

EFFECTS OF THE HEALTH CRISIS CAUSED BY COVID-19 ON BRAZILIAN CULTURAL EVENTS: DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE PANDEMIC



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ABSTRACT

The health crisis caused by Covid-19 has had a significant impact on Brazilian cultural events, with audience restrictions and social distancing measures. In this context, digital marketing strategies have become fundamental to maintain public engagement and the dissemination of events, in addition to providing innovative methods for artists and organizers of cultural events in general in order to increase the financial return of their artistic and cultural works with the support of social media, both in dissemination, and in the realization of digital events, such as YouTube lives. Digital marketing comprises the use of digital platforms and technologies to promote products, services, and experiences, and involves the creation of relevant content, audience segmentation, and online interactions. The purpose of this study is to examine the research problem identified below: what were the advantages provided by YouTube lives to artists and event organizers in Brazil during the Covid-19 pandemic? Regarding the general objective, this study intends to investigate the effects of the health crisis caused by Covid-19 on Brazilian cultural events. In this research, three specific objectives were conceived, which are presented as follows: to verify the general panorama of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil; explore the pandemic impacts on artists and organizers of cultural events; analyze the relevance that digital marketing strategies had for cultural events during the Covid-19 pandemic, with an emphasis on the impacts of YouTube lives. To develop this study, we opted for the methodology of bibliographic review with a narrative nature. This method is aligned with qualitative research approaches and is characterized as an exploratory investigation.

Keywords: Health Crisis. Cultural Events. Digital Marketing. Digital Media. Pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

The health crisis caused by Covid-19 imposed social isolation that caused a series of changes in relation to the customs and behavioral aspects of individuals, generating new forms of creation, production, consumption, and relationship with brands, artists, and cultural events. Suddenly, the streets emptied and non-essential commerce was closed, as well as cultural events and artistic performances were also suspended for much of the pandemic period. The technological presence in the daily lives of individuals was driven by the need to stay connected during the long period in which there was a need for physical distance due to the conditions indicated by health agencies.

Social media and instant messaging apps on mobile devices have become the main digital spaces for interaction between people during the pandemic, and have allowed human relationships to remain active for personal purposes, as well as in the professional sphere due to the increase in demands associated with teleworking. In the same way, innovative forms of cultural creation, production, and consumption have emerged, as is the case of artists and brands that have found, on certain digital platforms, digital marketing strategies to promote and market products and services, as well as strengthen the relationship with the public through lives, videos, and virtual interactions.

EVOLUTION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN BRAZIL: OVERVIEW

The Covid-19 pandemic, caused by the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, means "Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2, had its origin in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, China. The first initial information found clinical symptoms linked to coronavirus infections, highlighting the evolution to severe pneumonia. At the beginning of the health crisis, it was found that the initial confirmed cases were mostly people associated with a wholesale seafood market located in Wuhan (Brazil, 2022).

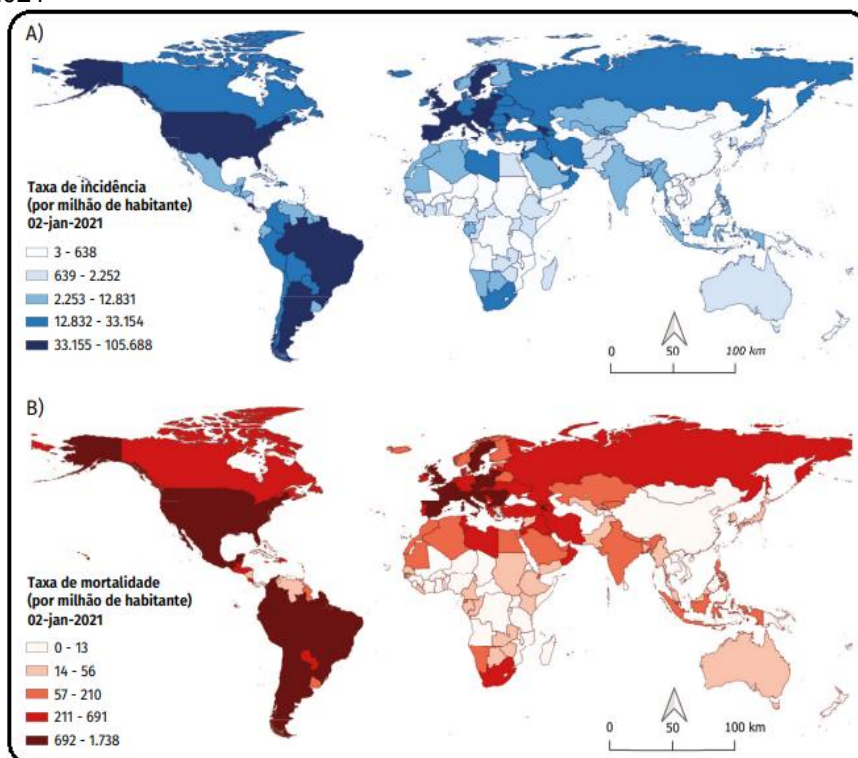
With the rapid spread of the virus in 25 provinces of China, and until January 25, 2020, approximately two thousand cases and fifty-six deaths from Covid-19 were identified. In the same month of January, the disease was identified in other regions of the world, such as Asia, Europe and North America. In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a state of pandemic, after Covid-19 surpassed 110,000 cases in 114 countries, reflecting the serious global spread of the virus (Brazil, 2022).

In February two thousand and twenty, the first case of Covid-19 was registered, followed by the Ministry of Health, together with other federal, state and municipal health

entities, began a concerted effort to monitor, manage and disseminate information responsibly, facing technical and scientific limitations due to the unprecedented nature of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The. The social, demographic, economic and cultural characteristics of the country, With a population of more than 210 million people, Brazil is the sixth most populous country in the world and has the fifth largest territorial extension, factors that influence the dynamics of viral dissemination, when compared to other relevant issues, shaped the way the transmission of the virus occurred between 2020 and 2021. In 2022, in Brazil, the marked influence of Covid-19 in the country was evidenced by the fact that the nation often occupies the world leadership in the number of cases and deaths during the pandemic.

As of January 2, 2021, ten months after the initial detection of Covid-19 in Brazil, there were 84,679,917 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 1,842,750 deaths related to the virus on a global scale. In that period, Brazil occupied the third position in relation to the total number of cases and deaths. Figure 1 illustrates the global distribution of incidence (A) and mortality (B) rates associated with Covid-19, emphasizing Brazil's position compared to other nations (Brazil, 2022).

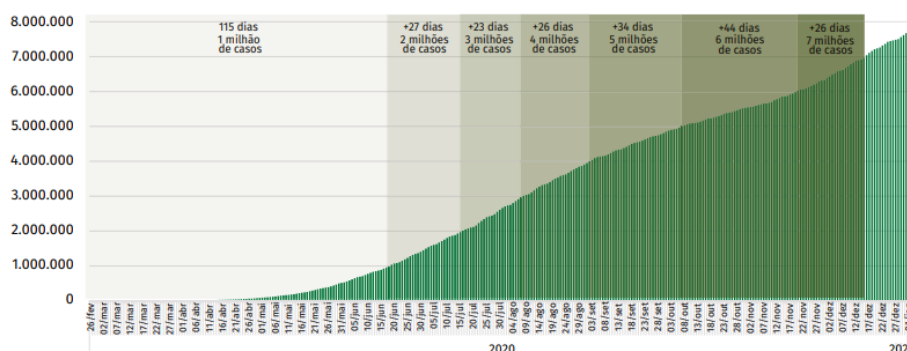
Figure 1 – Global Distribution of Incidence and Mortality Rates Related to the Covid-19 Virus – Official Data up to January 2, 2021



Source: Brazil (2022, p. 18).

The period between the first clinical case of Covid-19 in the national scenario until reaching the volume of one million confirmed clinical cases totaled one hundred and fifteen days. After reaching the mark of one million clinical cases of Covid-19, about one million new clinical cases were identified in Brazil approximately every 30 days, on average – Figure 2 (BRASIL, 2022).

Figure 2 – Chronological Evolution of Total Clinical Cases of Covid-19 in Brazil – Official Data up to January 2, 2021



Source: Brazil (2022, p. 19).

According to calculations by the World Health Organization – WHO, issued in May 2022, there is another alarming indicator associated with the total volume of deaths related to the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 virus, called excess mortality. In the period from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021, excess mortality reached the mark of 14.9 million victims. Excess mortality refers to a calculation characterized by the distinction between the volume of deaths registered due to the Covid-19 pandemic event and the volume of deaths predicted by an annual moving average indicator, whose tool is based on a history of information and calculations on deaths registered in previous years, that is, in a period without the pandemic (BRASIL, 2022).

PANDEMIC IMPACTS ON ARTISTS AND ORGANIZERS OF CULTURAL EVENTS: DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES, WITH EMPHASIS ON YOUTUBE LIVES

According to Vieira (2021), the influence of digital culture transforms society's behavioral patterns, the processes involved in the appreciation of cultural content, workflows and data sharing, promoting a reconfiguration in work and recreational interactions, in addition to stimulating the emergence of social modalities and message exchange. When considering this concept, it is noted that cyberculture was responsible for causing relevant changes in the entertainment sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. The

proliferation of online broadcasts has reached incredible levels, such as the 4,900% increase in user searches for live broadcasts on the YouTube platform in the period when social distancing measures were active in the Brazilian scenario. When pondering the contemporary social situation, it is possible to see that the evolutionary process of live streams has created new patterns regarding consumption habits, and demonstrates that individuals are creating a greater relationship with ICTs – Information and Communication Technologies as time goes by (AGRELA, 2020). Live streaming is the technology used for live broadcasts on the internet, requiring a stable connection for both the sender and the receiver.

The first broadcast of this nature took place in 1993 at the Xerox Research Center in California, with the presentation of the band Severe Tire Damage. In 1994, this group was also responsible for opening the first major concert broadcast on the internet, the Rolling Stones. However, live streaming only became widespread with the progress of broadband internet services, as (Perez; Sato; Pompey; Orlandini, 2022).

In the period between the end of the first quarter and the beginning of the second quarter of 2020 – the initial period of the Covid-19 pandemic – there is the emergence of artistic events promoted by relevant brands in the national public market, and coordinated by the main music labels in the country. At the same time, the music industry organized itself in an agile way in the Brazilian commercial environment, and strengthened the lives through the Youtube platform, whose stage is considered by the phonographic market as the crucial point of a professional structure for live broadcasts in the period in which social distancing had been decreed in Brazil (FGV, 2020).

Brands strengthened the increase in live broadcasts, and technological resources, in turn, encouraged people to seek symbolic opportunities on digital platforms while they were under social isolation in their homes that, in a way, reactivated emotions similar to those previously experienced in social environments and urban spaces in person. Thus, live streaming established, in an agile way, as a cultural resource based on a new prism in the social environment, in which there was a relationship between social distancing – a necessary situation due to the health crisis caused by Covid-19 – to leisure, entertainment and interaction activities in the digital environment, promoting a provisional form of consumption encouraged by the desire to engage and share collective experiences (Ferreira; Christino; Cardoso; Noronha, 2022).

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the consumption of products and services around the world from the social restriction measures adopted by health agencies, such as social isolation and the closure of non-essential commercial establishments, whose actions directly affected the consumption patterns of individuals, such as artistic performances and cultural events. The pandemic brought significant challenges to the economy in general, which compromised the consumption of various products and services during the health crisis caused by the virus (RIBEIRO, 2021).

Consumption in the same status as language and culture, insofar as consumption is a system of socialized exchange of signs, and in this sense, (Baudrillard, 1997) highlights that advertising, manufacturers and brands create an organized and coherent presentation of products to the consumer. They do not offer products randomly, but as an interlocking set that resembles a logical and structured sequence. This presentation, which may seem chaotic to attract more attention, actually guides the consumer to follow a purchase journey, leading him from one item to another. This leads the consumer to maximize their interest and purchasing potential by exploring different articles, such as apparel, devices, and cosmetics, which are presented as a harmonious series of options.

Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) state that the power of technology in society is strongly influenced by the control that the most economically powerful groups exert over it. In other words, those who have more economic resources end up determining how technology is used and distributed in society. Considering this assumption, in opposition to the rhetoric that postulates that the imposing rise of the cultural industry in the social sphere stems from the satisfied demands of the consuming public, the aforementioned authors maintain that such demands are reactive to the inputs propagated in the media.

In addition to the economic impacts, artists and organizers of cultural events faced major challenges during the pandemic, especially due to social isolation policies that, based on guidelines from health agencies, limited – or prohibited – the holding of face-to-face events in general – musical concerts, cultural exhibitions, artistic festivals, among others. Such restrictions have had a direct impact on the financial sustainability and visibility of artists, as well as the ability of event organizers to generate revenue and maintain their operations. Many artists had to quickly adapt to the virtual environment in order to explore innovative alternatives, such as live broadcasts, in addition to the commercialization of digital products and/or services (Ferreira et al., 2022).

The in-person experience of a cultural event offers a unique environment where artists can connect directly with their audience, create emotional bonds, and receive immediate *feedback*. With social isolation, this interaction was severely limited, and affected the artistic experience. Event organizers had to rethink their marketing and engagement strategies, and in this sense, through digital marketing, they sought to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, especially in relation to two fundamental factors in the relationship between the artistic environment and its audience: a) Keeping people's interest active in relation to the events promoted by the artists, without running the risk of falling into a kind of oblivion due to the long period of social isolation; b) Encourage interaction between the public and artists, with the support of digital media, such as YouTube (Ribeiro, 2021).

Digital marketing has been consolidated as a determining tool for the dissemination and management of cultural events. The dynamic and interactive nature of digital marketing allows cultural event organizers to create highly targeted strategies, with greater precision in relation to specific audiences. The use of digital platforms facilitates the creation of personalized campaigns, and enables direct and efficient communication with the target audience. In addition, the ability to monitor and analyze data in real time allows immediate adjustments in strategies, and ensures greater adaptation to consumer preferences and behaviors (Miceli, 2017).

Among the main advantages of digital marketing in cultural events is its ability to expand the geographic reach of events. Unlike traditional methods, which are often limited to a local audience, digital marketing makes it possible to promote events to global audiences, significantly expanding the potential for participation and engagement. This global expansion is facilitated by the segmentation capacity of digital campaigns, which allows organizers to reach audiences in different regions and countries, according to the specific profile and interests of individuals. Its flexibility and adaptability are also noteworthy, since, in contrast to traditional marketing methods, which may require long periods for adjustments and updates, digital campaigns can be modified quickly to respond to changing market conditions, cultural trends, and participant feedback (Salvador, 2015).

In the context where technologically interconnected communication is expanded, live broadcasts provide a feeling similar to participating in events in person, while internet users can engage with the content broadcast live through instruments connected to social media and other relevant digital platforms, such as the artist's official website. This dynamic interaction through technological resources offers the user to watch the event live, while this

individual can create content, share information they deem relevant, register comments, among other interactions that generate engagement for the live while it is being broadcast and, consequently, such engagement generates a greater volume of audience, according to specific settings on relevance in each social media (Almeida; Alves, 2020).

The purpose of live streams is to provide entertainment, information, instruction, other aspects that provide content with minimal relevance to a targeted audience, but that can also reach – discover – new audiences, and one of the main characteristics of these broadcasts is their ability to reach a wide audience through sharing and expanded dissemination. Live digital broadcasts are practices that allow a sense of social integration, even when face-to-face interaction is not possible, as it is feasible to establish real-time communication, as well as the possibility of the public interacting with the event at other different times, taking into account that digital platforms generally store the recorded content and make these materials available for people to access at the most appropriate time for each individual (Amaral, 2020).

Live broadcasts, therefore, act as simultaneous diffusions of audiovisual content in the digital environment, and manifest themselves in various approaches, subjects, and purposes through the sharing of content by communicators – artists, presenters, and others involved with the live event – and the public – users connected in real time who are following the live – through digital *streaming* platforms. Lives can have a particular character, as well as a collective objective, involving direct communication through discourse between individuals, or indirect communication through technological resources offered in social media, applications, chats, and other digital environments (Almeida; Alves, 2020).

Under this reality, on-demand content platforms have emerged, whose purpose is to use ICTs to foster business in the entertainment industry, commercially benefiting all those involved in the process in a fair and professional way: audiovisual content producers – studios, artists or license holders. For the consumer public, there are also important advantages, such as the ease of consuming certain content through the Internet legally, at a relatively low cost, being able to watch as many times as they want, on the most convenient day and time, detaching, for example, from TV programming schedules (Wolk, 2015).

Through low cost of reproduction and distribution, the services offered by on-demand content platforms have the ability to deliver relevant content in various formats to effectively meet consumer demand: audio; video; image; text; among others. In this way, with an

Internet connection, people can share and access various digital content through electronic equipment – Smart TV, computers, notebooks, tablets, cell phones, among other electronic devices –, consuming such content at the time they want, as well as in any location, with the possibility of reviewing the content as many times as they want as well (Albarran, 2016).

Prior to the health crisis caused by Covid-19, live broadcasts were activities of lesser importance in the context of communications managed by technological resources. Lives have become relevant as digital cultural phenomena and as significant forms of cultural instruction, and have become prominent in the entertainment sector while there have been restrictions associated with social isolation. The media influence society in different ways, and shape the culture and the ways individuals interact. Lives, in this sense, have become a way to mediate culture and entertainment, and offer a virtual space for interaction and collective experience, even in times of physical distancing, as occurred during the pandemic (SILVA, LIMA; COUTO, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The narrative literature review is a method used in studies to summarize and critically evaluate data obtained from bibliographic sources. This technique encompasses an extensive analysis of the literature on a specific topic, with an emphasis on choosing pertinent and reliable sources, such as academic articles, books, and dissertations. The researcher then performs an analytical reading of these sources to extract and systematize significant information in a unified narrative, which provides a structured and consistent understanding of the topic addressed. As Smith (2023) states, "the ability to synthesize information in a cohesive way is essential for the advancement of knowledge in any area of study".

The researcher evaluates and interprets information based on his or her own understanding of the subject. Therefore, it is essential that he be clear and impartial when establishing the criteria for selecting the sources and the method of the review. This clarity is vital to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. The researcher must also have a solid knowledge of the specific characteristics of his or her area of study to ensure that the review is appropriate and that the findings obtained are reliable and relevant. (Gerhardt; Silveira, 2009).

To be efficient, the researcher needs to have prior knowledge about the topic, as the narrative literature review is an approach that involves the critical evaluation and interpretation of available data. This methodology offers advantages in several areas of study, allowing the researcher to obtain a broad view of the topic, identify opportunities and challenges in current research, and provide foundations to develop hypotheses and direct future research. (Brum; Zuge; Rangel; French; Pieszak, 2015).

The study was carried out with the support of an exploratory qualitative research, which provides the complete structuring of the components of the research instrument, allowing the adequate formulation of questions and answers. This study aims to acquire familiarity with the phenomenon under analysis and facilitates the planning of the subsequent main study with greater clarity and precision. Exploratory qualitative research enables the researcher to delimit his study problem and formulate his hypotheses in a more precise way. In addition, it helps in choosing the most appropriate techniques for the study, in defining the issues that need greater attention and detailed analysis, and also alerts to possible challenges, sensitivities and areas of resistance (Silva; Hayashi, 2008).

Exploratory research is defined as a fundamental part of the main study, configuring itself as a preliminary analysis aimed at adjusting the information collected according to the reality that is intended to be investigated. It makes it possible to control the effects that can distort the researcher's perception, that is, it guarantees a more concrete understanding of reality, instead of presenting a supposed reality created by the researcher. Its main purpose, therefore, is to mitigate the researcher's bias and, consequently, contribute to increasing the level of objectivity of the research and making it more aligned with reality. (Pattah; Abel, 2022).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

YouTube lives provided greater flexibility and accessibility to cultural events during the Covid-19 health crisis, as there was no need for physical travel, and also allowed people to watch performances from the comfort of their homes. In this way, the lives opened up opportunities for a diverse audience, including individuals who would not have access to face-to-face events due to geographical, financial, or mobility limitations.

The use of YouTube lives as a digital marketing strategy also allowed, during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, a wide prior dissemination of events, in which artists and organizers were able to create anticipation and expectation through *teasers*, *trailers* and

ads, whose marketing actions enhance the engagement of the target audience, and also arouse greater interest in participating in cultural events in the digital environment.

Digital marketing offers analytical tools that allow organizers to obtain detailed information about the behavior and preferences of the public, and the consequence of this digital analysis process is the possibility of creating more effective campaigns. Data collection and analysis are processes that identify patterns and trends, and the information obtained in such processes is valuable for improving strategies and increasing effectiveness in marketing actions.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, digital marketing has become even more necessary for cultural events due to the physical and social restrictions imposed during the health crisis. The pandemic has led to a significant change in the way events are held and promoted, with a considerable increase in the holding of virtual and hybrid events. Digital marketing strategies, in this sense, have been adapted to meet this new reality, which emphasizes the relevance of online platforms and the creation of immersive virtual experiences to replace face-to-face interactions.

Digital marketing strategies in the pandemic also focused on creating relevant and engaging content that could capture the attention of participants and provide additional value, even in a virtual environment. The production of content such as live streams, webinars, and interactive virtual events became a common practice, and organizers maintained audience engagement as well as continued to promote their events despite physical limitations.

YouTube lives offered the opportunity to record and archive the presentations, which provides a lasting experience for the public. Unlike face-to-face events, which are ephemeral and often cannot be relived, live streams recorded on YouTube remain available for later access, and allow people to watch, share and relive the performances at any time, that is, it is possible to create, with the help of YouTube, a digital cultural collection, in order to preserve and disseminate artistic expressions even after the end of live broadcasts.

It was concluded that YouTube lives stood out as a fundamental marketing strategy for artists and cultural events during the health crisis, as it offers global reach, real-time interactivity, monetization, flexibility, accessibility, allows the pre-promotion and registration of presentations. In this way, considering the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, YouTube lives enabled the continuity of cultural activities, as they kept the audience engaged and provided meaningful experiences in such a delicate situation for

society, and in some cases, the possibility of increasing audience and profitability through social media strategies was even noted, as was the case mentioned above in this research on the lives of singer Gustavo Lima that brought greater profitability to the artist compared to face-to-face shows.

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