



THE ROLE OF A MEDIA ARTS GALLERY IN A POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY TO ENHANCE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

EL PAPEL DE UNA GALERÍA DE ARTES MEDIÁTICAS EN UNA UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA PARA MEJORAR EL EMPRENDIMIENTO

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KEYWORDS

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Engage community

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of a media art gallery within a university setting. Specifically, it examines how mahaus.gallery can contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of the university community. The paper discusses the ways in which a media art gallery can promote interdisciplinary learning and research, foster creative collaborations, and engage with the wider community beyond the university campus. Therefore, through a quantitative approach, we analyzed the role of a media arts gallery in a higher education institution in stimulating entrepreneurship among communication students. The results highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and institutional support in the development of entrepreneurial skills and indicate that mahaus.gallery is an essential component of the university as it provides a space for innovation, experimentation and critical reflection on the intersection of art and technology.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Artes mediáticas
Exposiciones de arte Mahaus.gallery
Habilidades empresariales
Involucrar a la comunidad

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora el papel de una galería de arte mediático dentro de un entorno universitario. En concreto, examina cómo mahaus.gallery puede contribuir a la vida intelectual y cultural de la comunidad universitaria. El documento analiza las formas en que una galería de arte multimedia puede promover el aprendizaje y la investigación interdisciplinarios, fomentar colaboraciones creativas y comprometerse con la comunidad más amplia más allá del campus universitario. Por lo tanto, a través de un enfoque cuantitativo, analizamos el papel de una galería de artes mediáticas en una institución de educación superior para estimular el espíritu empresarial entre los estudiantes de comunicación. Los resultados destacan la importancia de la colaboración interdisciplinaria y el apoyo institucional en el desarrollo de habilidades emprendedoras e indican que mahaus.gallery es un componente esencial de la universidad ya que proporciona un espacio para la innovación, la experimentación y la reflexión crítica sobre la intersección del arte y la tecnología.

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1. Introduction

Media arts galleries have gained space in the artistic and educational scene, providing a platform for creative expression and experimentation with new technologies and languages (Paul, 2016). They act as innovation laboratories and foster interdisciplinarity, connecting students, professors and professionals from different areas (Gere, 2006). Entrepreneurship in the field

of communication is a growing phenomenon, resulting from rapid technological evolution and changes in the way people communicate and consume information (Deuze, 2011). The ability to create, manage and innovate in companies in the field of communication is fundamental to face the challenges and opportunities of this sector (Küng, 2017). This study aims to investigate how the presence of a media gallery in a higher education institution can stimulate entrepreneurship among communication students. For this, interviews will be conducted with artists and questionnaires will be applied to students of an educational institution located in Portugal with a media arts gallery for the dissemination of the work of communication students. The choice of theme is justified by the growing importance of entrepreneurship in the field of communication and the need to promote innovation and the development of entrepreneurial skills among students (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Furthermore, few studies have explored the role of media arts galleries in this context, making it a relevant and promising research area (Lovejoy et al., 2016). The article is structured as follows: the literature review presents the main concepts and studies related to entrepreneurship in communication and the role of media arts galleries; the methodology describes the approach and instruments used; the results and discussion analyze and interpret the collected data; and, finally, the conclusion summarizes the main findings and suggests directions for future studies.

2. Theoretical foundation

Entrepreneurship is a process of identifying and exploiting opportunities, creating value and allocating resources to innovation (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). As in other areas, entrepreneurship in the communication field involves the application of entrepreneurial practices and techniques to generate innovation in products, services, processes and business models (Botti & Mora, 2015). Innovation in communication is characterized by disruptive and evolutionary changes in the ways of producing, distributing and consuming information, driven by technological advances and social transformations (Küng, 2017). Entrepreneurship and innovation in communication are interdependent, as entrepreneurship drives innovation and innovation creates opportunities for entrepreneurship (Rindova et al., 2009). This dynamic has been especially relevant in areas such as journalism, advertising, public relations, audiovisual and multimedia, where digital evolution has required constant adaptation and experimentation (Pavlik, 2013). Media arts galleries in educational institutions have established themselves as spaces where art, technology and science converge (Ito et al., 2010), offering resources and support for students and artists to experiment with new media and forms of expression, promoting interdisciplinarity and collaboration. Successful examples such as the Hallway Gallery of the Department of Transmedia in the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Syracuse University, USA and the Art, Design & Architecture Museum of the College of Letters & Science at the University of California reinforce the potential of these galleries to enrich the educational experience and cultivate innovation and creativity in the communication field. The projects developed in these galleries can have positive results in promoting entrepreneurship, especially in technological and artistic innovations, as well as in new business opportunities and partnerships (Graham et al., 2010).

Studies have shown that exposure to media arts and creative practices in educational contexts can contribute to the development of entrepreneurial skills, such as the ability to identify opportunities, think critically, solve problems and collaborate with others (Balsamo, 2011; Damásio & Bicacro, 2017). In addition, media arts galleries can provide a conducive environment for experimenting and learning innovative techniques and technologies, which is crucial for entrepreneurial success in the field of communication (Welch, 2020). The interaction between communication students and professors and artists and media arts professionals can also stimulate the development of networks and partnerships, fundamental for entrepreneurship (Ardichvili et al., 2003). This exchange of knowledge and experiences can drive innovation and value creation in the field of communication (Leonardi et al., 2012).

However, it is important to emphasize that the relationship between media arts galleries and the development of entrepreneurial skills can be influenced by several factors, such as student involvement, institutional support and organizational culture (Damásio & Bicacro, 2017). Thus, future studies should explore this relationship more deeply and identify the conditions that favor the stimulation of entrepreneurship in educational institutions with media arts galleries.

3. Methodology

This investigation will adopt a mixed approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews will be carried out with artists involved in the newly created media arts gallery 'mahaus.gallery', at the Higher School of Education, Communication and Sport of the Polytechnic University of Guarda, Portugal; and applied

questionnaires to the public of the gallery, which are the students, teachers and researchers of the institution and the general public. Since its creation, in December 2022, the gallery has hosted three media arts exhibitions and has explored multimedia resources and tools for the exhibition of work by undergraduate students in the field of communication. This institution has courses in Multimedia Communication and Communication and Public Relations and has received the visit of more than 200 students from these courses since its creation.

The questionnaire was prepared with closed questions, with responses on a Likert scale; and an open question. The questions were designed to understand the perception of artists and students about the impact of the gallery: on the interest in entrepreneurship in the field of communication (Leonardi et al., 2012), on stimulating creativity and innovation (Gere, 2006; Pavlik, 2013), participating in collaborative and interdisciplinary projects related to media arts (Florida, 2002), the importance of these experiences for entrepreneurial development (Hearn et al., 2007), especially entrepreneurial skills (Damásio & Bicacro, 2017), encouraging collaboration between students from different areas (Shanken, 2009), and in the perception: of the institutional and academic support received for the media arts gallery to be enough to stimulate entrepreneurship (Graham et al., 2010) and of the areas in which the media gallery institution arts could improve to further stimulate entrepreneurship among communication students (Open question) (Balsamo, 2011; Florida, 2002).

Quantitative data from the questionnaires will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in order to identify trends and relationships between the variables under study (Bryman, 2012). The open questions of the questionnaire will also be submitted to content analysis in order to complement the interviews.

4. Results and discussion

This study, carried out with students of the Communication course at the Polytechnic University of Guarda, obtained 56 responses, mostly from Communication and Public Relations students (71%) and females (60%). Most respondents visit the ESECD media arts gallery occasionally (48%) or rarely (32%), while 20% never visit it. Only 12% visit often and 8% always. These results indicate room to raise awareness about the gallery and encourage more visits.

Most partially agree (44%) that mahaus.gallery raises interest in entrepreneurship in the field of communication. With 37% of respondents fully or partially agreeing, the gallery can be an important tool to encourage entrepreneurship. However, 25% totally or partially disagree, suggesting room for improvement. Most students fully (34%) or partially (32%) agree that exposure to projects and works in the gallery stimulates creativity and innovation. With 66% of respondents fully or partially agreeing, the gallery can be effective in inspiring student creativity and innovation. However, 15% completely or partially disagree, indicating that there is still room for improvement.

Among the respondents, 79% did not participate in collaborative and interdisciplinary projects at the media arts gallery, while only 21% did. These results suggest that the institution can encourage student participation in projects related to the gallery, promoting initiatives such as workshops or competitions. Most respondents agree (47%) or partially agree (22%) that the gallery offers opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills. The institution can carry out initiatives to foster these skills, such as workshops and lectures on leadership, decision making and project management, using the gallery as a tool. Of the respondents, 44% agree that the gallery encourages collaboration between students from different areas. The Polytechnic University of Guarda can take advantage of this aspect to promote collaborative projects involving areas such as design, programming and marketing, encouraging the exchange of knowledge and skills, and making the gallery a space for interdisciplinary experimentation and innovation. The majority of respondents consider support in the gallery sufficient to stimulate entrepreneurship among communication students, with 34% partially or fully agreeing. However, 8% totally or partially disagree, indicating room for improvement in institutional and academic support.

Based on respondents' responses to the open question, the proposals involve showing more artistic projects beyond photography, developing projects open to students, improving the quality of the space, using more digital options and increasing the gallery's accessibility. There are also suggestions related to specific areas. In addition, the institution can create more initiatives and programs to encourage entrepreneurship in communication, focusing on interdisciplinary collaboration, mentoring, networking and training. Suggestions also include greater dissemination of the gallery, workshops in different areas, addressing less explored areas, improving dissemination among students and teachers, and holding interactive events. Based on the results, to encourage interest in entrepreneurship, Polytechnic University of Guarda may consider holding special events in the gallery, highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship in the field of communication and media arts. Workshops, mentorships and other events can be offered to teach entrepreneurial skills and connect students to the community of entrepreneurs. To attract visitors, events should be organized in the gallery, promoting them on digital and social platforms. Creating partnerships with cultural institutions and organizations in the region can increase the gallery's visibility and encourage visits. A wider communication campaign to promote the gallery can also be effective. In addition, events can be promoted that encourage students to develop innovative projects and promote challenges and competitions related to innovation. The institution can collaborate with companies

and organizations to offer internship and mentoring opportunities, allowing students to work on market-relevant projects. Creating initiatives that encourage collaboration and interdisciplinarity and considering partnerships with companies and organizations to offer internship opportunities and mentoring programs can also be positive. In this way, the institution can promote entrepreneurship in the communication field and encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills among students.

5. Conclusions

This study analyzed the role of a media arts gallery in a higher education institution in stimulating entrepreneurship among communication students. Research has shown that the mahaus.gallery at Polytechnic University of Guarda has a significant impact, offering space for experimentation, interdisciplinary learning and the development of creative and innovative skills (Leonardi et al., 2012; Pavlik, 2013). The results also highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and institutional support in the development of entrepreneurial skills (Damásio & Bicacro, 2017). The investigation contributes to the field of communication and entrepreneurship, providing empirical evidence of the relevance of media arts galleries promoting entrepreneurship among communication students. The study underlines the need to promote interdisciplinarity and innovation in communication teaching, in line with the existing literature (Gere, 2006; Shanken, 2009). Factors such as access to technological and artistic resources, stimulation of interdisciplinary collaboration and institutional and academic support in the development and implementation of innovative projects contribute to the development of entrepreneurial skills in students and should be considered (Damásio & Bicacro, 2017).

The investigation has limitations, such as the sample size, which may not be representative of all higher education institutions with media arts galleries, and the fact that it is concentrated in only one institution, limiting the generalization of the results. However, the results have important implications for education and communication teaching, suggesting that institutions should consider creating and strengthening spaces such as media galleries to foster the development of entrepreneurial skills among students. The investigation highlights the need for greater integration between disciplines and institutional support for the development and implementation of innovative projects.

The results reinforce the importance of the institution's gallery as a conducive space for stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation, in line with the ideas and examples presented in the literature (Gere, 2006; Shanken, 2009). The study also confirms the relevance of factors such as interdisciplinary collaboration and institutional support in the development of entrepreneurial skills (Florida, 2002; Hearn et al., 2007). Based on the results, the Polytechnic University of Guarda can encourage interest in entrepreneurship by holding special events in the gallery, offering workshops, mentoring programs and other events, as well as promoting partnerships with cultural institutions and organizations in the region. The institution can promote events that encourage students to develop innovative projects and collaborate with companies and organizations to offer internship and mentoring opportunities, as well as create initiatives that encourage collaboration and interdisciplinarity.

Therefore, the media arts gallery of the Polytechnic University of Guarda plays an important role in the development of entrepreneurial skills among communication students. To reinforce this function, the institution can adopt strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration. Attracting visitors can be achieved by organizing events in the gallery and promoting them on digital and social platforms. Creating partnerships with cultural institutions and organizations in the region can increase the gallery's visibility and encourage visits. A wider communication campaign to promote the gallery can also be effective. Promoting innovation-related challenges and competitions can also boost student engagement and stimulate the development of innovative projects. The institution can collaborate with companies and organizations to offer internship and mentoring opportunities, allowing students to work on market-relevant projects. By creating stimulus initiatives, the institution can promote entrepreneurship in the field of communication and encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills among students. In this way, the Polytechnic University of Guarda can become an even more conducive environment for student success in entrepreneurship and innovation in the field of communication and media arts.

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