ABSTRACT

Objective: analyzing how entrepreneurship is portrayed by the mass media in Brazil, based on data on one of the main national communication media, namely: Folha de São Paulo newspaper.

Design/methodology/approach: 1,288 news reports, published between January 2019 and December 2021, were analyzed based on using Structural Topic Modeling (STM) algorithm support and R programming language. Publications’ volume and the main entrepreneurship topics were herein described. In addition, content published in the year before the Covid-19 pandemic and those published during the aforementioned health crisis were comparatively analyzed, based on trends reported by previous research.

Results: there was increase in the number of publications during the pandemic period. Entrepreneurship’s positive image was maintained by the media, which disregarded narratives about entrepreneurs’ trajectories and failure times. Topics associated with minorities’ inclusion proved to be a novelty, with emphasis on social entrepreneurship.

Originality/value: the current research has evidenced entrepreneurship representation specificities, such as those associated with the pandemic period, although this scientific topic remains poorly explored at national level. STM highlights the news reports adopting discourse analysis among most studies on this subject. Furthermore, previous studies have mainly focused on news reports published in business magazines. In terms of social contribution, the current findings trigger a critical reflection on how mass media portray entrepreneurship in Brazil, and it enables addressing the need of developing more realistic and less romanticized narratives about this phenomenon.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar como o empreendedorismo é retratado pela mídia de massa no Brasil, a partir de um dos principais veículos nacionais de comunicação, o jornal Folha de São Paulo.

Design/metodologia/abordagem: análise de 1.288 matérias jornalísticas, publicadas entre janeiro de 2019 e dezembro de 2021, com o apoio da Modelagem de Tópico Estrutural (STM) e da linguagem R. Descreveu-se o volume de publicações e os principais tópicos sobre empreendedorismo. Analisou-se comparativamente os conteúdos divulgados no ano que antcedeu a pandemia de covid-19 e aqueles veiculados durante a crise sanitária, com as tendências relatadas por pesquisas anteriores.

Resultados: crescimento do número de publicações no período pandêmico. A imagem positiva do empreendedorismo foi mantida pela mídia, sendo desconsideradas as narrativas de trajetórias e momentos de fracasso dos empreendedores. Temáticas relacionadas à inclusão de minorias se revelaram novidade, além do destaque para o empreendedorismo social.

Limitações da pesquisa: consulta a um único portal jornalístico e análise de uma pequena amostra na etapa de detalhamento das matérias.

Originalidade/valor: a pesquisa revela particularidades do retrato do empreendedorismo, incluindo-se aquelas do período pandêmico, temática científica pouco desenvolvida nacionalmente. A utilização da STM destaca o artigo da maioria dos estudos sobre o tema, que adotou a análise do discurso. Ademais, o foco dos estudos anteriores esteve, principalmente, nas matérias publicadas em revistas de negócios. Considerando as contribuições sociais, os resultados levantam uma reflexão crítica sobre como a mídia de massa retrata o empreendedorismo no Brasil, o que permite debater a necessidade de se ampliar narrativas mais realistas e menos romantizadas sobre o fenômeno.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a widespread phenomenon that has been widely investigated from different perspectives, both in and outside the academic scope (Casaqui, 2017; Laguía & Moriano, 2021; Silva, 2016). These perspectives range from the conceptualization of the term “entrepreneurship” and reflections on its research field (Castrogiovanni, 2018; Shane, 2012) to topics associated with innovation (Chaudhry, Xu, & Cao, 2018; Murmann, Salmivaara, & Kibler, 2023) and to those referring to minorities (Kabir & Abubakar, 2023; Shelton & Minniti, 2018; Singh & DeNoble, 2003). There has also been growing interest by the mass media in the entrepreneurial universe, and it has encouraged researchers to analyze the way entrepreneurship is portrayed by it (Laguía & Moriano, 2021).

Thus, studies on entrepreneurship comprise a wide variety of likely implications to be analyzed, such as media influence on this phenomenon. The literature in this field has some studies focused on investigating media relevance – be it TV, digital or print – for entrepreneurship. They promote reflections on media’s power of persuasion when it comes to this phenomenon and on the way it is portrayed (Dias & Wetzel, 2010; Hang & van Weezel, 2007; Santos, Becheri, Oliveira, & Leme, 2020).

According to Anderson and Warren (2011), the media plays a relevant role in producing discourses focused on featuring the entrepreneurial identity, besides being capable of building a version of what the entrepreneurial agent would be. Thus, it has the power to affect both representations and social imaginary (Radu & Redien-Collot, 2008), as well as to create and promote stereotypes about entrepreneurship. However, it does not highlight the difficulties faced by this sector, which are relevant for analysis purposes (Laguía & Moriano, 2021).

According to Laguía and Moriano (2021), results of previous studies about “mass media” and “entrepreneurship” may not be applicable in certain countries, and it requires different contexts to be analyzed in specific ways. In addition, national studies have mostly analyzed business magazines. Costa, Barros and Martins (2012), for example, have used magazines, such as Você S/A, Exame, Carta Capital and HSM Management, as information sources, whereas Dias & Wetzel (2010) have only used Exame, and it can be a limitation in studies about this topic.

Furthermore, according to the study review carried out by Gimenez (2017), studies focused on investigating entrepreneurship representations in the media account for a small number of articles about entrepreneurship published in national journals. According to his analysis, only 0.29% of the 1,365 reviewed articles addressed this topic (Gimenez, 2017). This finding has evidenced a gap in entrepreneurship studies that should be explored.

In addition, there are studies questioning how the media portrayed entrepreneurship during the Covid-19 pandemic, based on its likely impacts on ventures’ development and maintenance processes. Previous studies have shown that feelings, such as sadness and fear, got stronger among entrepreneurs during this period, as well as the likelihood of burnout caused by the strong risk of bankruptcy (Pagotto et al., 2022; Torrès et al., 2022). Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic raised questions about what entrepreneurs could do to remain active in the market, as well as to mitigate the negative impacts of this health crisis on it (Nassif et al., 2020), given the need of implementing a crisis management process imposed by the pandemic (Thukral, 2021).

Thus, because the Covid-19 pandemic may have influenced the way the herein investigated topic was approached by the media, it is essential identifying and analyzing how the media have portrayed entrepreneurship in Brazil by identifying their focus on representations, as well as by investigating whether they issue warnings about entrepreneurial difficulties and overcome this fully positive image of entrepreneurial actions.

Therefore, the overall aim of the current study was to analyze how entrepreneurship is portrayed by the Brazilian mass media, by taking into consideration one of the main national communication media, namely: Folha de São Paulo newspaper. Option made for using the aforementioned newspaper is justified by the fact that topics addressed by this journalistic medium are not limited to business, unlike media previously analyzed by the literature. This factor can help providing a new perspective about the investigated phenomenon. The specific aims of
the current study comprised:

a) Describing the number of publications and the main topics about entrepreneurship published by the mass media and;

b) Comparatively analyzing the content published in the year before the Covid-19 pandemic onset to that published during this health crisis, with emphasis on trends reported by previous research on this subject.

Structural Topic Modeling – which is a textual analysis technique supported by a probabilistic approach – was the herein adopted method. A sample comprising 1,288 news reports - published by Folha de São Paulo between January 2019 and December 2021 - was analyzed with a support of R language.

Results have evidenced increase in the number of news reports about the investigated topic that were published during the pandemic period, as well as specificities of these reports published in newspapers, which differed from the way entrepreneurship is often portrayed by the media. However, the praiseworthy tone towards entrepreneurial actions and tips for success that - sometimes, disregard narratives about entrepreneurs’ trajectories and times of failure - represent warning points. On the other hand, the social entrepreneurship topic has gained prominence in the investigated medium. Moreover, the current study accounts for social contributions, since it enabled critical reflections about entrepreneurship portrayed by the mass media in Brazil, which is oftentimes romanticized to the detriment of revealing challenges inherent to entrepreneurs’ reality.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE MEDIA

Studies about entrepreneurship account for investigating sources of opportunities, as well as their discovery, assessment and exploitation processes; and individuals exploiting them, namely: entrepreneurs (Shane, 2012). Although some definitions often associate entrepreneurial action with companies’ launching (Spencer, Kirchhoff, & White, 2008) or with the exploration of profitable opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), it is possible seeing that this field encompasses sub-processes, subdomains and interfaces that go beyond aspects of creating new ventures (Castrogiovanni, 2018), or even the necessary pursuit of economic wealth (Lortie & Cox, 2018; Mair & Marti, 2006). Moreover, they are used in a wide variety of contexts, with a wide range of meanings (Matlay, 2005).

Entrepreneurship is a comprehensive and diverse study field that goes from technological (Chaudhry et al., 2018) and social entrepreneurship (Lortie & Cox, 2018) by women (Brush, Bruin, & Welter, 2009) to that associated with minority groups (Singh & DeNoble, 2003) - new domains are developed as this field evolves (Castrogiovanni, 2018). Thus, one can see the interest of scholars focused on investigating this subject in its diverse and distinct subdomains, as well as in promoting discussions about it to help broadening this scientific field.

However, according to Mazza and Alvarez (2000), the way academic research is promoted leads to limitations in individuals’ access to the developed knowledge, which is, sometimes, limited to channels poorly known by the general public. The aforementioned authors compared it to haute couture, in an analogy to limited-access, exclusive and handmade high fashion. On the other hand, the popular press would also spread information about several matters associated with management, which were compared to the prêt-à-porter fashion - i.e., ready-to-wear, more comfortable and accessible, aimed at mass distribution and consumption (Mazza & Alvarez, 2000).

If one takes into consideration the aforementioned aspect, the increased number of non-scientific publications about, and the popularization of the “entrepreneurship” topic, as well as the positive influence of entrepreneurs’ image transmitted by the media on entrepreneurial intention (Casaqui, 2017; Laguía & Moriano, 2021), the following question arises: “how is entrepreneurship portrayed by the mass media?”. This questioning will guide the present study, with emphasis on national publications.

The media has been defined in different ways, although studies tend to portray it as a single entity. However, according to Hang and van Wezel (2007), it refers to different communication forms, such as magazines, newspapers, radio, television, billboards, videogames and computer games. According to these authors, the essential point of the media lies on the fact that it can be used to store or provide information to the public.
Similar to what happens in academic research, according to which, entrepreneurship is not limited to a single action or event (Matlay, 2005), the mass media attributes different meanings to this term (Dias & Wetzel, 2010). Based on the analysis applied to 86 news reports from a national business magazine well known in the 1990s, Dias and Wetzel (2010) concluded that the media portrays entrepreneurship in an elastic way, which is adaptable to the interests of each topic, although it converges to the sense of empowered entrepreneurs and businesspersons, in general.

The news reports analyzed by Dias e Wetzel (2010) have considerably focused on the opening of a business (aimed at profit) at the time to define entrepreneurship; whereas entrepreneurs were portrayed as individuals with distinctive natural or acquired skills, such as special worldview and the ability to envision opportunities that other people would not get. Six groups were identified for the analyzed news reports, namely: “economic situation”, “cultural and historical aspects”, “management tips”, “opportunities” (for those who want to open a company), “the role of good ideas” (and how to start a business without one) and “definitions of entrepreneur” (Dias & Wetzel; 2010).

In the following decade, between 2004 and 2009, Costa et al. (2012) conducted a similar study in three national business magazines, the same analyzed by Dias and Wetzel (2010) in the previous decade. The latter focused on analyzing discursive contents, whereas former used critical discourse analysis. Results recorded by Costa et al. (2012) were similar to the ones observed by Dias and Wetzel (2010), since they: a) identified entrepreneurs as differentiated subjects, “with features capable of promoting results that express business success” (p. 368), almost heroes; b) represented entrepreneurs as individuals capable of controlling uncertainties and unpredictability; c) associated entrepreneurship with simple solutions, guides, formulas and “recipes”; therefore, success would be linked to entrepreneurs’ personal features and to their management skills.

According to Wood Junior and Paes de Paula (2006), the promotion of managers’ successful stories and heroic deeds, as well as of new technologies and advices for business success by “gurus”, were associated with the pop management culture spread in Brazil from the 1980s, onwards. According to these authors, the business media can help popularizing and legitimizing this culture, through a lighter and funnier version of news that has strong popular appeal, based on synthetic and easily assimilated information, with emphasis on market components. Such encouragement to the “cult of excellence” was also observed by Dias et al. (2007), who analyzed the way female executives and business owners were portrayed by two business magazines, one was national and the other one, international.

Similar to what happened in the research by Wood Junior and Paes de Paula (2006), Dias et al. (2007) concluded that the analyzed news reports presented a complimentary tone towards successful female entrepreneurs and executives. Emphasis was given to individuals – similar to what was observed in the previously mentioned studies – to the detriment of their contextual and socioeconomic aspects and, most of all, of their failures (Dias et al., 2007; Dias & Wetzel, 2010; Wood Junior & Paes de Paula, 2006).

More recently, between 2016 and 2019, Santos et al. (2020) have mapped news reports posted on the internet, about a specific topic, namely: “stage entrepreneurship”. Although the research line followed by them was slightly different from that of previous studies, results of their investigation were in line with them. In other words, the authors realized that the analyzed news reports referred to fast success, based on speeches that did not match the reality of, and challenges faced by, entrepreneurial practice. Moreover, they showed certain distancing from concrete tools, as well as lack of market knowledge, among other essential aspects of entrepreneurship (Santos et al., 2020). With respect to social entrepreneurship, whose definitions take into consideration the pursuit of solving social issues (Vásquez & Dávila, 2008), the media keeps on using the portrayal form that describes entrepreneurial actions as something extremely beneficial to overall society (Casaqui, 2017).

Based on discussions carried out in this section, as well as on evidence deriving from the referenced studies, the following assumptions were identified to help conducting the herein presented research: a) entrepreneurship is
portrayed by the business media under the spotlight of entrepreneurs, whose differentiated profile and successful actions are emphasized in a complimentary tone (Dias and Wetzel, 2010; Wood Junior and Paula, 2006; Dias et al., 2007; Casaqui, 2017); b) the contexts entrepreneurial actions take place in are disregarded by news reports (Dias et al., 2007); c) most news reports focus on marketing components and on profit-oriented businesses (Dias and Wetzel, 2010); d) entrepreneurial action is portrayed as something positive, without taking into consideration the challenges or difficulties imposed by this process (Santos et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2012); e) the presentation of tips and formulas, as well as advices from gurus, on how to achieve success are recurrent (Costa et al., 2012; Wood Junior and Paula, 2006); and f) news reports focus on current issues, in a synthetic and easily assimilated way (Wood Junior and Paula, 2006; Dias and Wetzel, 2010).

Identifying these assumptions played fundamental role in the process to substantiate the analyses applied to journalistic texts, in order to check whether these assumptions were present in Folha de São Paulo news reports about entrepreneurship, as well as to compare results in the present research to those observed in previous studies. The next section presents the methodological procedures.

METHODOLOGY

The current research falls into the category of applied study because its results have immediate implications in problems and solutions. In addition, its findings can potentially unfold in managerial actions (Cooper & Schindler, 2016). This study can also be classified as quantitative research, since it uses an algorithm capable of measuring associations between terms to form content topics (Cooper & Schindler, 2016). Data collected from a previously existing source – news reports published by Folha de São Paulo newspaper, over a three-year time horizon - were used to achieve this purpose. This factor classifies the current research as longitudinal in terms of extent of time (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The present study adopted the Structural Topic Modeling technique for textual analysis purposes (Dimaggio, Nag, & Blei, 2013); this technique had been used in previous studies about entrepreneurship (Chandra, Jiang, & Wang, 2016).

In order to meet the proposed aim - i.e., to analyze how entrepreneurship is portrayed by the national media –, decision was made to analyze the news reports published by Folha de São Paulo newspaper. According to Vannuchi (2018), and based on data from Instituto Verificador de Circulação [Circulation Verifier Institute] (Folha, 2021), the aforementioned newspaper is the non-scientific journal with the highest circulation (both print and digital) in Brazil. Access to its news reports was granted upon subscription to the newspaper. Thus, secondary data presented non-structured nature in documentary format (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

The survey of news reports was carried out by inserting the following terms in the search tool of the assessed newspaper’s webpage, which was available on Folha’s electronic portal: “entrepreneurship” and “entrepreneur”. The timeframe from January 2019 to December 2021 was defined by taking into consideration the study’s specific aims. The word “undertaking” (empreender in portuguese) was excluded from the search process, since it resulted in a significant number of news reports whose topics were different from the herein analyzed one, due to expressions such as “undertaking efforts” (empreender esforçor, in portuguese).

The query resulted in 2,844 news reports. After filtering data and words capable of influencing the research results, 2,312 journalistic articles remained in the sample. The following step consisted in dividing the news reports by period. Analysis process adopted the topic modeling from the Structural Topic Model (STM) textual analysis model (Roberts, Stewart, & Tingley, 2019), based on using the stm package of R and Rstudio free software.

Topic modeling is an automated process used to organize and group a significant number of textual data. The algorithm enabled building interpretable text topics to assess word clusters’ influence on the assessed documents (Dimaggio et al., 2013). Thus, it was possible analyzing a larger range of data that could not be manually
assessed, as well as minimizing likely biases, and it enabled identifying unprecedented patterns in the database built from the herein performed extraction process (Dimaggio et al., 2013). STM enabled estimating the list of available metadata through probabilistic association with topics likely discovered in the analyzed documents (Roberts, Stewart, & Tingley, 2019). Thus, the adopted algorithm has classified the news reports into similar topics, as well as defined a framing probability score for news reports in the topics. Each topic was used to both assess and name the news reports’ content, as shown in the results.

After a preliminary round of analysis, certain columns of the investigated newspaper, such as “Painel SA” [SA Panel] and “Empreendedor Social” [Social Entrepreneur], presented data that could be biases for the study, because the word sought at the website’s tool could refer to any part of the column, such as columnists’ description, rather than just to title or main text content. Thus, even news reports addressing subjects different from the investigated topic – if written by individuals whose biography, at the end of the page, had the word “entrepreneur” – ended up being mistakenly selected. Decision was made to filter the keywords in the HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) code of the pages to help minimizing this issue.

After this treatment, all topics were redone and lower interference was observed. Analyses were carried out on a semester basis from 2019 to 2021. After all treatments were applied, the resulting sample comprised 1,288 news reports. Decision was made to apply STM to maintain five topics for each period division, in the time interval between 2019 and 2021. However, it was possible seeing that one of the topics did not show common points among its news reports in the first half of 2020 and that many of them did not have entrepreneurship in their content. Thus, this period comprised four topics.

Subsequently, the last research step was carried out to detail the news reports’ contents (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009), as well as to compare the current results to the ones available in the literature about “entrepreneurship in the media”. Topic modeling results enabled identifying the relevance of each news report, based on global data deriving from the built database. Thus, three journalistic articles from each topic (news reports’ subject) were selected for descriptive analysis applied to the news.

Methodological procedures adopted in the current research are synthesized in Figure 1, which also presents research steps, such as data extraction, interference resolution and analysis times, in order of implementation. Dotted rectangles emphasize details of the referenced step. Results obtained from this process will be presented in the next section.

**Figure 1**

Methodological steps

- **Initial extraction**: Selecting news reports at the website of Folha de São Paulo newspaper. Initial total number without filtering: 2,844 reports.
- **Preliminary analysis**: Topic Modeling, most specifically, Structural Topic Model (STM).
- **Interference resolution**: Collecting the keywords found in the HTML code of the news reports.
- **Topics’ Creation**: Total number of news reports after all filtering procedures: 1,288. Result: Creation of 5 topics for each period division.
- **Descriptive analysis**: Selecting 30 news reports (3 news reports per topic).

Source: elaborated by the authors (2021).
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first semester of 2020 presented the largest number of news reports about entrepreneurship during the COVID-19 pandemic - 276 news reports, in total. On the other hand, the first semester of 2019 presented the smallest number of news reports - 86, in total. There was considerable increase (by 73%) in the number of news reports about entrepreneurship between 2019 and 2020. On the other hand, there was small retraction (by 19%) in the number of publications on this topic, between 2020 and 2021. Figure 2 shows the number of news reports published over the analyzed period.

As reported in the methodological section, news were classified into topics based on using STM. Each topic was named according to authors' analysis, by taking into consideration the main subject of the associated journalistic articles, namely: “Strategies and recommendations for entrepreneurial practice”; “Changes in social trends”; “Entrepreneurship and minorities’ inclusion”; “Social impact”; “Social entrepreneurship and acknowledgement”; “Entrepreneurship encouragement/support actions”; “Donations and solidarity”; “Training and entrepreneurship”; “Award-winning initiatives to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic”.

Figure 3 shows the main topics, which were organized in descending order of appearance, per period. “Strategies and recommendations for entrepreneurial practice” appears as the main topic in four of the six analyzed periods. “Award-winning initiatives to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic” stood out in the first semester of 2021. On the other hand, “Social entrepreneurship and acknowledgement” remained the topic with the smallest number of publications in this period, although it was observed in five of the six analyzed periods.
As previously mentioned in the methodological section, news reports associated with each topic were selected to validate the names suggested for each group in order to achieve the second specific aim, to comparatively analyze contents published in the year before the Covid-19 pandemic onset and those published during the health crisis, as well as to make this discussion easier. Thus, Table 1, below, presents the name of the topic, its description and the news reports selected for analysis.

**Table 1**
Topics’ description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples of News Reports in the Random Search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strategies and recommendations for entrepreneurial practice | Topic composed of journalistic articles that overall describe strategies that can be adopted by entrepreneurs and enterprises to achieve the best results. | Titles: “Responda essas perguntas e descubra onde seu negócio falhou antes de recomeçar”. [Answer these questions and find out where your business failed before starting over] Date: 12/14th/2019  
“Como evitar que a live da sua empresa seja um fiasco”. [How to prevent your company’s live broadcast from becoming a fiasco] Date: 07/09th/2020  
“Como se preparar para a Black Friday em meio à retomada da economia”. [How to prepare for Black Friday amid the economic recovery] Date: 11/07th/2021 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in social trends</th>
<th>This topic exposes news reports that deal with transformations involving topics like sustainability, health, technology, new labor models, pandemic, inequality, and their association with entrepreneurship.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Titles:** “A diversidade como condição para a sustentabilidade”. [Diversity seen as condition for sustainability]  
*Date: 09/30th/2019* |  
“Festival ODS promove debate sobre recuperação econômica inclusiva”. [SDG Festival promotes debate on inclusive economic recovery]  
*Date: 05/24th/2021*  
“A agroecologia pode salvar o planeta”. [Agroecology can save the planet]  
*Date: 10/25th/2021* |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Entrepreneurship and minorities’ inclusion</th>
<th>This topic indicates journalistic articles on entrepreneurial and social projects involving the most socially vulnerable populations, such as women, Blacks, LGBTQIA+ and low-income people, as well as describes their process to overcome both inequalities and difficulties in the entrepreneurial environment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Titles:** “Depois de violência doméstica, empresária recomeça com bufê para eventos”. [After domestic violence, businesswoman restarts with catering for events]  
*Date: 09/16th/2021* |  
“Empreendedora cria espaço de penteados afro para promover a autoestima da mulher negra”. [Female entrepreneur launches afro-hairstyle space to promote Black women’s self-esteem]  
*Date: 12/23rd/2021*  
“Empreendedora trans criou antiquário-café e emprega LGBTQIA+ em SP”. [Trans woman entrepreneur launched antique-café and hires LGBTQIA+ individuals in SP]  
*Date: 12/30th/2021* |

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<tr>
<th>Social Impact</th>
<th>This topic presents news reports about examples of entrepreneurship capable of generating some social transformation, as well as opportunities for this entrepreneurial category.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Titles:** “Festival global debate expansão do empreendedorismo de impacto”. [Global festival addresses the expansion of impact entrepreneurship]  
*Date: 04/17th/2019* |  
“Vivenda lança programa de aceleração para negócios e profissionais de habitação”. [Villa launches boosting program for businesses and housing professionals]  
*Date: 10/09th/2020*  
“Avaliar impacto social é uma estratégia de comunicação e captação de recursos”. [Assessing social impact is a communication and fundraising strategy]  
*Date: 07/22nd/2021* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social entrepreneurship and acknowledgment</td>
<td>Most journalistic articles in this topic focus on promoting the Social Entrepreneur Award. Many of them aim at promoting this action by addressing contents, such as voting on the aforementioned award, celebrities supporting the businesses competing for it, among other issues in the award universe. Some journalistic articles deal with awards, contests or notices that go beyond the Social Entrepreneur Award.</td>
<td>Titles: “Prêmio Empreendedor Social celebra 15 anos no Brasil com sete finalistas em 2019”. [Social Entrepreneur Award celebrates 15 years in Brazil with seven finalists in 2019] Date: 10/01st/2019 “Cerimônia pop anuncia e celebra as iniciativas vencedoras do prêmio 2021”. [Pop ceremony announces and celebrates the winning 2021 award initiatives] Date: 12/01st/2021 “Campanha Brasil sem Fome lidera captação na Escolha do Leitor”. [Brazil without Hunger Campaign leads fundraising in Reader’s Choice] Date: 12/28th/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship encouragement/support actions</td>
<td>This topic presents news reports focused on describing actions capable of encouraging entrepreneurs in different ways, such as social programs and government proposals developed for this public.</td>
<td>Titles: “O que os pequenos empresários podem esperar de 2019”. [What Small Business Owners Can Expect from 2019] Date: 01/14th/2019 “Venezuelanos buscam inserção no mercado como microempreendedores”. [Venezuelans pursue insertion as microentrepreneurs in the market] Date: 03/04th/2019 “Do Jardim Ângela a Londres: DJ vira empreendedor na quebrada”. [From Jardim Ângela to London: DJ becomes entrepreneur in the outskirt] Date: 06/04th/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and solidarity</td>
<td>This topic comprises journalistic articles addressing different social actions that involve donations. For example, there are news reports about companies that donated equipment, materials, as well as hygiene and food items during the pandemic. However, the examples are not limited to the pandemic, since news reports also addressed warm clothing donations in winter.</td>
<td>Titles: “Doações de itens de higiene e limpeza por empresas se espalham pela América Latina”. [Personal hygiene and cleaning items’ donations by companies spread across Latin America] Date: 05/14th/2020 “McDonald’s, Unilever e outras empresas combatem a fome na pandemia”. [McDonald’s and Unilever, among other companies, fight hunger during the pandemic] Date: 05/30th/2020 “Campanhas de arrecadação de agasalhos e cobertores iniciam com inverno; veja como doar”. [Campaigns focused on collecting warm clothing and blankets start in winter; see how you can donate] Date: 06/17th/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award-winning initiatives to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic</td>
<td>This topic refers to different reports of entrepreneurial actions acknowledged as initiatives that helped minimizing the negative impacts of the pandemic.</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Titles: “‘Quanto se respeita a vida, é preciso passar isso para o outro’, diz agente na linha de frente da Covid-19”. [‘When individuals respect life, they have to pass it on to others’, says an agent on the front line against the Covid-19 pandemic] Date: 01/03\textsuperscript{d}/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>“‘É muito tocante a manutenção de respiradores’, ação que salvou vidas como a minha”. [‘Maintaining the ventilators is quite touching’, an action that saved lives like mine] Date: 01/12\textsuperscript{th}/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Produção de máscara em larga humaniza a pena em unidades prisionais”. [Large-scale mask production humanizes the sentence of individuals serving time in prison units] Date: 01/17\textsuperscript{th}/2021</td>
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<tr>
<th>Training and entrepreneurship</th>
<th>This topic comprises news reports focused on knowledge transfer for entrepreneurship purposes, be it through formal education in universities and courses or through hackathons and boosting programs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Titles: “Programa premia com até R$ 20 mil startups de impacto social”. [Program awards up to R$ 20,000.00 to social-impact startups] Date: 07/16\textsuperscript{th}/2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“USP, Unicamp e UFMG são as universidades mais empreendedoras do Brasil”. [USP, Unicamp and UFMG are the most entrepreneurial universities in Brazil] Date: 10/22\textsuperscript{nd}/2019</td>
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<td>“Yunus aposta na diversidade em programas de aceleração para fomentar o empreendedorismo feminino”. [Yunus bets on diversity in boosting programs to encourage female entrepreneurship] Date: 11/19\textsuperscript{th}/2019</td>
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Source: elaborated by the authors (2021).

Based on the analysis applied to journalistic articles belonging to topic “Strategies and Recommendations for Entrepreneurial Practice”, it was possible seeing persistent outspread of advices for business success by “gurus”, as pointed out in previous studies conducted by Wood Junior and Paes de Paula (2006), Dias and Wetzel (2010) and Costa et al. (2012). The news report titled “How to prepare for Black Friday amid the economic recovery”, for example, presents recommendations to help entrepreneurs to manage their business during Black Friday in order to achieve greater sales success during this period. The news report titled “Answer these questions and find out where your business failed before starting over” lists questions created by experts to help entrepreneurs’ reflection through post-failure self-assessment. It presents a list of questions, such as “Did I do everything possible?”, “Did I analyze the market?”, “Did I set goals?”, “Did I serve customers well?”, among others.

Because of the pandemic, the other news reports presented tips on actions to be adopted by companies to reinvent themselves throughout the social isolation period to remain operational. Guidelines for successful live broadcasts, whose aim was to ensure the maintenance of products’ exposure even during quarantine (“How to prevent your company’s live broadcast from becoming a fiasco”), are an example of it. Therefore, news reports presenting strategies and recommendations for entrepreneurial practice as a way to face difficulties are often published, as shown in Figure 3. They describe models to be
adopted by entrepreneurs to help them to easily achieve their goals and to ensure their business’ survival.

The topic “ Changes in Social Trends” presents news reports focused on suggesting reflections about changes in attitudes, as well as the need of taking sustainable actions and making innovations to help repositioning entrepreneurial actions. News reports, such as the one titled “Diversity seen as condition for sustainability”, present different ways of achieving sustainability, as well as projects focused on the most sustainable actions for the planet, such as agroecology and family production, as seen in the one titled “Agroecology can save the planet”. The aforementioned topic also comprises news reports focused on emphasizing the need of achieving a more inclusive economy that, in its turn, promotes the debate on sustainable development, as seen in the news report titled “SDG Festival promotes debate on inclusive economic recovery”.

News reports belonging to topic “Entrepreneurship and Minorities’ Inclusion” present reports by individuals belonging to minority social groups that affected or were affected by entrepreneurial social actions or projects. Among the observed contents, one finds reports by female entrepreneurs, who faced different obstacles, but who believed in the possibility of restoring their business (“After domestic violence, businesswoman restarts with catering for events”), entrepreneurial ideas aimed at the valorization and inclusion of Black women (“Female entrepreneur launches Afro-hairstyle space to promote Black women’s self-esteem”) and initiatives to address and enable the integration of LGBTQIA+ individuals and to encourage business launching by this public (“Trans woman entrepreneur launched antique-café and hires LGBTQIA+ individuals in SP”). According to Costa et al. (2012) and Dias and Wetzel (2010), the entrepreneurship-minority inclusion association addressed in the analyzed news reports is something new, although emphasis on overcoming difficulties and on taking advantage of opportunities is not new.

Topic “Social impact” follows the line of positive effects of entrepreneurship and brings together journalistic articles about organizations interested in producing movements capable of generating positive social impacts - and their associated awards - seen as beneficial to overall society, and it corroborates Casaqui’s (2017) indications. News reports in this group describe, in details, actions developed by different organizations, such as promoting events to help better understanding social-impact entrepreneurship (“Global festival addresses the expansion of impact entrepreneurship”) and projects developed by companies to boost impact businesses (“Villa launches boosting program for businesses and housing professionals”). Moreover, news reports associated with this topic highlight the importance of adopting social impact assessment in different projects (“Assessing social impact is a communication and fundraising strategy”). These news reports present recurrent words, such as “impact”, “transformation” and “innovation”.

“Social Entrepreneurship and Acknowledgement” has the initiative promoted by Folha de Sáo Paulo itself - which rewards social entrepreneurship actions - as prevalent topic. Therefore, assumingly, this topic was addressed in all assessed years, except for the first semester of 2021; moreover, there was increase in the number of journalist articles about it, in 2020. Most actions awarded in 2021, for example, focused on operations developed by social entrepreneurs to help mitigating the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic; among the aforementioned actions, one finds those involving humanitarian aid and/or actions capable of leaving a post-pandemic legacy. These journalistic articles enable seeing what was highlighted by Casaqui (2017), according to whom, even social entrepreneurship adopts a positive discourse, according to which, benefits are always evidenced to the detriment of aspects understood as negative.

With respect to “Entrepreneurship encouragement/support actions”, the journalistic article titled “From Jardim Ângela to London: DJ becomes entrepreneur in the outskirt”, which was published before the Covid-19 pandemic onset, praises the path taken by a poor young man, who was a former deliveryman living in the violent Southern zone of São Paulo City and found the way to a different life in entrepreneurship. The aforementioned entrepreneur had the opportunity to participate in the British Council’s Dice Program, which offers financial support to participants, by sharing
his entrepreneurial experience that, in its turn, involves developing an impact-business booster in local peripheries. The news report titled “What Small Business Owners Can Expect from 2019”, which was also published before the Covid-19 pandemic onset, describes measures (which would be developed by the new government, after the 2018 elections) aimed at supporting the growth of small and micro entrepreneurs’ businesses and at avoiding difficulties traditionally faced by them. Measures, such as tax reform, credit facilitation with lower interest rates, and incentives for entrepreneurs and employees’ training, are included in this journalistic article.

Still, in this topic, the news report “Venezuelans pursue insertion as microentrepreneurs in the market” presents reports about Venezuelan immigrants who managed to enter the Brazilian labor market by formally registering themselves as individual microentrepreneurs (MEI - microempreendedor individual), with emphasis on entrepreneurship benefits for immigrants living in the country. Thus, although this topic did not disregard contextual or socioeconomic aspects, it virtually omits failure cases and its narrative adopts a flattering tone to refer to those who successfully overcome their difficulties (Dias & Wetzel, 2010; Laguía & Moriano, 2021; Radu & Redien-Collot, 2008).

On the other hand, all journalistic articles associated with topic “Donations and solidarity” were considered by Folha de São Paulo, itself, as related to social entrepreneurship, likely because they reported solidarity actions taken by private companies and social organizations. All three articles (“Personal hygiene and cleaning items’ donations by companies spread across Latin America”, “McDonald’s and Unilever, among other companies, fight hunger during the pandemic”, “Campaigns focused on collecting warm clothing and blankets start in winter; see how you can donate”) present similar content and describe, in details, actions taken by enterprises accounting for managing donations or for collecting food, cleaning products, masks and hand sanitizers aimed at the poor population affected by the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. These journalistic articles listed the names of the involved enterprises and the actions carried out by each one of them; they also included the equivalent values of donations in Reais. The way these articles portray entrepreneurial actions with considerable benefits for society reinforces Casaqui’s (2017) conclusions about social entrepreneurship in the media.

The news report titled “‘When you respect life, you have to pass it on to the other’, says agent on the front line of Covid-19” – which is inserted in the main topic of the first semester of 2021 (Figure 3), i.e., “Award-winning initiatives to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic” – follows this very same line and reports both the actions taken, and difficulties faced, by an agent of a non-governmental organization, which were essential to help changing the health status of riverside, indigenous and Quilombola populations, mainly during the Covid-19 pandemic. The text clearly dignifies the NGO’s actions: “Our people lacked information and our children often had diarrhea, whooping cough, pneumonia and measles. Things started to change with project Saúde e Alegria” [Health and Joy]. The news report titled “‘Maintaining the ventilators is quite touching’, an action that saved lives like mine” shows how an initiative taken by volunteers from a project helped those who needed ventilators during the Covid-19 pandemic. Actions to re-socialize prisoners involved in mask production processes are highlighted in the journalistic article titled “Large-scale mask production humanizes the sentence of individuals serving time in prison units”. Many news reports linked to this topic stood out in the Covid-19 Mitigation category of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Although the topic “Training and Entrepreneurship” did not appear in previous research reports, it was one of the main topics in the year before the Covid-19 pandemic onset. However, it was not observed among the topics addressed in the following years (Figure 3). Analyzed journalist articles, such as “Program awards up to R$ 20,000.00 to social-impact startups” and “Yunus bets on diversity in boosting programs to encourage female entrepreneurship”, focus on programs developed to contribute to both the education and training of individuals who already had active businesses, with emphasis on promoting knowledge to help boosting their businesses. The news report titled “USP, Unicamp and UFMG are the most entrepreneurial universities in Brazil”, in its turn, reported the result recorded for the Ranking of Entrepreneurial Universities. Besides indicating the results of entrepreneurial
actions taken by educational institutions that have led to innovations for society, the text pointed out that universities at the top of this ranking also account for training students to be “able to solve contemporary issues”, by providing entrepreneurship education associated with innovation practices and social impact.

Consequently, it is possible noticing both positive and negative aspects in the way entrepreneurship is portrayed by the mass media in Brazil. Spreading advices for success, without necessarily taking into consideration the contexts where businesses operate, as well as the praiseworthy tone used to refer to entrepreneurial actions - that, sometimes, hides the challenges faced throughout the path traveled by entrepreneurs - can mask the entrepreneurship reality. On the other hand, journalistic articles defending sustainable entrepreneurship and inclusive economy can be important information sources and inspiration to help promoting actions with positive social impact.

Therefore, the current findings corroborate the relevant role played by the mass media in communicating and supporting entrepreneurship, as long as it is carried out in a responsible manner and takes into consideration the enterprises’ contexts, whenever possible. In addition, the current study acknowledges the importance of training focused on entrepreneurship, based on the support provided by private initiatives and public educational institutions, although this topic remains poorly explored by these communication media.

CONCLUSION

By analyzing how entrepreneurship is portrayed by the mass media in Brazil, the present study has evidenced increase in the number of journalistic articles about this subject, which were published during the Covid-19 pandemic period, in comparison to the period right before the health crisis onset. “Strategies and recommendations for entrepreneurial practice” was the main topic addressed in the analyzed news reports, whereas journalist articles on “Award-winning initiatives to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic” gained prominence within the pandemic context.

Based on the analysis applied to the topics and new reports, it was possible noticing that the topic linked to social entrepreneurship was quite frequent in them. In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, journalistic articles started to put greater emphasis on social actions taken by companies. There was lower focus on entrepreneurs, in comparison to news reports analyzed in previous research. Thus, the first assumption of the current study was not fully confirmed, since entrepreneurship was not portrayed by the business media from entrepreneurs’ perspective, only. However, the praiseworthy tone towards the actions taken by these individuals and by companies mentioned in the news reports remained.

Furthermore, the media also maintained entrepreneurship’s positive image and disregarded narratives about entrepreneurs’ trajectories and failure times, a fact that confirmed the current study’s fourth assumption. On the other hand, unlike what happened in other periods, according to reports from previous studies, not all journalistic articles disregarded contextual aspects, even before the pandemic period. Therefore, the second assumption of the present study was not confirmed. The emphasis given to non-profit ventures in most journalistic articles was against assumption number three, which was not confirmed.

On the other hand, the presentation of tips and formulas, as well as of advices by gurus (experts) on how to achieve success, mainly in the complex times experienced by entrepreneurs during the Covid-19 pandemic, remained among the main topics and confirmed the fifth assumption. However, we reinforce the recommendations by Nassif, Corrêa and Rossetto (2020) - about the need of conducting dense studies, with scientific and methodological rigor, to present propositions capable of theoretically and empirically contributing to support enterprises in times of crisis or extreme situations, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Even the most extensive journalistic articles associated with all analyzed topics adopted simple and easy-to-understand language; moreover, they focused on current issues in line with the journalistic style, and it corroborated the sixth assumption of the current research. Subjects associated with minorities’ inclusion have proved to be new, since they had not been mentioned in previous analyses. It is important
highlighting that very fine lines separated the analyzed categories from each other. Therefore, even if a given news report presents high degree of adherence to a certain topic, it may also have contents similar to those of other topics.

Although the current study has some limitations, such as consulting a single journalistic portal, having the news reports classified in only one topic and the analysis covering a small sample at the journalistic articles’ detailing stage, the proposed aims were achieved. The current results have evidenced some peculiarities, in comparison to those of studies conducted in business magazines. Thus, future studies should take into consideration other journalistic portals, as well as printed versions of newspapers, besides analyzing the full content of all news reports and whether changes in the way of portraying entrepreneurship will remain unchanged in the post-pandemic period.

Finally, the current study presents social contributions, by triggering a critical reflection on how the mass media portrays entrepreneurship in Brazil. Such reflection enables discussing the need of broadening more realistic and less romanticized narratives about this phenomenon, since it can affect the entrepreneurial process and initiatives taken to support entrepreneurs.

REFERENCES


586. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-05-2021-0429


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### APPENDIX

#### Table 2

**Table 2: News Reports and Links**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>News Reports</th>
<th>Links</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes in social trends</strong></td>
<td>“A agroecologia pode salvar o planeta” [Agroecology can save the planet]</td>
<td><a href="https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/empreendedorsocial/2021/10/a-agroecologia-pode-salvar-o-planeta.shtml">https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/empreendedorsocial/2021/10/a-agroecologia-pode-salvar-o-planeta.shtml</a></td>
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<td>Donations and solidarity</td>
<td>“Doações de itens de higiene e limpeza por empresas se espalham pela América Latina” [Personal hygiene and cleaning items' donations by companies spread across Latin America]</td>
<td><a href="https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/empreendedorsocial/2020/05/doacoes-de-itens-de-higiene-e-limpeza-por-empresas-se-espalham-pela-america-latina.shtml">https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/empreendedorsocial/2020/05/doacoes-de-itens-de-higiene-e-limpeza-por-empresas-se-espalham-pela-america-latina.shtml</a></td>
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<td>Donations and solidarity</td>
<td>“McDonald’s, Unilever e outras empresas combatem a fome na pandemia” [McDonald’s and Unilever, among other companies, fight hunger during the pandemic]</td>
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<td>Donations and solidarity</td>
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<td>Award-winning initiatives to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic</td>
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Source: elaborated by the authors (2021).