäki. Due to the negativity in the press and the incidents either before, during or after the event, Vola Events Oy declared bankruptcy, with Riuttamäki experiencing personal losses as well. (Roiha 2024; Ylitie 2024)

#### 6.4 Instagram Marketing Analysis of Himos Winterfest 2024

In this section of the results and findings, a detailed analysis of the Instagram account belonging to Himos Winterfest will be conducted. The focus will be on their marketing posts, which serve as promotional content and platforms for customer engagement. Expanding the Risk Assessment Matrix (Table 2) in this Instagram marketing analysis allows for the creation of more effective risk mitigation strategies tailored to specific needs. Examining how these posts facilitate the inclusion of customer opinions and feedback, as well as the responses provided by the marketing team. By evaluating the interactions between the audience and the marketing team, we can gain substantial insights into the effectiveness of Himos Winterfest's social media presence and its impact on customer feedback and brand image.

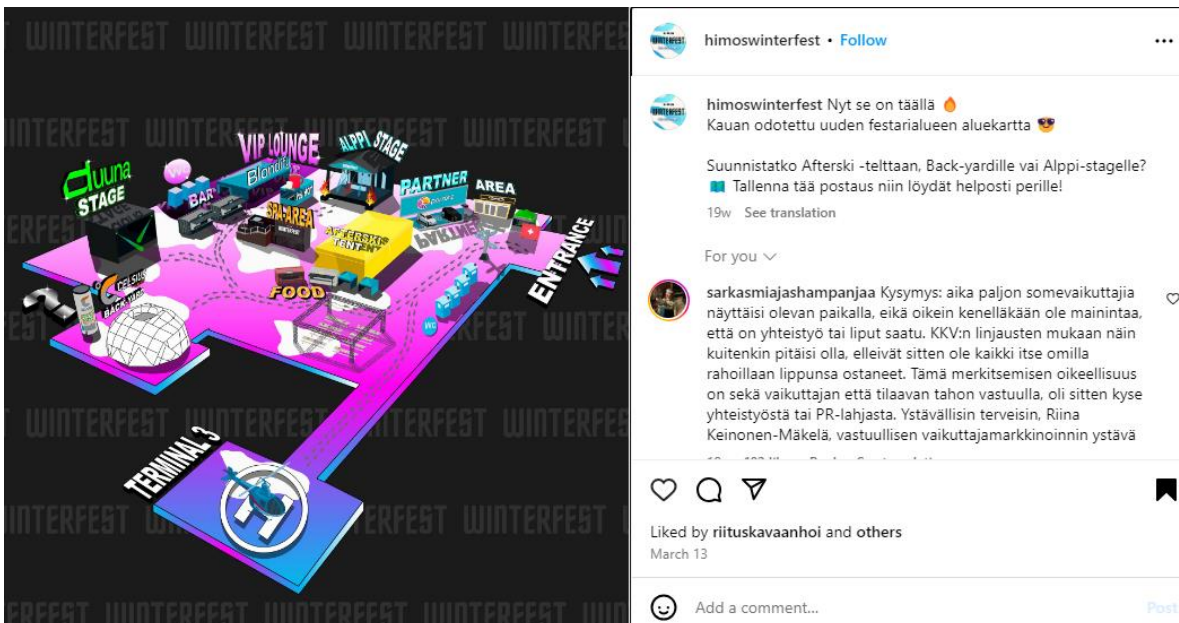


Image 2. Himos Winterfest (Instagram Post 13.3.2024)

Image two above displays an example of Himos Winterfest marketing, specifically on the Instagram platform, where it highlights the different areas of the festival. This post was released on March 13,

2024, to generate excitement for the event. However, many regions advertised in this post either did not exist or were poorly constructed during the Himos Winterfest 2024 event. This inconsistency created a negative brand image and highlighted issues with the festival's organisation. (Lassuri 2024)

A notable criticism, mentioned by an author in the comments, was the lack of transparency regarding collaborations or free tickets given to influencers aimed at boosting ticket sales. It is essential to acknowledge that the influencers participating in the event purchased their tickets to avoid any deception in advertising. This example illustrates a failure to deliver on promised elements and improper marketing of the event, reflecting the inexperience of the Himos Winterfest 2024 organisers.



Image 3. Himos Winterfest (Instagram Post 3.3.2024)

This image and the one below, which are images three and four, include the festival schedule on Friday and Saturday. Each shows the location and timeframe for the artist performing on the different stages. These posts' marketing purposes were also to generate excitement and increase ticket sales for Himos Winterfest 2024. In image two, released on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024, the comments are asking about the status of the artists, which was due to the cancellation of another artist, Sanni. There was much false information surrounding the reason for the cancellation, which caused suspicions to be raised. One user briefly commented about the situation with Sanni, only confirming the negative image that the situation had created for the festival. Another example of the unrest in image two is when a comment raises a question about the status of No Hero, another artist due to perform at Himos Winterfest 2024.

For image four, the Himos Winterfest 2024 marketing team announced the cancellation of Sanni's performance in an Instagram post on March 16th, 2024. The cancellation was due to insufficient funds, specifically the missing prepayments. The marketing team, and undoubtedly the organiser Kim Riuttamäki, further explained that Himos Lomat Oy had neglected the bills regarding the Himos Winterfest event. An apology is included for the customers, especially artist Sanni, who promises to be better prepared in the future for these issues. The message then ends by announcing the replacement artist, Tuuli. However, it became clear in an YLE news article, in which Himos Lomat Oy took part, that the payments had been finished. This further incited distrust regarding the authenticity of the company and the overall image of Himos Winterfest. (Lassuri 2024)

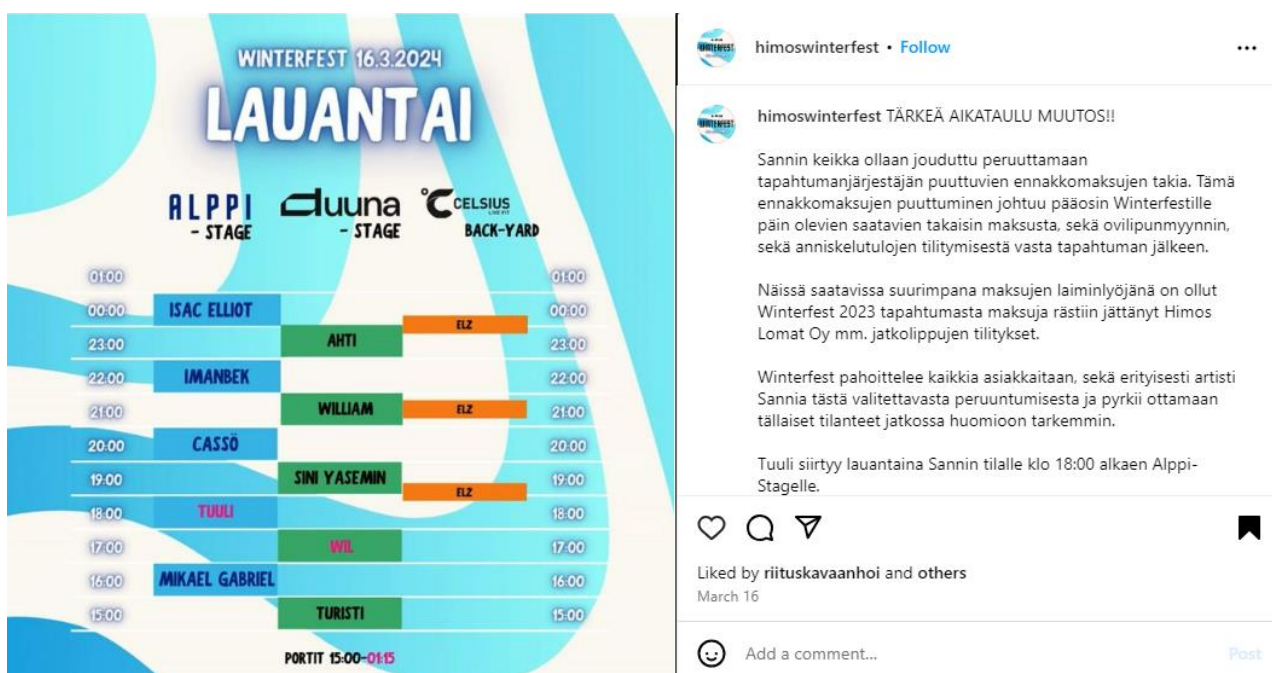


Image 4. Himos Winterfest (Instagram Post 16.3.2024)

In image five, the Instagram post is the organisers' reply regarding the incidents at Himos Winterfest. The post was created on March 31, after the festival, and the media showed great dissatisfaction with the organiser; the marketing team's response appeared tone-deaf considering the situation. Initially, the post begins with expressing gratitude to the workers, volunteers, artists, and business partners. It is mentioned that the event brought many emotions, such as happiness, hate, tears, and laughter. While the marketing team cautiously addresses the incidents covered on multiple media platforms and news outlets, they state that these incidents provide a learning opportunity, which is valid.

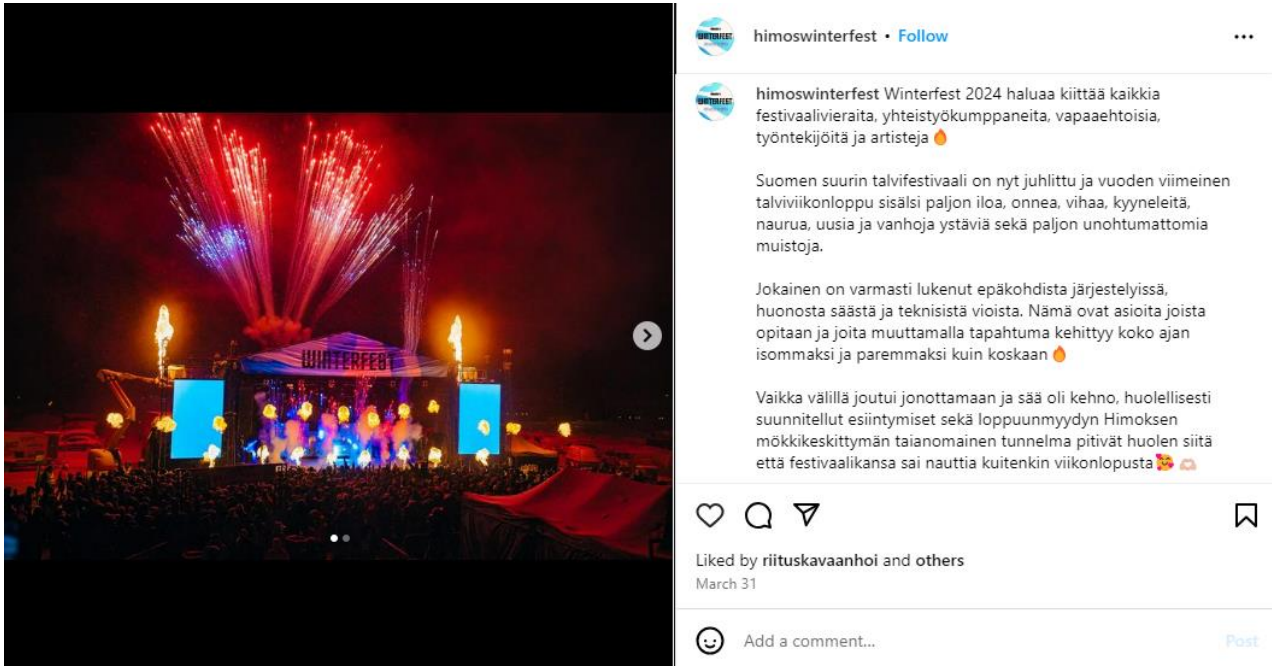


Image 5. Himos Winterfest (Instagram Post 31.3.2024)

However, the last paragraph of the Instagram post created an image that the organisers were completely on top of all the incidents and people were still enjoying their time at Himos Winterfest 2024. By browsing through the comments, it was evident that while there were a few positive remarks about the festivals, most of them painted this statement as the organisation not properly taking responsibility for their shortcomings. Not to mention, the articles and posts by volunteer workers and attendees introduced the incidents in a different light, raising further doubts about the credibility of Vola Events Oy and, by extension, Kim Riuttamäki. (Lassuri 2024; Lippu 1 April 2024)

In summary, the marketing team's approach in showcasing the Himos Winterfest 2024 on Instagram revealed concerning risks that stemmed from the organisers' apparent negligence and lack of accountability, highlighting their inexperience in the event management industry. Each post on the platform illustrated a gradual escalation in these risks, which became increasingly apparent through the combination of public comments and the materials selected for promotional purposes. The feedback from viewers and the choice of content and imagery used in the marketing efforts pointed to missteps that contributed to the festival's unfortunate outcome. The disconnect between the marketing vision and practical application reveals systemic issues within the event's organisational framework, suggesting an urgent need for improved risk assessment and management practices.

## 6.5 Content Analysis of News Articles Titles

This sub-chapter analyses news articles about Himos Winterfest 2024, specifically focusing on titles. The news articles are from Iltalehti, Yle Uutiset and Helsingin Sanomat. The content analysis of these titles reveals a predominantly negative portrayal of the event, highlighting significant challenges the organisers face and their broader implications. The analysis in this chapter will support the development of risk mitigation strategies based on the Risk Assessment Matrix (Table 2) in Chapter 6.1. The language and tone used in the headlines reflect dissatisfaction and outrage, focusing on logistical failures, disputes, and poor management. This analysis will explore the recurring themes, their implications, and how they influence public perception.

Table 4. Printed Media and Headlines

News Outlets	Articles and Dates	Original Title in Finnish
<b>Iltalehti</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview with the workers of Himos Winterfest 2024. Released 17 March 2024. Hopi, A &amp; Simoinen, K.</li> <li>• Himos Winterfest organiser receives hundreds of awful texts. Released 18 March 2024. Hopi, A.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Nyt Puhuvat Himoksen Kaaosfestarin Työntekijä Ja Somevas- taava: Vesi Loppui, Palkkaa Ei Maksettu, Hygienia Puutteel- lista”</li> <li>• “Himos Winterfestin Järjestäjälle Sataa Karkeitä Viestejä – Myöntää Nyt Suurimman Vir- heensä.”</li> </ul>
<b>Yle Uu- tiset</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Himos Winterfest receives cri- tique for poor festival arrange- ments. Released 16 March 2024. Roiha, M. &amp; Kangas, L.</li> <li>• The organiser, Riuttamäki, an- nounced they would quit. Re- leased 2 April 2024. Lassuri, A.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “.Himos Winterfest Kerää Kritiik- kiä Huonoista Järjestelyistä, Sanni Perui Keikkansa.”</li> <li>• “Himos Winterfestin Pääjärjes- täjä Kertoo Lopettavansa – To- teaa Projektin Olleen Itselle Liian Iso.”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organiser of Himos Winterfest has declared bankruptcy. Released 24 August 2024. Roiha, M.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Jämsän Himoksen Winterfestin Järjestäjä on Hakeutunut Konkurssiin.”</li> </ul>
<b>Helsingin Sanomat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannonball's ex-boss was named as the harassment contact person. Released 28 February 2024. Nykänen, R.</li> <li>Attendees give negative feedback about the Himos Winterfest 2024 organisation. Released 16 March 2024. Mattila, I.</li> <li>“Real Chaos”: Winterfest Volunteer worker talks about the horrific working conditions. Released 19 March 2024. Lippu, A.</li> <li>The booking agent claims Winterfest asked them to lie about reasons for Sanni's cancelled gig. Released 21 March 2024. Lippu, A.</li> <li>The organiser of Himos Winterfest leaves his position after an onslaught of negative feedback. Released 1 April 2024. Lippu, A.</li> <li>The organiser of the chaotic Himos Winterfest is in distress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Cannonballin Ex-Pomo Nimitettiin Nuorisofestivaalin Häirintäyhdyshenkilöksi.”</li> <li>“Himoksen Talvifestivaalin Yleisö Valittaa Huonoista Järjestelyistä, Sanni Perui Esiintymisensä.”</li> <li>“”Kunnon Kaaos”: Winterfestin Vapaaehtoistyöntekijä Kertoo Karuista Olosuhteista.”</li> <li>“Keikkamyymä Väittää: Winterfest Pyysi Valehtelemaan Sannin Keikan Peruuntumisen Syystä.”</li> <li>“Järjestelyistään Moitteita Saa-neen Himos Winterfestin Järjestäjä Luopuu Tehtävästään.”</li> <li>“Kaaottisten Festivaalien Järjestäjä Suistui Ahdinkoon.”</li> </ul>

	Released 23 August 2024. Ylitiie, H.	
<b>Ilta-Sanommat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Himos Winterfest became a disaster, now talks the organiser. Released 17 March 2024. Mattila, M.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Himoksen Festivaalista Tuli Tohtaalinen Katastrofi – Nyt Järjestäjä Avaa Suunsa.”</li> </ul>

Table four above lists the four news outlets, the twelve articles, and their dates to ensure a more thorough understanding of the material. This allows for easier access for the readers to follow through with the articles mentioned in this chapter. The authors of each article, along with their original Finnish titles, are included to provide a comprehensive source of information.

## VIIHDEUUTISET



# Nyt puhuvat Himoksen kaaosfestarin työntekijä ja somevastaava: Vesi loppui, palkkaa ei maksettu, hygienia puutteellista...

Himos Winterfest meni työntekijän ja somevastaavan mukaan pahasti pieleen myös kulissien takana.

Image 6: Article Title (Iltalehti 17.3.2024)

In image six, a prominent theme appears in the title, *"Nyt puhuvat Himoksen kaaosfestarin työntekijä ja somevastaava: Vesi loppui, palkkaa ei maksettu, hygienia puutteellista..."* (Now the workers and social media managers of the chaotic Himos festival speak: Water ran out, wages unpaid, hygiene lacking...). This headline focuses on operational and ethical failures behind the scenes. Complaints about unpaid salaries, lack of essential services, and poor hygiene highlight the event's internal chaos, suggesting deeper systemic issues within the organisation. This article was released after the Himos Winterfest 2024 was held and revealed the conditions of the workers, whether they were volunteers or social media managers. Including all these incidents in the title captures the overwhelming moments that these workers had to face, and after these were released to the public, they caused an outrage. Overall, this title creates a successful hook for readers and furthers the negative connotation associated with Himos Winterfest 2024. (Hopi & Simoinen 2024)

# Keikkamyymjä väittää: Winterfest pyysi valehtelemaan Sannin keikan peruuntumisen syystä

**Festivaalit** | Festivaalin järjestäjä ja tapahtumatoimisto setvivät välejänsä sosiaalisessa mediassa.

Image 7: Article Title (Yle Uutiset 21.3.2024)

Headlines like *"Keikkamyymjä väittää: Winterfest pyysi valehtelemaan Sannin keikan peruuntumisen syystä"* (Booking agent claims: Winterfest asked to lie about the reason for Sanni's cancelled gig) point to ethical and professional misconduct. The inclusion of accusations about dishonesty amplifies the controversy surrounding the event, painting the organisers as untrustworthy. Such narratives deepen public distrust and contribute to the overall negative branding. This erosion of trust can have lasting effects on the organisers' brand image, and anyone associated with the event's building. Any accusations of credibility, especially when a famous artist like Sanni is associated with it, increases the risk of lasting ramifications to Vola Events Oy. By extension, in the future, artists and the public will show doubt whenever the organiser makes an announcement. Overall, signs of ethical misconduct associated with artists and essential announcements will now be associated with Himos Winterfest, Vola Events Oy and CEO Kim Riuttamäki. (Lippu 21 March 2024)

# Kaaottisten festivaalien järjestäjä suistui ahdinkoon

**Konkurssit** | Konkurssihakemuksen jättänyt Vola events tunnetaan kaksi kertaa järjestetyn Himos Winterfestin järjestäjänä. Festivaali sai keväällä moitteita sen epäonnistuneista järjestelyistä.

Image 8: Article Title (Helsingin Sanomat 23.8.2024)

Titles such as *"Kaaottisten festivaalien järjestäjä suistui ahdinkoon"* (The organiser of chaotic festivals fell into distress) highlight the overall perception of mismanagement with Himos Winterfest. Using terms like "chaotic" underscores the event's failure to meet expectations, portraying it as poorly executed and plagued by significant issues. This framing sets a tone of incompetence and unreliability, only creating a negative connotation with the event. In the news article title, the

organiser, Kim Riuttamäki, is mentioned to be in "distress", followed by a declaration of bankruptcy of Vola Events Oy. It also mentions the overwhelmingly adverse feedback about the failed arrangements for Himos Winterfest 2024. This article's title creates a dramatic framing of the condition of the Riuttamäki, which escalated with the recent bankruptcy of his company when the article was released. Overall, this article creates a very distasteful image of the organiser, which has not been confirmed by Riuttamäki themselves in the article. (Ylitie 23 August 2024)

The consistent use of emotionally charged words such as "chaotic," "distress," and "lacking" emphasises the negative impact of the event, contributing to its notoriety. This reflects a shift in media coverage from the event's intended purposes, entertainment, and community engagement to its shortcomings, creating an adverse narrative. The overwhelmingly critical tone of the headlines indicates that Himos Winterfest 2024 serves as a case study on how logistical missteps, ethical controversies, and poor crisis management can result in a significant reputational crisis. The extensive media attention on failures rather than successes illustrates how negative publicity can overshadow any potential positive aspects of the event. This negative narrative harms the credibility of the festival and its organiser and has wider implications for future events bearing similar branding. As a result, sponsors, partners, and attendees may be reluctant to associate with such events due to concerns about reputational damage or financial loss.

Overall, this analysis of the headlines reveals a stark disconnect between Himos Winterfest's intended purpose and public perception. The language used in the media conveys feelings of disappointment, frustration, and mistrust, creating a lasting negative impression. This case underscores the importance of proactive management, transparency, and effective crisis communication to mitigate risks and rebuild trust following such failures.

## **6.6 Risk Mitigation Strategies**

Based on the findings from the previous chapters, this subchapter's understanding of qualitative methodology has enabled the development of comprehensive and effective mitigation strategies. Developing the Risk Assessment Matrix (Table 2) and risk mitigation strategies based on the media analysis of Himos Winterfest 2024 allows for a comprehensive analysis of Himos Winterfest 2024 to be facilitated for the thesis.

The mitigation strategies are for developing future festivals with a similar idea or if Himos Winterfest aims to return despite Vola Events Oy declaring bankruptcy. The strategies are connected to the previous sub-chapter as the matrix introduces the possible risks, which are given solutions in this section. As seen in the other chapters, many risks were classified as very likely, likely,

possible, or unlikely on the Risk Assessment Matrix (Table 2). This creates a higher need for proper and meticulous mitigation strategies for each potential risk.

Each identified risk category requires a tailored approach to mitigate the risks associated with Hi-mos Winterfest. For risks deemed very likely yet low in severity, such as lost items, organisers can establish an accessible lost-and-found system. This should be visible on event maps, websites, and apps, with staff trained to assist attendees in retrieving their belongings. Waste management, another very likely risk, calls for an organised disposal plan involving ample recycling and waste bins around the venue and regular waste collection schedules. Partnering with local waste management services and promoting sustainable practices among attendees is essential. Extreme weather conditions, rated as a severe risk, demand a detailed weather contingency plan that includes provisions for shelter, snow removal, and safe pathways. Monitoring weather forecasts and communicating updates to attendees through social media will keep everyone informed while warming stations and emergency shelter options can mitigate the impact of extreme winter conditions.

For risks categorised as likely, such as temporary technical issues, on-site technical support should be readily available to address any sound or lighting problems. Equipment must be tested in advance, with backup systems prepared for critical areas. Financial risks and transportation disruptions require a flexible budget to accommodate unexpected expenses and ensure reliable transport providers. Maintaining an emergency fund and positive vendor relationships can buffer against these financial challenges. The risk of environmental impact necessitates reducing the event's footprint by setting up recycling stations, using eco-friendly materials, and educating attendees on responsible behaviour. Medical emergencies, another significant concern, highlight the importance of having trained medical personnel and a designated first-aid station that attendees can quickly locate. Collaborating with local health services and preparing staff for various health issues, such as hypothermia or injuries, is essential.

Possible risks, like communication delays in media, can be managed by maintaining open lines with media outlets and using multiple channels, including social media, for timely updates. A team dedicated to media communication, equipped with pre-written messages, can expedite responses. Supply chain disruptions and staff shortages necessitate backup suppliers to ensure consistent food and beverage service and cross-training for staff to cover various roles. A reserve of essential items can prevent potential shortages. Security threats and food or beverage supply issues, assessed as significant risks, require professional security personnel trained in crowd control and incident response. Multiple food vendors and well-organised crowd management at food stalls ensure a safe environment. Addressing severe risks like adverse publicity and program changes

involves a crisis communication plan with a designated spokesperson who can provide consistent messaging. Contingency plans for program changes, such as alternative activities, can prevent disappointment among attendees.

For unlikely risks, such as technical and safety equipment failures, organisers should regularly test and maintain essential gear, including power sources and safety equipment. Inspections before the event and backup options like portable generators and additional safety tools can minimise disruptions. Overcrowding and legal compliance issues, categorised as severe, require a strict capacity limit with crowd control measures, such as barriers and marked pathways. Coordination with local authorities ensures compliance with permits and regulations, while experienced security personnel maintain lawful and orderly event operations.

By implementing effective mitigation strategies, Himos Winterfest organisers and organisers could have significantly reduced the likelihood and impact of potential risks. Establishing safety protocols and enhancing communication with attendees would promote a secure environment and ensure quick responses to any issues. These proactive measures would improve the overall attendee experience and protect the festival's reputation, attracting repeat visitors and contributing to its long-term success. Prioritising risk reduction would have positioned Himos Winterfest as a responsible and enjoyable event for all.

## 7 Discussion

In this chapter, we will delve deeper into the results and findings presented in the previous chapter, analysing them in conjunction with the concepts outlined in the theoretical framework. This approach aims for a thorough and nuanced understanding of the research findings. A significant concept evident and applicable to Himos Winterfest 2024 is Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which underscores the critical importance of fulfilling basic physiological and psychological needs for individuals to achieve a sense of security, contentment, and overall well-being. When these foundational needs remain unaddressed, it often leads to dissatisfaction and unrest among individuals.

An example of Maslow's hierarchy phenomenon, as defined in Chapter 3.1, can be observed in the case of Himos Winterfest, an event many attendees had high expectations for. Unfortunately, it became clear that the event suffered from significant organisational shortcomings, resulting in widespread discontent among the participants. This dissatisfaction was not merely anecdotal; it was prominently displayed across various social media platforms, particularly Instagram, where attendees voiced their grievances regarding the event's disorganisation, whether that was in the comment section of Himos Winterfest posts. The festival's reputation, along with that of its CEO, Kim Riuttamäki, faced challenges due to the public backlash stemming from the unmet expectations of the attendees. This situation illustrates the critical importance of effective event management and the potential consequences of failing to meet participants' basic needs as expressed in *Ilta-lehti*. (Hopi & Simoinen 2024; McLeod 2024)

The consequences of the festival's shortcomings extended well beyond the immediate disappointment experienced by attendees, as mentioned in Chapter 2.4. As news of the event's failures spread, media outlets, social media platforms, and public discussions began to amplify the negative aspects of the experience, creating a stark and troubling contrast between the festival's intended image of excitement and vibrancy and the actual lacklustre reality. The journalistic coverage highlighted specific incidents of mismanagement, safety concerns, and logistical failures. At the same time, attendees took to social media to share their frustrations, posting real-time updates and photos that displayed the disconnect between expectations and reality. This barrage of adverse reactions contributed to a growing narrative of infamy surrounding the event, leading to unwanted publicity that was difficult to manage, which was mentioned in Chapters 4.1 and 4.2. (Himos Winterfest 2024)

The negative coverage not only captured the immediate critiques but also began to overshadow any positive elements that might have been associated with the festival, such as planned performances or unique attractions. As a result, the festival faced significant backlash, leading to widespread criticism from various stakeholders, including attendees, local businesses, and sponsors.

This chain reaction ultimately eroded trust, as mentioned in the cancel culture Chapter 4.2.1, as stakeholders questioned the festival organisers' competence and commitment to delivering a satisfactory experience. (Hopi 2024; Roiha 2024)

The lack of preparation exhibited during the Himos Winterfest resulted in significant consequences for Vola Events and its founder, Kim Riuttamäki. The chaotic organisation of the event sparked intense criticism from the media, which fuelled public outrage and led to a substantial erosion of trust in the company. Vola Events Oy struggled to maintain its reputation, facing mounting pressure from media outlets and the community. By August 2024, unable to recover from the fallout, Vola Events Oy made the difficult decision to file for bankruptcy. This development highlights the critical importance of thorough risk management and meticulous preparation in event planning. The case serves as a poignant and relevant example within this thesis, showcasing the tangible repercussions that can arise from inadequacies in planning and the necessity for event organisers to prioritise robust strategies to mitigate potential risks. (Ylitie 2024)

## **7.1 Further Improvement**

In this chapter, we discuss potential improvements for Himos Winterfest 2024, which were further developed by creating risk mitigation strategies. The mitigation strategies were supported by the tool Risk Assessment Matrix (Table 2) and the media analysis in Chapter 6. As the researcher, I have identified several areas for improvement regarding the execution of Himos Winterfest 2024. The collected data highlights critical issues that require attention and provides valuable insights into possible solutions and mitigation strategies to enhance future event iterations.

To address the inadequacies noted at Himos Winterfest, a robust planning framework must be implemented. Improved logistical coordination, including clear communication channels and contingency plans, can help to reduce risks including delays, resource shortages, and technical failures. Enhanced staff training and planning and a dedicated crisis management team would ensure a more professional reaction to unexpected situations. Maintaining open communication with stakeholders, including attendees, artists, and partners, is critical for maintaining trust and credibility. This includes providing honest and timely updates, particularly on cancellations and program changes.

The research process itself can benefit from improvement. Using broader data collection methods, such as surveys or focus groups with attendance, would provide a more comprehensive insight into participant experiences. Expanding the scope of interviews to include employees, contractors, and vendors may provide more in-depth insights into operational elements and aid in the

identification of further improvement opportunities. Furthermore, incorporating a comparative analysis with similar occurrences would allow for benchmarking and implementation of best practices.

By incorporating these enhancements, future events with comparable goals, like an Alpine-themed winter festival, and the findings of this study can gain increased depth and efficacy, contributing to a more successful and well-regarded music festival.

### **7.1.1 Sustainability Improvements**

Regarding sustainability improvements that Vola Events Oy should have included in its risk management strategy, numerous critical actions should have been implemented to improve the event's environmental and social impact. These precautions would include focusing on waste management strategies, such as placing clearly designated recycling stations across the event grounds and ensuring the correct disposal of all waste products. Furthermore, having assigned workers who would oversee the conditions of waste management throughout the festival ensures a clean environment.

Another improvement would be incorporating local Jämsä suppliers and vendors, which would support the regional economy and reduce the environmental impact of long-distance shipping and transportation. Collaborating with local communities to source sustainable products and services would align the event closely with responsible environmental practices. Furthermore, offering incentives for attendees to use public transport or carpooling, alongside coordinating shuttle services, would help minimise transportation-related carbon emissions.

Finally, clear communication about the event's sustainability efforts is critical for educating and inspiring guests. Updating sustainable projects and encouraging attendees to participate in eco-friendly activities, such as reusable water bottle stations, would help to develop a shared feeling of environmental responsibility. Vola Events Oy could have increased its environmental and social accountability by incorporating these sustainability improvements into its risk management plan, reaffirming the company's commitment to responsible event management.

## **8 Conclusion**

This chapter concludes the thesis by synthesising the findings and providing final reflections on the study. Its primary objective is to enhance our understanding of the factors contributing to the unfortunate incidents associated with the Himos Winterfest 2024 event. The analysis explores various elements that led to the event's challenges, including logistical errors, communication breakdowns, and shortcomings in risk management.

This thesis functions as a comprehensive case study that underscores critical aspects of risk management for students and professionals in the event management field. It highlights the necessity of thorough planning and proactive decision-making to mitigate potential issues. By examining this case, the researcher aims to offer practical insights and strategies that can be implemented to avoid similar adverse reactions in national news and media in the future. This reflection contributes to academic discourse and serves as a valuable resource for those aiming to excel in the dynamic arena of event management.

### **8.1 Potential Follow-up**

As for the potential follow-up to the thesis, arranging in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, including festival workers, attendees, and artists, would be beneficial. By exploring their perspectives, unfiltered by media portrayals, we can uncover new insights regarding the circumstances surrounding the incidents that occurred during the Himos Winterfest 2024. The initial research needed to focus on these groups' personal experiences and narratives, which are crucial for a well-rounded understanding of the event.

Conducting interviews would allow us to gather firsthand accounts that can reveal motivations, emotions, and reactions that have not been documented previously. Testimonies from attendees would provide valuable insights into their experiences, while volunteer input can highlight the operational challenges faced during the festival. Additionally, artists can share their unique perspectives on how these incidents affected their performances and interactions with the audience. This information will help improve the organisation of a professional and stress-free environment for all stakeholders, particularly the artists expected to perform at the event.

By incorporating various perspectives, we can create a more detailed and balanced portrayal of Himos Winterfest and explore the potential factors that led to its unfortunate outcome. This comprehensive approach will enhance our understanding of the festival's dynamics and improve our ability to draw meaningful conclusions from the events that took place. Additionally, this can create further learning opportunities for students in the event management field.

## **8.2 Benefits of the Thesis**

Students and business professionals can develop innovative strategies by thoroughly analysing and discussing the various events during the Himos Winterfest while gaining valuable insights from previous mistakes. Vola Event Oy's primary objective was to provide students with hands-on experience to help them build expertise in the diverse and dynamic events industry. Organising a large-scale festival presents numerous challenges, even for well-established companies with considerable experience. These challenges can be magnified for newer organisations due to their limited resources and knowledge. To navigate these difficulties effectively, new companies should seek advice from experienced community members with a proven track record in event management or consider hiring professionals with extensive backgrounds in the industry. This approach will facilitate a smoother learning curve, providing newcomers with the insights and skills necessary to succeed.

To conclude, it is vital that by closely examining Vola Event Oy's journey and the specific projects undertaken at Himos Winterfest, aspiring event industry professionals can equip themselves with the knowledge and preparedness required to tackle the unique challenges they may encounter as they pursue their careers in the events industry. A high level of preparation will enhance the confidence of these future professionals and improve their ability to contribute effectively to future events by understanding the underlying elements when preparing to organise an event like Himos Winterfest.

## **8.3 Own Learning**

This subchapter details my experiences throughout the various phases of the thesis process. The work involved in producing this bachelor's thesis demanded many hours dedicated to finding credible sources and planning a comprehensive layout. In the first phase, most of the time was spent searching for potential sources and topics to include in the theoretical framework. With guidance from the coordinator, I was able to construct a coherent plan outlining the content to be included in the thesis.

During the second phase, new ideas emerged that allowed for developing a more specific and detailed content outline, enhancing the initial chapters. As the thesis evolved, it became more apparent which topics were essential to pursue further and which could be omitted. Maintaining a consistent writing schedule proved challenging in this phase, as the workload required significant motivation to sustain. Ultimately, the introduction, theoretical framework, and methodology were finalised upon completion of this phase.

In the third phase of the thesis, the focus shifted to completing the results and findings, discussion, and conclusion sections. This part required extensive connection of points and integrating all previous information into a comprehensive analysis. The analysis benefited from the years of study at Haaga-Helia, enhancing the quality of the research. By examining the Himos Winterfest 2024, it was possible to evaluate the festival from an event management perspective, deepening the understanding of risk assessment and management applicable to Himos Winterfest 2024 and similar future festivals.

Throughout this process, I enhanced my research skills by effectively identifying credible resources and understanding what constitutes a credible source. My writing has also significantly improved in speed and quality due to consistent practice. This experience has made it easier for me to produce a cohesive piece of research, particularly one that requires extensive data collection and thorough writing. Additionally, by applying the knowledge acquired during my studies at Haaga-Helia, I was able to contribute to the development of the events industry. Overall, the thesis process has fostered my personal growth into a student who can take pride in their work, concluding with the bachelor's thesis on Himos Winterfest 2024.

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