

## Innovate in sports journalism. Contributions from an interdisciplinary perspective

### *Innovar en periodismo deportivo. Aportes desde una perspectiva interdisciplinaria*

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#### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research is to review the literature review on innovation, in the fields of business management, creative innovation and media innovation to identify the elements that support innovation studies in the journalistic field in aspects such as methodologies, conceptualizations and theories. The aim of the article is to expand the potential of interdisciplinary work, which would make it possible to enrich research on innovation, specifically in sports journalism, a field characterized by precariousness and cyclical crises, where journalists and organizations need to take advantage of the opportunities offered by both technological tools such as knowledge in innovation. The documentary research technique is used as a methodology to identify the studies related to the aforementioned topics. A sample of 75 publications in innovation journals, located in quartiles 1 and 2, was analyzed. As a result, it was found that the most researched areas include innovation and creativity, leadership, the role of members of an organization to develop innovative ideas, the relationships between innovating and undertaking and the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Finally, some proposals are made about future research.*

#### **Keywords**

*Innovation, digital journalism, social innovation, creative innovation, sports, innovation research, startups, sustainability.*

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## **Resumen**

El propósito de esta investigación es revisar la bibliografía académica sobre innovación, en los ámbitos de gestión empresarial, innovación creativa e innovación mediática. El objetivo es identificar los elementos que contribuyen a los estudios sobre innovación en el campo periodístico en aspectos como metodologías, conceptualizaciones y teorías. La consideración central del artículo es expandir el potencial del trabajo interdisciplinario, lo cual posibilitaría enriquecer las investigaciones sobre innovación, específicamente en el periodismo deportivo, un campo caracterizado por la precarización y las crisis cíclicas, donde periodistas y organizaciones necesitan aprovechar las oportunidades que brindan tanto las herramientas tecnológicas como los conocimientos en innovación. Se utiliza la técnica de investigación documental como metodología para identificar los estudios relacionados con los temas mencionados. Se analizó una muestra de 75 publicaciones en revistas sobre innovación, ubicadas en cuartiles 1 y 2. Como resultados, se encontró que las áreas más investigadas comprenden la innovación y creatividad, el liderazgo, el papel de los miembros de una organización para desarrollar ideas innovadoras, las relaciones entre innovar y emprender y el desarrollo de ecosistemas de emprendedores. Por último, se plantean algunas propuestas para futuras investigaciones.

## **Palabras clave**

Innovación, periodismo digital, innovación social, innovación creativa, deportes, investigación de innovación, emprendimientos, sostenibilidad.

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## **Introduction**

What is innovation in journalism? For decades, this question has been debatable in the media industry and sports media. Even though the latter have spearheaded major transformations in the sector, it still predominates throughout journalism, as well as in academic studies, with concerns in technology (Barnhurst, 2012), which dismisses complex and dynamic social processes that exceed the control of individuals (Bleyen *et al.*, 2014).

Year after year, journalists and sports media have faced unemployment, precariousness and the impossibility of feeling fully professional. Also, the feeling of depending on external factors. The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic showed the structural deficiencies of sports journalism, which was unable to cover news due to lack of competitions.

In this context, research and studies on innovation in journalism have an important role and although these studies have experienced a remarkable growth in recent years, theoretical, methodological and systematic contributions have received little and fragmented attention (García-Avilés, 2021). Likewise, underlying this thematic range is an approach focused on the diffusion, adoption and acceptance of the final technological result implemented in a media (Domingo, 2008; Plesner, 2009; Schmitz-Weiss and Domingo, 2010; Spyridou *et al.*, 2013).

Research on innovation in journalism -a concept that does not have a precise definition- also reflects an optimistic vision perceived as a hopeful response to the reduction of traditional journalism and its economic models. The huge spectrum also includes the lack of resources in the newsroom, limited deadlines and the need to get both print and multimedia content as well as the impulses to capture digital audiences and increase digital advertising revenue (García-Avilés, 2021).

This optimistic and technocentric vision is also transferred to the professional field of journalism, where journalists understand innovation mainly from the technical point of view using digital platforms, immersion in the metaverse or the use of artificial intelligence.

More specifically in sports journalism, most of the research in the Ibero-American context on innovation has been conducted by the Spanish researcher José Luis Rojas Torrijos (Manfredi-Sánchez *et al.*, 2015; Rojas-Torrijos and Marín Sanchiz, 2016; Rojas Torrijos, 2016; Rojas-Torrijos *et al.*, 2020), who is a famous author in this category.

Rojas-Torrijos focuses on strategies for generating added value in sports media (Rojas-Torrijos and Marín-Sanchiz, 2016), analyzing the lack of innovation in sports news projects (Manfredi-Sánchez *et al.*, 2015) and the possibilities of podcasting for the full exploitation of the narrative and innovative possibilities of this audio format (Rojas-Torrijos *et al.*, 2020), almost all studies are conducted in Spain.

In the Anglo-Saxon literature, Buzzelli *et al.* (2020) stand out with their article Poaching the News Producers: The Athletic's Effect on Sports in Hometown Newspapers, which analyzes the business model of The Athletic, which was catalogued in its beginnings as a radical change in the journalism industry. Another case study, in which a sports media is analyzed, is *Revistas nativas digitales in the area of sports in Spain: the case of Marca Plus* by Ignacio Labarga, Laura González and Pedro Pérez-Cuadrado (2018).

In this sense, there is a need for a broader methodological and conceptual theoretical framework oriented to interdisciplinarity, where new lines of research on innovation in the external and internal environments of sports media can be identified. The field of business studies offers some new clues as to where further efforts can be directed to increase the knowledge and practice of innovation development in sports journalism. Certainly, this may contribute to increase the thematic dispersion of studies on innovation in journalism, as well as to increase the uncertainty regarding what topics to address; however, the intention is to be informative, stimulating and intellectually challenging to open other doors that contribute to the knowledge and practice of innovation development in sports journalism.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to describe the academic production on innovation in the business environment and the specific objective is to identify methodologies, conceptualizations and theories that contribute to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective in research on innovation in sports journalism.

## **Materials and methods**

Documentary research is a qualitative technique that consists of selecting and collecting information by reading and analyzing documents and bibliographic materials that contain interesting data to the researcher and that were obtained in libraries, newspaper libraries, documentation and information centers, databases, internet, etc. (Hernández-Sampieri *et al.*, 2014). According to these authors, what distinguishes this technique is that "...it is characterized by the use of graphic and sound records as sources of information..., records in manuscript and printed form". This research method is ideal for analyzing the academic production on innovation in the sample of 75 articles, selected mainly from the following journals: *Creative and Innovation Management*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *The journal of media innovations*, *Innovation Policy and the Economy*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Research Policy*, known by their high impact on issues related to innovation in industries close to sports media such as creative industries and those social innovations that occur in organizations with a high normative value.

## **Steps in the methodological process**

1) Selection of the field of study and the temporal space to be analyzed: Selection of articles on innovation, entrepreneurship, social innovation, business management and creativity, as well as innovation in sports journalism. The period selected was 2015 and 2023.

2) Selection of sources: publications on innovation in business and sports journalism belonging to quartile 1 and 2 journals indexed in EBSCO, DOAJ, REDALYC and SCOPUS databases focused on innovation, business management, industry and innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship.

3) Search in Web of Science, EBSCO, DOAJ, REDALYC and SCOPUS and Google Scholar to obtain a first list of publication titles, abstracts of research on innovation.

4) Review of abstracts for a first filter in which articles that did not fit the purposes of this research were excluded. Articles on innovation in large companies, innovation focused on the manufacture of industrial products, and innovation linked to the use of technologies were discarded.

5) Design, structure and elaboration of the content of the article, following the contributions and conceptual frameworks established from the analysis of the publications.

## **Results**

According to the sample of articles analyzed on the literature review, the most recent articles on innovation in the business field are grouped into various thematic areas that can contribute theoretically and methodologically to research on innovation in sports journalism. Some of these lines of study address the changes caused by innovation in organizations, the links between innovation and the development of creativity, leadership and empowerment, among others, which are expanded in the following points referring to creativity and innovation; leadership and empowerment to encourage innovation; the role of team members in driving innovation; innovation and entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship ecosystems and theories and conceptualizations on innovation.

## **Creativity and innovation**

Innovation is considered a cornerstone of a firm's success and competitiveness and as such, creativity, a core component of innovation, is a fundamental asset for innovation (Amabile and Pratt, 2016). Studies on creativity tend to remain within their discipline and focus, for example, organizational characteristics that are relevant to creativity or the cognitive dimensions of creativity (Pinkow, 2022).

Research has shown that individuals apply different strategies when working on similar creative tasks (Dorst and Cross, 2001 in Pinkow, 2022) but these strategies are still not well understood in an organizational context. This is an element that should be considered in research on innovation in new ventures in sports journalism. Creativity to develop ideas that answer the questions of what is my unique value proposition, what do I offer, why do I offer it, what problem do I solve, how am I going to achieve it? issues such as format, technology, distribution, equipment are often not understood in an organization, as well as these ideas may respond to "emotional impulses" or predetermined ideas rather than reasoned decisions.

Some clues on this last point are provided by Díaz-Portugal *et al.* (2023), who hypothesize that "positive affect" influences entrepreneurs' evaluation of opportunities, mainly in cultural and creative entrepreneurs, where media can be incorporated. Contrary to their hypothesis, their results revealed that positive affect has a low influence on entrepreneurial selection in the subgroup of cultural and creative entrepreneurs, suggesting that entrepreneurs belonging to cultural and creative industries do not consider subjective perceptions as objective truths and thus avoid biased perceptions of their entrepreneurial opportunities promoted by their positive affect (Navis and Ozbek, 2016; Zhang and Cueto, 2017).

Investigating whether these results would be similar in sports media entrepreneurs could provide further clues in this regard.

## **Leadership and empowerment to foster innovation**

Business leadership has a significant impact on employees' innovative behavior through the innovation climate and intellectual agility (Malibarria and Bajab, 2022). According to these researchers, leaders must identify their critical roles in fostering innovation in their businesses and establishing the

ideal culture and climate for innovation. Leaders must create innovative environments to encourage employees to share ideas and concepts with confidence to make strategic decisions at a time when sectors such as technology and telecommunications companies are driving innovation (Küng, 2013).

For research on sports journalism ventures, it is useful to know the relationships established between the leadership of a project with the innovative ideas that are developed in them. Is there a centralized structure where only the leader(s) decide the strategic actions of the project? Are there spaces that encourage the development of ideas by all members of the group which are encouraged by the leader? Which of these variants is more effective? The latter if understanding “effectiveness” as the economic sustainability of the environment.

On this regard, Amoroso *et al.* (2021) investigated how “empowering” leadership correlates with team creativity, innovative orientation, and with business model innovation. According to their results, surprisingly, neither “empowering” leadership nor team creativity was related to business model innovation. Empowering leadership and team creativity may be necessary but insufficient factors to explain business model innovation. For this, other elements are needed, including greater employee involvement in decisions.

## **The role of team members in driving innovation**

The success of innovations depends on the support received by certain individuals, team members who promote and defend innovations within their organizations. This is the conclusion reached by researchers Stielor and Henike (2022) after analyzing for three years how innovative ideas from employees of a German manufacturing plant were promoted. For them, engaging employees to contribute to corporate innovation is vital to the future success of companies, yet long-term jobs, highly specific organizational units, and hierarchical management structures are designed to preserve the *status quo* rather than promote transformative change.

The empirical results of Stielor and Henike (2022) support the proposition of Floco *et al.* (2022) that states, on the one hand, autonomy and inclusion foster employee participation and community building, while, on the other hand, says that control seems necessary to ensure innovative outcomes. In addition to autonomy and inclusion, Van Essen *et al.* (2022) added other variables that contribute to the development of innovative behavior at work:

creativity, psychological empowerment, optimism and contextual work factors as space for autonomy, leadership and teamwork.

Van Essen *et al.* (2022) and Stieler and Henike (2022) agree that external stimuli are necessary for team members to develop innovative proposals. Van Essen *et al.* (2022) present the concept of “innovation energy”, which transforms the innovative properties of employees into innovative work behavior. Stieler and Henike (2022) talk about “Innovation nudging” as a series of strategies to drive innovative behavior within organizations.

Although these two concepts were developed for companies with a large number of employees and highly hierarchical structures for research on innovation in sports journalism, it is not an idle exercise to identify whether “innovation energy” or “innovation nudging” actions are developed in journalism and sports projects or ventures as a way to create innovative solutions that impact the sustainability of the organization.

## **Innovation and entrepreneurship**

In colloquial language, the terms innovation and entrepreneurship seem intrinsically linked. Startups, generally associated with technology companies, are implicitly considered innovative, a logic of thought that is transferred to new journalistic ventures, even sports ones. This leads to journalistic projects being considered “innovative” just for being created on some digital platform.

Kenneth Kahn (2022) takes an institutional perspective on innovation and entrepreneurship, arguing that the lack of differentiation between these two terms results in a lack of entrepreneurship and innovation centers in universities. This leads to research and teaching activities in the areas that are not clearly differentiated and thus generate suboptimal results (Hölzle, 2022).

Considering this difference, Grilli (2022) established a correlation between the age of 4000 Italian entrepreneurs and their “business acumen” with the development of innovative new products. The research found that “youth advantage” and “business acumen” do not necessarily lead to success in developing innovative products, but at the same time, it found that both categories significantly characterize the best among entrepreneurs involved in new product development. For starting a new journalism project, the “youth advantage” is also considered a relevant element mainly due to the belief that young people adopt technology better, a view linked to the technologi-

cal determinism that exists about entrepreneurship. Mapping demographic elements among journalistic entrepreneurs (gender, age, region, city, etc.) and correlating them with the innovative capacity of these media could offer new clues as to which characteristics make the creation of a journalistic initiative more likely.

Another example of research that clearly delineates technology platforms, entrepreneurship and innovation, in this case business model, is the study by Hyunkyu *et al.* (2021), who examine how users use digital platforms to become entrepreneurs who conduct business activities on the platforms; and how platform providers can turn this user entrepreneurship into a source of revenue. Korsgaard Andersen *et al.* (2022) are in a similar perspective by analyzing how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) apply innovative business models from data-driven decisions.

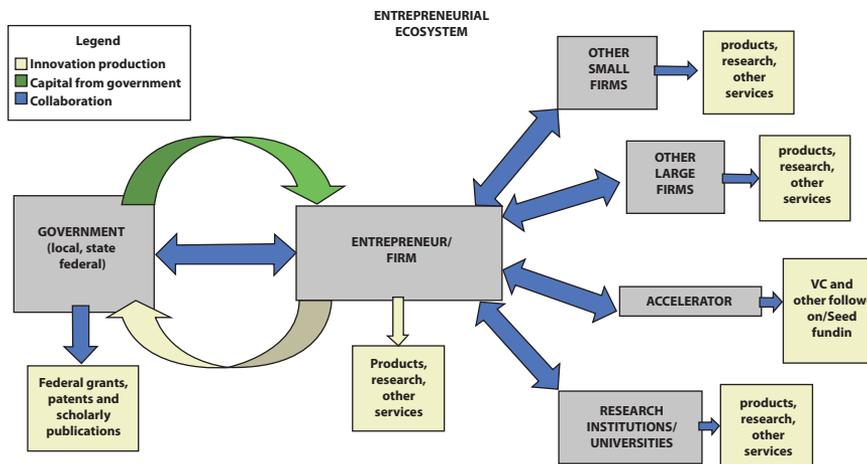
After reviewing research on the role of creativity in innovation, leadership, the role of constituents and the differences between innovation and entrepreneurship, it is necessary to add factors related to the environment and context, since organizations do not operate alone but in correlation with others.

## **Entrepreneurial ecosystems**

The idea that economic solutions to innovation and entrepreneurship problems should be “place-based” has its roots in Adam Smith’s (1776) observation that states that productivity and wages were higher in areas with larger, denser populations (Johnson *et al.*, 2022). Following this idea, these authors offered a measurement framework that places collaborative relationships between entrepreneurs, government agencies, and research institutions at the center of the ecosystem concept and conceptualizes four roles of governments as catalysts, coordinators, certifiers, and customers in shaping these relationships. Entrepreneurs interact with government in different ways that influence the condition of the surrounding entrepreneurial ecosystem (Figure 1).

This raises new questions for research on innovation in independent sports media. Is the social context a determining element? In the case of Latin America, for example, is it different to undertake a sports journalism project in Chile, Argentina or Mexico, even in more regional geographic spaces such as Monterrey or Guadalajara?

**Figure 1**  
*Simple conceptual model of the entrepreneurial ecosystem*



Note. Johnson *et al.* (2022)

In addition to the relationships of entrepreneurs with research institutions and governments, studies on innovation focus on the links created among entrepreneurs to reduce the uncertainty caused by innovation. Cuntz and Peuckert (2022) analyzed several hacker communities (hackerspaces) in Germany and found a strong correlation between the establishment of hackerspaces with the level of digital entrepreneurship in regions, particularly in agglomerations and urban contexts.

According to these authors, hackerspaces are excellent examples of innovation and provide an institutional solution to overcome collective action problems related to innovation. The “fierce culture of sharing” and the implicit understanding that “to participate you had to contribute” makes access to these places valuable for their members. This collaborative environment helps the community accumulate “information about innovation,” which “enables people to overcome uncertainty about the nature of the market opportunity and thus become entrepreneurs” (Cuntz and Peuckert, 2022). This type of research could help identify second-order innovators, “early adopters” (Rogers, 2003) who fulfill the role of opinion leaders (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944) in a yet unresearched step of innovation adoption.

## **Teorías y conceptualizaciones de la innovación**

### **Innovación de modelos de negocio sostenible e Innovación social**

La innovación de modelos de negocios sostenibles (SBMI, por sus siglas en inglés) ha atraído recientemente un gran interés entre la academia y la práctica. (Bashir *et al.*, 2022). Las ideas innovadoras que se enfocan en problemas sociales insatisfechos o emergentes representan una oportunidad para crear nuevos modelos de negocios, iniciar nuevas empresas y mejorar la transferencia de conocimiento (Nicolopoulou *et al.*, 2017). Los emprendimientos sociales pueden constituirse como posibles agentes de cambio, ya que ofrecen soluciones innovadoras a problemas sociales complejos que las organizaciones existentes pasan por alto o abordan sin éxito (Maiolini *et al.*, 2016 en Battistella *et al.* (2021) sustentando el crecimiento empresarial con recursos oportunos, por ejemplo, las finanzas.

Sin embargo, las empresas emergentes, que poseen un alto valor normativo, se enfrentan a mayores riesgos y posibles tasas de fracaso debido a una complejidad peculiar y las dimensiones contextuales de los desafíos sociales (Martínez *et al.*, 2017). Las dificultades para acceder al financiamiento externo, o para unirse a redes y alianzas estratégicas, se deben principalmente al escepticismo de los inversionistas y la falta de conocimiento compartido para alinear los valores de las startups con varios stakeholders (Cacciolatti *et al.*, 2020).

## **Theories and conceptualizations of innovation**

### **Innovation of sustainable business models and social innovation**

Sustainable business model innovation (SBMI) has recently attracted great interest among academia and practice (Bashir *et al.*, 2022). Innovative ideas that focus on unmet or emerging social problems represent an opportunity to create new business models, start new ventures, and enhance knowledge transfer (Nicolopoulou *et al.*, 2017). Social ventures can constitute potential change agents, as they offer innovative solutions to complex social problems that existing organizations overlook or unsuccessfully address (Maiolini *et al.*,

2016 in Battistella *et al.*, (2021) by sustaining business growth with timely resources, e.g., finance.

However, start-ups, which possess a high normative value, face higher risks and possible failure rates due to complex and contextual dimensions of social challenges (Martinez *et al.*, 2017). Difficulties in accessing external funding or joining networks and strategic alliances are mainly due to investors' skepticism and lack of shared knowledge to align startups' values with various stakeholders (Cacciolatti *et al.*, 2020).

Sports media ventures are in this context, most of which are strongly committed to the development of high standards of the profession. According to Negredo *et al.* (2020), one of the main motivations for journalists to start up is to experiment with new forms of organization, work routines and content in the face of the failure of old methods, linked to dependence on advertising, government funding, loss of credibility among audiences, etc.

On the other hand, the theory of social innovation can be defined as the development of innovative products, services or processes aimed at satisfying a social need, with the opportunity to create new social relationships between actors who collectively engage in purposeful actions to achieve positive and systemic social change. In the ever-changing socioeconomic environment, an analysis of the contextual dynamics of social innovation must include the unique nature and structure of the participants, processes, and complexities involved (Nicolopoulou *et al.*, 2017).

## **Open innovation**

Open innovation has attracted significant attention as firms respond to increasing complexities by opening their organizational boundaries to interact with stakeholders along the innovation funnel (Chesbrough, 2003). In a comprehensive review of the open innovation literature, Randhawa *et al.* (2016) noted that studies of open innovation had been primarily concerned with the roles of knowledge, technology, and R&D from a firm-centric perspective. At the same time, the complexity of managing collaborative efforts across organizational boundaries are more apparent (Pedersen *et al.*, 2022).

According to Dogruel (2014), even though there is a wide range of perspectives to address media innovation, it remains being an underdeveloped academic field due to weak theoretical frameworks (Klaß, 2020). According to

this author, approaches tend to focus on communication, journalism and other humanistic disciplines lacking organizational, managerial and technological perspectives. For Klaß (2020), the Open Innovation (OI) approach allows integrating different visions that embrace their complex communication organizations, which are understood as “hybrid companies providing content, but at the same time with a remarkable social impact” (Hess, 2014 in Klaß, 2020).

Open innovation research is subdivided into “outside-in”, “inside-out” and coupled open innovation processes.

### **Innovation in times of crisis? Theory of Creative Destruction**

The concept of “Creative Destruction” created by Schumpeter (1942, in Negredo *et al.*, 2020) has been one of the most widely used to describe the change processes in industries. The term describes innovation processes that bring new products to the market, displacing or “destroying” those already established. The media industry has been an example of this process (Negredo *et al.*, 2020). For example, with the advent of television in the radio era, or the Internet in the television era.

Under this theoretical approach, Negredo *et al.* (2020) attempt to elucidate whether the greatest explosion of digital native media in Spain, which occurred paradoxically in the Great Recession (2008-2014), constituted a process of Creative Destruction. At this stage, journalists created their own independent projects, after traditional media cut staff in response to the economic crisis, and unemployment rates in the media sector increased.

However, while the crisis was a boost for the creation of new ventures, it was not so for the development of innovations, especially in the sustainability model. In their results, Negredo *et al.* (2020) show that only in 2015, one fifth of the new media founded by journalists had closed or were inactive.

The biggest problem of these media was that the founders did not have a business plan or a commercial approach. One third of their publications billed less than 25,000 euros per year; almost 60 % generated between 25,000 and 50,000 euros. (Negredo *et al.*, 2020)

Makridis and McGuire (2022) also indicate that crises are periods of reallocation and disruption that generate new innovations that transform industries. According to these authors, the empirical evidence that research and

development (R&D) and patent expenditures are procyclical, not countercyclical, contradicts the theory of creative destruction in which firms invest more resources in research during periods of lower demand.

## **Radical innovation**

Traditional Schumpeterian literature categorizes innovations as either “radical” or “incremental” according to the change they generate in the value creation of products or services (Krumsvik *et al.*, 2019). Järventie-Thesleff *et al.* (2014, in García-Avilés, 2021) observe that management practices in print media tend to be oriented to support incremental innovations, while practices in digital media tend to pursue more radical innovations.

In their conceptualization, Freeman and Pérez (Badillo, 2013) argue that radical innovations are quite distinct: they are large-scale, discontinuously occurring events, such as the emergence of nylon, technological changes, and such as the petrochemical boom, have an even greater impact. Finally, changes in technological paradigms affect economic and social life as a whole.

For Cuntz and Peuckert (2022), radical innovations transform existing goods and services significantly. This type of innovation represents a risky departure from existing practice and can be disruptive or discontinuous within firms. For these authors, radical innovation is more likely to occur in firms that are able to integrate a wide variety of new and pre-existing, heterogeneous but complementary knowledge.

## **Innovation Commons Theory**

Contrary to the traditional producer- or company-centered innovation model, users are an important source of innovation (‘user’ innovation or ‘free’ innovation). Users frequently modify existing products or create entirely new solutions in response to their heterogeneous and non-standard needs (Von Hippel, 2017).

Notably, users exchanging knowledge in communities of practice may also develop entrepreneurial aspirations and start to commercially exploit community-based innovations (Ferdinand, 2017). Thus, user experimentation is not limited to product development and innovation, but sometimes extends to the formation of new businesses.

## **Innovation methodologies**

Methodological approaches to study innovation are very varied and include quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. The selection of methodologies is very fragmented, and no patterns or traditions of study are identified, responding to the wide range of research objects in the field of innovation.

The survey (Chirico *et al.*, 2022; Miyao *et al.*, 2022; Chi and Nan Lin, 2022; Bashir *et al.*, 2022; Amoroso *et al.*, 2021) constitute some of the most widely used techniques by researchers seeking to analyze a broad population, either within a company or in a geographical location. In addition, the use of factor analysis, exploratory and confirmatory to assess the construct validity of all items belonging the surveys.

On the other hand, Grilli (2022), applied a questionnaire to 4000 entrepreneurs with the purpose of collecting information on Italian innovative start-ups along a number of dimensions including the demographic characteristics of the entrepreneurs, their human capital endowment and the innovation strategies pursued.

Jønsson and Kähler (2022) conducted analyses of longitudinal questionnaire data, while Johnson *et al.* (2022) relied on relational database management systems suitable for establishing metrics for entrepreneurial ecosystems due to their ability to capture relationships between ecosystem actors that emerge across many disparate data sources. Cuntz and Peuckert (2022), developed a large panel of observations that merges annual counts of digital startups with a set of conventional determinants of entrepreneurship as well as local indicators of hackerspaces to determine the correlation between hackerspaces and digital entrepreneurship.

Hyunkyu *et al.* (2021) and Korsgaard Andersen *et al.* (2022) relied on case study and multiple case study, respectively, as did Battistella *et al.* (2022). Stieler and Henike (2022) opted for participant observation over a three-year period in a German company, while Van Essen *et al.* (2022), Floco *et al.* (2022), (Alam, 2022) and (Mesabia, 2022) used semi-structured interviews.

## **Conclusions and discussion**

An interdisciplinary perspective in research on innovation in sports journalism is the starting point for entering new paths away from the precariousness, click dependency, lack of funding, and loss of credibility among audiences of traditional sports media. The field of business studies offers some

new clues to increase the knowledge and practice of innovation development in sports journalism.

Studies on innovation in sports journalism can build some of the thematic lines most developed by articles focused on business. Understanding how creativity processes work to develop innovative ideas would help to understand why the founders of sports journalism ventures decide to launch a media outlet with a certain value proposition and not another, why it addresses certain topics and not others, etc. Likewise, studies on innovation offer clues to analyze whether sports media entrepreneurs make these decisions based on affective or reasonable criteria, which is a determining factor in the future of the project.

For research on sports journalism ventures, it is useful to know the relationships established between the leadership of a project and the innovative ideas developed in them, which have a direct effect on the sustainability of the media, if the creation of spaces that encourage the development of ideas by all members of the group could contribute in this sense, and if actions such as “innovation energy” or “innovation impulse” could contribute to the generation of innovative proposals among the members of a venture.

Drawing lines between business and journalism studies will also make it possible to outline a more holistic and tangible concept of innovation in the media, away from the technocentric vision. In this way, it is avoided that sports journalism projects are considered “innovative” just because they are created on some digital platform or that only the youngest journalists can undertake new projects. Regarding the latter, it would be interesting to propose studies that map demographic elements among journalistic entrepreneurs (gender, age, region, city, etc.) and correlate them with the innovative capacity of sports media.

Another line of research could focus on determining whether sports journalism entrepreneurship ecosystems exist, or whether their creation would help to reduce uncertainty in the decisions to be made by their members.

It is also necessary to renew the theoretical-methodological proposals in future research and go beyond traditional methods such as case studies and interviews to adopt mixed or quantitative methodologies.

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