

IMPORTANCE OF INCORPORATING EDUCATION FOR MEDIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN JOURNALISM STUDIES IN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

Elements of entrepreneurial processes – innovation, risk taking and creation are essential attributes of successful media products and services. This shows that media and entrepreneurship, even at the conceptual level, have a strong connection. This paper aims at setting a theoretical framework of relevance and reasons for incorporating education for media entrepreneurship into the curriculums of media studies. Entrepreneurial learning and development of related competences are almost non-existent in higher education curriculums in Croatia, but also in other European countries. In the times of maximal democratization and concurrent trivialization of media products that are also

characterized by rapid technological changes, entrepreneurial initiatives are of utmost importance for the media and even in the broader social context. Conclusions suggest the importance of entrepreneurial coursework in the media curriculum and entrepreneurial development within the media industry in general with implications both for the traditional media as well as for the new business ventures within the sector.

KEYWORDS:

media entrepreneurship, media, education, journalism

1. INTRODUCTION

“We live in an entrepreneurial age, not an institutional one. That’s been true of many professions for quite a while, and increasingly (and perhaps somewhat belatedly) it is true of journalism’ said John F. Harris in 2006 when he resigned from the position of national politics editor of The Washington Post to become the editor in chief in a *start-up* company Politico.com. Media have become part of these entrepreneurial times mostly due to great technological innovations, which have changed the production, distribution and promotion processes, as well as consumer habits. The other reason is the national and to a certain extent global deregulation of the media market.

Consequences of changing from market-planned economy to market economy, the EU accession process and the current financial crisis are some of the factors that generate the volatile economic and political conditions which have characterised Croatia in recent years. Europe is troubled by the growing unemployment rate, especially in the young population, as well as the media industry which is far from economic prosperity. These changes are a source of new challenges in entrepreneurship. Great economic uncertainty demands exceptional economic dynamics, speed, innovativeness and continual adjustment to new circumstances.

Due to the liberalisation of the media market in Croatia and this part of Europe, changes in technology, recession and the European and global crisis in the media industry have decreased the employment possibilities for journalists in the traditional media organisations. In order to find your way and succeed in this new media environment, new kind of knowledge and various new skills are needed. Therefore, today more than ever before, it is of utmost importance for future journalists to develop entrepreneurial skills so that they can join the ever changing processes on the media scene.

Consequently, in this paper we will discuss the main reasons and importance of the incorporation of education for media entrepreneurship into education programmes, using various secondary sources to introduce media entrepreneurship within a theoretical framework. Then, on the basis

of primary sources we will present the findings of the research on availability of entrepreneurial courses in media programmes of study in Croatia and by performing a meta-analysis of several longitudinal studies demonstrate the availability of entrepreneurial courses in media programmes of study in Europe. In conclusion, we will present the results of these studies which reveal a clear cause-effect relationship and give an answer to the question: why do we need education for media entrepreneurship?

2. MEDIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Schumpeter's definition of an entrepreneur which includes a creative destruction of a an established economic order, generating new value and using new materials, Drucker's 'innovator' who creates new markets and new consumers, as well as the entrepreneur from the most recent theories, all have a common denominator. The following conclusion can be drawn from a wide range of definitions: the qualities of a successful modern entrepreneur are creativity, innovativeness, dedication to achievement, ability to make decisions in volatile situations and risk-taking.

In addition, according to Achtenhagen regarding media entrepreneurship one should be aware of a very specific characteristic which is non-profit orientation, i.e. search for opportunities irrespective of the available capital. Media companies have always struggled to find a balance between social institutions, whose role and function is related to promoting democracy, and industry aiming to make a profit (Peruško, 2011:25). Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that "a definition of media entrepreneurship requires incorporating other significant aspects of media products, namely literary and artistic endeavours or more missionary attempts of 'changing the world'. (Achtenhagen 2008:126, according to Picard 2005).

The slow-to-change traditional media organisations, without any entrepreneurial initiative, are not capable of a timely implementation of innovations in their business activities, so they cannot adjust on time to technological changes or changes in the customer behaviour. Serious

problems which these organisations face are a proof of that. The situation in the Croatian media has never been worse: in 2012 only one daily newspaper made a profit (24 sata), all the other ‘big’ daily newspapers (Večernji list, Jutarnji list, Novi list and Slobodna Dalmacija) showed diminishing circulation figures as well as revenues. To conclude the sad Croatian reality of the daily newspaper business as the oldest mass media – in 2012 the newspaper Vjesnik ceased publication after 72 years and a new newspaper 21. stoljeće was published only to also cease publication after a few months of unsuccessful presence on the market. The reality of media business in Croatia, Europe and some other western countries is today marked by downsizing, strikes, bankruptcies, losses worth millions and cost-cutting in all kinds of print media, as well as TV broadcasters, news portals and radio stations. The crisis which hit this and related industries is not the only one to blame for this situation, but also media companies themselves because of their wrong editorial policies, bad management and non-adjustment to new market conditions. If these internal problems were solved, crisis in the industry would definitely be less acute and media products of better quality (Brkulj, 2010). For such a “quality product” you need innovation, risk-taking, you have to generate ideas and invest in them, as well as in technology and people, and finally, manage your organisation in such a way to foster internal entrepreneurship (*intrapreneurship*). In the theory of economics, entrepreneurship is viewed as a separate production factor. Its task is to combine and coordinate other factors of production (labour, capital) in the most auspicious way, thus maximising the profit. We come to a conclusion that entrepreneurship is also important in the media context for the development or even survival of traditional media organisations and the changes in their dated and non-functioning business models. Companies with entrepreneurial orientation exhibit a far greater ability to adapt to the rapid and omnipresent changes of the current business environment.

It is exactly under the circumstances of dramatic and rapid changes in technology and the preference of the consumers themselves, which have been present to a large extent in the media industry in the last decade that the entrepreneurial activities have become essential in the establishment of new companies and self-employment. The situation in the media is affected

by great technological changes which has made the obstacles for market penetration less difficult to overcome with one's own content, enabled a wider availability of professional production standards and created new distribution and promotion channels (Achtenhagen 2008:128, according to Küng 2007:31). Such media scene, which is somewhat more independent financially, has caused some changes in the traditional start of a career in journalism, which didn't use to offer innovative and creative approaches. Digital revolution has made it possible for journalists not to pursue their career only in the big media organisations. They can start building their careers from a student dormitory, garage or at their desks at home by means of a digital platform. All these factors have contributed to a great number of new media and related technology and communication entrepreneurial projects, especially in the USA. Entrepreneurial companies are undertaken due to the recognition of:

- a) changes in the consumers' preferences or demonstration of some new, so far non-existent preferences;
- b) technological changes and ideas how to use this to "change the world", access a content or create one, establish communication and make profit.

Therefore, at its core, every entrepreneurial activity, a media one included, results from the influence of a few driving forces:

- a) idea,
- b) innovation,
- c) investment,
- d) risk,
- e) management.

Such a business will, upon establishing its position on the market, become one of the firms in the network of businesses and a part of the overall economy. Making use of the changes in the consumers' preference or the technological progress, the entrepreneur introduces a new or innovative product to the market thus influencing further changes, both in the

consumers' preference and in technology. These processes are especially active and vital in the media industry. On the one hand, we can talk about a maximal democratisation, on the other about maximal trivialisation of media products. If we try to observe these two extremes, without being critical, it is clear that at the beginning of the 21st century we can talk about a certain media and communication revolution in which the entrepreneurial projects play a vitally important role in the society.

3. JOURNALISM EDUCATION IN CROATIA AND MEDIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Why is journalism education important for the journalists' professional success is best summarised by De Bourgh (Kanižaj, Skoko, 2011:36): "In order to perform their functions, journalists need an education which enables them to put themselves and their society in perspective; find out anything and question everything. Motor skills yes, but also the intellectual confidence which comes from knowledge."

The higher education for journalists in Croatia started when a four-year university journalism study was founded at the Faculty of Political Sciences in 1986, whereas the first applied journalism study was set up in 2007 at the School of Journalism.

Figure 1
HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OF STUDY IN CROATIA IN 2011
IN THE AREA OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA

<i>Undergraduate studies:</i>		
Institution	Program title	Type of program
Faculty of Political Sciences	Undergraduate university study of journalism	academic
University of Dubrovnik	Undergraduate study of Media and social culture	academic
Croatian Studies	Undergraduate study of Communication sciences (until 2005 study of journalism)	academic
School of Journalism	Undergraduate applied study of journalism	professional
College for Public Relations and Media Studies "Kairos"	Undergraduate applied study of public relations and the media	professional
<i>Graduate studies:</i>		
Institution	Program title	Type of program
Faculty of Political Sciences	Graduate university study of journalism	academic
University of Dubrovnik	Graduate study the Media	academic
University of Zadar Department for Tourism and Communication Sciences	Graduate university study Journalism and Public Relations	academic
Croatian Studies	Graduate study of communication sciences (until 2005 journalism study)	academic
<i>Postgraduate studies:</i>		
Institution	Program title	Type of program
Faculty of Philosophy	Postgraduate doctorate study of information and communication sciences	academic

Source: by the authors

The overview in Figure 2 shows that in Croatia journalism is mostly studied as a scientific program at a university level. However, both theoreticians and practitioners of journalism mostly consider journalism to be a craft, which would indicate that journalism education should be professional and vocational.

Having studied the curriculums of the above mentioned programs, we have observed that their programmes are also more academic and the

education of journalists in the field of management and entrepreneurship is minimal. They only include a few courses such as: Media Management (School of Journalism), Basic Management (Kairos) and Basic Entrepreneurship (Kairos).

Since the research was based on ten programs at all levels, the fact that there are only three courses which educate future media professionals in entrepreneurship and management is more than significant. In addition, all these three courses are taught at professional programs, where the number of students is substantially smaller than at university, academic programs. Education of media professionals is especially important in the Croatian context, taking into consideration that many media managers are journalists, who neither have any formal business or entrepreneurship education, nor experience (Biondić, Jeličić, Slijepčević, 2010).

Consequently, on the basis of the research findings we conclude that media education in Croatia doesn't really foster an entrepreneurial environment and the students (who are in most cases very creative individuals) are not educated to develop their entrepreneurial competences, which they need as future media professionals.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN EUROPE

To define the level of incorporation of media entrepreneurship education in Europe a meta-analysis was carried out of a series of longitudinal studies, whose findings were published in the 'European Journalism Education' in 2009 in a comparative overview of journalism education in 33 European countries by more than 60 authors/researchers. Additionally, we analysed the report in the European Journalism Observatory (*later on in the text EJO*) entitled 'Entrepreneurial Journalism in Europe' from 2012, which consists of reports on entrepreneurship in the media and entrepreneurship education in 10 European countries, by 11 authors.

Our conclusion drawn on the analysis of media studies in Europe according to the 'European Journalism Education' is that the curriculums

are actually very similar to those of about 20 years ago, when the last similar study before this one was conducted. The authors primarily think that the European journalism education is incomplete, immature, fragmented and confused. Nevertheless, it is recognized that journalism education successfully follows media trends in technology and production. Academic education is more common than the vocational one, even though it is evident that new media reality requires new and more demanding set of skills. To address the immaturity of the curriculums the authors of the report emphasize that both the profession and the education have to be faced with new challenges posed by the new economic, technological, cultural, and social reality. In the context of the findings of the meta-analysis on the incorporation of the development of entrepreneurship competences in 33 countries, we find it relevant that in the report, which is over 500 pages long, the word entrepreneurship is mentioned only once, in the curriculum of a Croatian media study.

The EJO report by Dr. Stephen Russ-Mohl and the authors, from 2012, is the most recent one used in this analysis. Among the findings it defines one of the key reasons why the journalism education in Europe is changing so slowly: „As several scholars have pointed out, educational institutions in several countries are also slow to react to changes in the real world due to the legally complex procedure of accrediting academic curricula.” (Nazhmidinova, Russ-Mohl, 2012). In its introductory part this report states that in Europe efforts to combine journalism with entrepreneurship and to explore new options are modest compared to those in the U.S. However, compared with the findings of other studies analysed in this paper, it is a definite move in the right direction. First of all, the role of entrepreneurship is recognized in creating one’s own employment and not relying on employment in shrinking media organizations. The problem still remains that there is no understanding of the thesis that the gist of an entrepreneurial idea is that it can fulfil a human need in a better and more effective way, which clearly indicates that the application of such ideas should be inherent in a media context.

In Germany and some other countries there is a certain misunderstanding of the term entrepreneurial journalism in the context of employment. – “Most journalism programs in Germany do not distinguish between

the traditional self-employment in journalism (freelancing) and the concept of entrepreneurial journalism.” (Nazhmidinova, Russ-Mohl, 2012). In Italy they even consider these two roles – that of a journalist and an entrepreneur – completely incompatible – “authority, credibility and professional skills of the journalist simply cannot be combined with the abilities and the lack of scruples of an entrepreneur.” It is our opinion that such an attitude results from lack of understanding of entrepreneurship as business processes which adapt to new market conditions, create new markets and thus affect the economic vitality of different industries.

In various countries the development of entrepreneurial projects is in different phases of professional transition, but the educational basis is still not fully developed in most of them. Quite the contrary, “In the U.K., the discussion has arrived at the educational institutions, but not yet in the media industry as a whole,” says media economist Robert Picard of the Reuters Institute (Nazhmidinova, Russ-Mohl, 2012). **Regarding training opportunities in Europe EJO report states that** educational offers in entrepreneurial journalism differ throughout Europe. The report mentions just a few entrepreneurial courses in the U.K. and France – “the City University of London offers an Entrepreneurial Journalism program which focuses on data journalism and community management. A similar course is offered by Bournemouth University for mid-career professionals. In France, teaching entrepreneurship in general is undervalued. The School of Journalism at SciencesPo Paris, however, offers a course on Entrepreneurial Journalism in its Master’s program” (Nazhmidinova, Russ-Mohl, 2012). All the other mentioned programs in Germany, Switzerland, Albania, Latvia, Serbia and Romania are more orientated towards media management, innovation in media, multimedia journalism, online journalism, Internet technology, alternative media, new media and social media, as aspects that are important in a wider context of entrepreneurial learning. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, in some countries, like Germany and Switzerland, there is an etymological and conceptual misunderstanding of the term entrepreneurship, using it as a synonym for freelance journalism.

The authors end the report with the following conclusion: “In attempting to create an overview corraling the various outlooks and initiatives related to entrepreneurial journalism in Europe, one thing remains

clear: There is no common understanding of the phenomenon and its ramifications. Some view the transformation as a new window of opportunity for ambitious journalism, while others merely consider it a new name for the old game of freelancing.” (Nazhmidinova, Russ-Mohl, 2012). Their conclusion serves as an appropriate overview of the level of incorporation of entrepreneurship education in media studies in Europe, showing that there is no common understanding of this issue, so the atmosphere of entrepreneurship cannot be spread in the European media.

5. CONCLUSION AS THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION – WHY DO WE NEED EDUCATION FOR MEDIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

The theoretical framework established in this paper suggests the importance of the development of entrepreneurial competences in students of media and journalism. The research done on media studies in Croatia and the meta-analysis of the programmes of study in Europe indicate that the entrepreneurship education is under-represented in the segment of higher education. Moreover, there is a difference in opinion on the conceptual level about what entrepreneurship really is and whether it is necessary for media industry and journalism. Therefore, in the conclusion of this paper, we are giving a synthesis of two topics. While presenting a comprehensive overview of the reasons why education for media entrepreneurship is needed, we will emphasise the importance of a holistic approach to its development.

The introduction to the ‘European Journalism Education’ explains that the fundamental changes in journalism are closely connected to the political context, technological changes, diminishing revenues in the traditional print media and fragmentation of the public, whereas nothing has diluted this traditional model of the journalist’s role more than the current world financial crash and global recession. Journalism and media students should therefore take an active role as positive catalysts of change amidst these profound changes in media environment.

In this context, the development of entrepreneurial competences and the incorporation of the education for media entrepreneurship into the curriculums of media studies are essential and should result in:

- ↳ higher quality of the media (both as content that is produced and business models that are in place) and a more constructive civic dialogue;
- ↳ journalists and media professionals who have a deeper understanding of how the industry and specific media operate, as well as the trends in this and related industries;
- ↳ development of managerial and entrepreneurial competences required by the overall media industry;
- ↳ revitalisation of the ailing traditional media;
- ↳ fostering an entrepreneurial climate within the existent media organisations;
- ↳ a more innovative way of creating media content, products and services and the improvement of the existing ones;
- ↳ spreading the spirit of entrepreneurship, encouraging the launch of new media projects and the self-employment of young journalists.

Additionally, features of media products are closely related to the dimensions of entrepreneurial processes. Innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness are characteristics of a process in the media industry, as well as the entrepreneurial orientation of an individual or an organisation (Hang, van Weezel 2007:5 according to Lumpkin, Dess 1996). Thus, journalists and media professionals can profit in many ways from entrepreneurship education, so the incorporation of the development of required competences is significant for all aspects of media industry.

Practical implications of this conclusion lead to the importance of the holistic development of the education for media entrepreneurship, at all levels of education, formal, non-formal and informal processes and in the context of the development of wider educational, social and economic values. Without such an approach, which equally takes into account all basic conditions for the development of entrepreneurship i.e. educational, scientific, legal, financial, etc., the entrepreneurial climate will not come to life on the media scene.

Hugh Stephenson, Professor Emeritus at City University in London, points out that journalism and journalists perform (or should perform) a powerful and positive role in the social and political development of Europe. We think it should be added – also an economic one. And to perform these roles students should be given the tools – competences that are going to enable them to do so. Entrepreneurial competences developed in this holistic manner are surely some of the most important ones both at an individual and social level.

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