Opening the black box of idea evaluation: Impact of the presentation during idea pitches

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I. Introduction

The objective of a creative session is to generate as many ideas as possible. The principle behind this assumption is that the more ideas that are generated, the more likely they are to include ones that are strong and of high quality. It is then up to the organization or the entrepreneur to select and exploit the best ideas. However, the evaluation of an idea depends not only on its intrinsic value (originality, feasibility, and relevance) (Dean *et al.*, 2006), but also on the context in which it is conducted and on the position of those who present the idea. Recent research reveals that team composition, in terms of gender, could influence the selection of ideas that have been proposed by team members (Parmentier et Loarne-Lemaire, 2018 ; Parmentier, Szostak et Rüling, 2017). This implies that no creative idea is independent from its originator and that the way it is presented could impact its evaluation. While much research has already explored the process of idea generation, little work has been done on the process by which ideas are evaluated, let alone on the influence of idea presentation on evaluation. Some research highlights the gender effect of the ideator (Gupta et Turban, 2012), the gender composition of the group (Parmentier, Le Loarne-Lemaire et Belkhouja, 2017), the way to present an idea (Chiaburu, Peng et Van Dyne, 2015), and the experience of the ideator (Gupta et Turban, 2012) on idea evaluation. However, the evaluation of ideas remains a black box for understanding creativity. This article, therefore, aims to open this black box in order to understand the factors that influence the evaluation of an idea beyond its intrinsic value.

More precisely, the paper explores the dark side of idea evaluation and focusses on the influence of the presentation of ideas on their evaluation: not only the role that the gender and experience of the ideator play, but also the structure of the pitch, the dynamism of the presentation, the nature and level of language used, and the personal appearance of the ideator.

Based on the analysis – conducted according to the qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) method – of 57 pitches of entrepreneurial ideas during two start-up weekends, we show that the ideas that receive the highest evaluation are those that are judged to be the best in terms of newness, feasibility, and relevance, but also that mastery of the basics of pitch presentation has an impact on idea evaluation. In fact, the dynamism of the ideator and his/her ability to generate an outstanding presentation of his/her idea seem to have a strong impact on the selection of that idea by the audience. The paper seeks to contribute to the literature by identifying the most favorable configurations for a positive evaluation of an entrepreneurial idea in this type of innovation-competition context.

II. Theoretical framework

II.1. Generic considerations for the journey of the creative idea by organizations: the creative process

Creativity is an activity that involves an individual or a small group of individuals in producing new, appropriate, useful, and feasible ideas (Amabile, 1988). Its objective is to find innovative solutions by mobilizing the imagination to rethink the existing system (Ford, 1996). In the creative process, an idea can be considered as the result of an intention to act that leads to a statement integrating a new knowledge network and sometimes involving new networks of knowledge brokers (Parmentier et Loarne-Lemaire, 2018). On its journey, the idea often emerges in organizational interstices (Cohendet et Simon, 2007), is part of multiple collaborative networks (Perry-Smith et Mannucci, 2017), and creates new links between people and knowledge. The form of this idea, however, is closely linked to the context in which it emerges (Amabile, 1996). It will take the form of a "pitch" in entrepreneurship, a "high concept" in the film industry, or a "breakthrough" in video games, and it will be more solution-oriented in industry.

II.2. The place of idea evaluation within the creative process

Various research acknowledges that idea evaluation is part of the creative process but also reveals ambivalent results. On one hand, idea evaluation is considered as part of the whole process of idea generation and is mobilized several times during the process (Harvey et Kou, 2013 ; Lubart, 2001); on the other hand, idea evaluation refers to one specific phase of the creative process (Amabile, 1988 ; Wallas, 1926). Nevertheless, in both cases, it is a key activity that contributes to the performance of the creative process.

The attention and amount of resources that are dedicated to phase of idea evaluation strongly influence the transformation of employee creativity into achievable ideas (Van Dijk et Van Den Ende, 2002). Creativity techniques may generate many ideas, but we must also be able to recognize good ones. Therefore, in the creative process, the evaluation of ideas is as important as their generation. However, this part of the creative process remains underexplored in the literature on creativity (Girotra, Terwiesch et Ulrich, 2010). Depending on its form and the context of dissemination, it may be difficult to assess the quality and value of an idea. For example, during creativity sessions, participants find it hard to identify the best ideas (Putman et Paulus, 2009) and do not systematically select the best intrinsic ideas for the organization (Girotra, Terwiesch et Ulrich, 2010).

II.3. Generic criteria for selecting ideas during the creative process: the quality of the idea

Beyond the debate of its place within the creative process, the definition of idea evaluation as a phase has been established. Idea evaluation refers to a cognitive process that involves evaluating the consequences of developing an idea according to explicit or implicit evaluation standards (Lonergan, Scott et Mumford, 2004).

A literature review of 90 articles, which describe evaluation methods in research laboratories during creative processes, reveals that selection criteria of creative ideas can be gathered into four categories: novelty, feasibility, relevance, and idea specificity (Dean *et al.*, 2006). The novelty of an idea can be assessed from its degree of originality and its "paradigm relatedness", that is, to some extent, the degree of disruption of the idea. Selected ideas are more novel when participants are instructed to choose the most creative ideas rather than the best ones (Rietzschel, Nijstad et Stroebe, 2010). Feasibility can be appraised from its social acceptability and technical implementability. The relevance of an idea can be judged from its applicability to a problem and its effectiveness in solving that problem (Ford, 1996). Specificity can be determined from its implicational explicitness and the completeness of its description.

Relevant criteria are dependent on the context of creative sessions and strategic objectives of the organization (Cooper, 2006). However, when experts intuitively evaluate ideas, they subconsciously use the criteria of originality, user value, and producibility (Magnusson, Netz et Wästlund, 2014). Originality, feasibility and relevance are thus the most used explicit and implicit measures in creative sessions (Dean *et al.*, 2006 ; Magnusson, Netz et Wästlund, 2014). Despite these explicit or implicit criteria, participants in a creative session have a strong tendency to choose feasible and desirable ideas to the detriment of originality (Rietzschel, Nijstad et Stroebe, 2010). Moreover, there is no constant direct effect between the completeness of the idea presentation and the evaluation of its quality, suggesting that the evaluation of ideas is not a rational decision based entirely on the information provided and on rational evaluation criteria (Sukhov, 2018).

II.4. Other criteria for selecting ideas during the creative process: the fluency of the message

Managerial literature, although not always based on scientific and established results, proposes other potential characteristics that the ideator needs to possess in order for his/her creative idea to be adopted by the organization. The author of the bestseller *Pitch Anything* (Klaff, 2011), claims that the assessment that an idea is a good one, which can be based on the previously mentioned characteristics, is not a sufficient criterion alone for that idea to be selected. The way the ideator introduces the idea and, moreover, the fluency of the idea also matter. The author insists on the positive emotion that the ideator must induce in those judging the idea. In such an attempt, the phrasing of the message remains a priority: the idea must be presented in a clear manner and be easy to understand, details must be avoided, and the message must be presented in a positive way.

II.5. Other criteria for selecting ideas during the creative process: the intrinsic characteristics of the ideator

Other, non-explicit, criteria may also influence the evaluation of ideas, for example, gender bias. Some female leaders who are perceived to have egotistical characteristics are considered less effective by their subordinates than male leaders who demonstrate the same traits (De Hoogh, Den Hartog et Nevicka, 2015). The composition of the group presenting an idea may also influence the evaluation of that idea. So, ideas supported by mixed teams are perceived as being less creative than ideas supported by teams that are predominantly composed of either all men or all women (Parmentier, Le Loarne-Lemaire et Belkhouja, 2017). The way the idea is presented (in a constructive versus complaining form) also has a significant impact on the evaluator; thus, the evaluation of the idea is influenced by the degree of dogmatism of the receiver (Chiaburu, Peng et Van Dyne, 2015).

Apart from the gender effect, other characteristics of the ideators may also influence idea selection: the more the ideators, as individuals or teams, are recognized by the idea evaluators as having strong experience in the domain, the more their ideas will be accepted (Foo, 2010). As evaluation is a cognitive process (Lonergan, Scott et Mumford, 2004) that explicitly results from an observation or opinion on the value of an idea, it is likely that this evaluation mobilizes not only formal criteria such as novelty, feasibility and relevance, but also informal and unconscious criteria related, for example, to the ideator and the way the idea is presented. A study conducted in the Hollywood context shows that evaluators use a set of physical and

behavioral cues to match each pitcher to archetypes of scriptwriters. Each of these archetypes reflects for them specific levels of creativity that ultimately strongly influence their evaluation of the pitcher (Elsbach et Kramer, 2003). In another context, during an oral pitch to business angels at a UK investor forum, presentational factors (relating to the entrepreneurs' style of delivery) had a strong influence on the overall score of the entrepreneurs (Clark, 2008). These two examples highlight that, beyond the idea itself, the way the idea is presented has a strong impact on its final evaluation. So, in terms of behavior, the literature on communication psychosociology points out the importance of *prestance* in the process of evaluating ideas. *Prestance* is a French term, developed by the child psychologist H Wallon, that refers to the role of the body while communicating (Trevarthen, 1993). It concerns not only the structure of the body – big or small – but also body movement and how these elements are perceived by those receiving the message. Even if we are referring to a totally different context here, we could also argue that the structure of the body and its movement during the pitch, in our case the stage presence, could impact the judgment of idea evaluators and, therefore, their selection process. Moreover, the pitcher's tone of voice may have a pervasive effect on social perceptions. For example, an experimental study shows that listeners perceive lower-pitched voices as more trustworthy and attractive in the context of prosocial words than in the context of antisocial words (O'Connor et Barclay, 2018). Thus, during a pitch, the way in which the voice is used to express an idea could have consequences for its evaluation. The appropriate use of voice (emphasis, tone, and pause) is also highlighted as good practice for making a successful entrepreneurial pitch (Klaff, 2011).

To conclude, the management sciences literature on how ideas are selected is lacking and seems limited to the judgment of the idea per se. The managerial literature for entrepreneurs and, moreover, other literature from the fields of psychosociology and psychology provide more insight and claim that other criteria play a role in this selection process: not only the characteristics of the ideator, but also the fluency of the message he/she diffuses. Therefore, the evaluation of ideas is still a black box that needs to be opened to better understand the phenomena of evaluation. The ambition of this present research is to explore the dark side of evaluation and to identify the informal and unconscious criteria relating to the ideator and how the idea is presented.

III. Research design

We used a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) method to address our research question. QCA is a set theoretical method that uses Boolean algebra and algorithms based on case studies (Fiss, 2007 ; Schneider et Wagemann, 2012) and assesses the configurations of conditions that are necessary and sufficient to achieve a result in one case. A condition is a variable that can take only one of two values, i.e., 0 or 1. A 0 value is coded when the case does not meet the condition. For example, in our research, if a pitcher has a presence during his/her pitch, it will be assigned a value of 1 for the presence condition. On the contrary, if a pitcher does not have a presence, it will be coded 0. The QCA compares all cases through assessed conditions and their outcome (high pitch evaluation by the public). This method allows us to determine the optimal configuration for the outcome of interest. In our research, it enables us to find the optimal configuration of conditions that result in the selection of a pitch by an audience of potential entrepreneurs. We used the software "R" with "R packages", QCA (Adrian Dusa) and Set Method (Ioana-Elena Oana and al.) to analyze data in order to identify necessary and/or sufficient conditions for a high or low score in the evaluation of pitches.

III.1. Data collection

We collected data during two start-up weekends in Grenoble and Chambéry (France) in November 2018 and February 2019. A start-up weekend is an event that brings together potential entrepreneurs whose objective is to create businesses. Over the course of 54 hours, participants learn to create a company. They meet mentors, investors, co-founders, and sponsors who help them get started. In the first phase of the event, each participant has one minute to pitch in front of the group. It is not mandatory to pitch, and only those who have an idea to present to the public do so. After the pitching session, participants may vote for their preferred proposals. They each have €6000 in virtual currency: a €3000 bill, a €2000 bill and a €1000 bill that they may distribute over one or more projects. The projects that raise the most money are put forward to continue their development during the rest of the weekend, and teams are formed to work on each one. At the end of the event, each project is pitched again to a jury of entrepreneurs, investors, sponsors, and coaches, and the top three projects receive a sum of money to start their businesses. Start-up weekends throughout the world use the same process with a pitching session in front of the audience at the beginning, a working session lasting 48 hours, and a second pitching session in front of the jury at the end. The Grenoble start-up weekend brings together 89 participants with 37 initial pitches, from which 15 are selected. The Chambéry event involves 48 participants with 22 initial pitches, from which 8 are selected. All

pitches were recorded on video (except for the seventh Chambéry pitch that was subject to technical problems) and the soundtrack was transcribed. The overwhelmingly majority of pitches and exchanges were conducted in French. Therefore, we did not include pitches that were conducted in English in order to preserve the consistency of the sample and to exclude any bias. Our final sample of cases contains 57 pitches, each of one-minute duration.

III.2. Measures of variables

The outcome is based on a vote of participants. The conditions are based on academic literature focussing on entrepreneurship and psychology.

Outcome. We used the pitch evaluations by the participants to assign a score from 0 to 100 to each pitch. The 100 scale is based on the highest score (amount of virtual money) reached by a pitch, which was €33,000 for Grenoble and €39,000 for Chambéry. Each score was then reduced to a percentage of that highest score. Pitches that scored in the top two-thirds of the sample (≥33) were coded fully in (1) and pitches that did not score in the top two thirds (≤ 32) were coded fully out (0). This level of transformation of the outcome from 0 to 1 corresponds to the level of pitch selection in the project for the weekend start-ups in Grenoble and Chambéry.

Conditions. We coded all videos with the conditions of *originality, feasibility, relevance, specificity, enunciation, presence*, and *physical appearance*. The first three conditions were assessed on a scale of 1 to 5. The other conditions were broken down into sub conditions in order to be as precise as possible in the evaluation. Each condition was carefully described to determine the criteria for justifying its presence (1) or absence (0). Each researcher first coded the videos alone, then notes were compared. If there was a discrepancy, a discussion ensued to reach a common assessment. In the event of disagreement, a third researcher assessed the condition in order to offer additional advice. In the end, there was an evaluation gap of 4.86% in the 1276 codes assigned to videos. Newness, feasibility, relevance, and specificity were the four most important criteria for evaluating ideas in creativity literature (Dean *et al.*, 2006 ; Magnusson, Netz et Wästlund, 2014). These first three conditions were assessed on a scale of 1 to 5. For a score ≥3, the condition was coded at 1. For a score ≤2, the condition was coded at 0.

For the specificity of an idea, based on the managerial literature for entrepreneurs (Klaff, 2011), we identified five sub conditions, which determine its explicitness and exhaustiveness: the explanation of the need, of the solution, and of the target, the use of a story to illustrate the need or the solution, and the stated project title. When there were more than two sub conditions at 1, specificity was coded at 1. If there are only one or two under conditions at 1, specificity was coded at 0. We identified five sub conditions for the enunciation of a pitch, also based on the managerial literature for entrepreneurs (Klaff, 2011): the absence of the use of written notes, the fluency of speech, a low level of hesitation or blockage in the flow of speech (less than 7 hesitations), the correct use of grammar, and respect for the time allocated. When there were more than two sub conditions at 1, enunciation was coded at 1. If there are only one or two under conditions at 1, enunciation was coded at 0. Presence is the impression that a person gives in terms of his/her character and manners. We identified four sub conditions based on the psychosociology and managerial literature: the varied and accentuated flow of the voice, a smiling person, the use of arm movement and space to highlight salient elements of the speech, and interaction with the audience in the form of a question requiring an answer. When there were more than two sub conditions at 1, presence was coded at 1. If there are only one or two under conditions at 1, presence was coded at 0. Finally, we also coded the deviation of the pitchers physical appearance from the audience of the weekend startup. As soon as there was a difference in body shape in term of weight (corpulence), geographical origin or age range in relation to the majority of participants present, we set this condition to 0. In our case, the audience was mainly students or young workers. We considered that there was an age gap with the public for people who appeared to be over 40 years of age. Similarly, the audience was mainly made up of people few corpulence. So all very corpulent people were considered to have a gap with the public. Finally, to estimate the geographical origin gap, all people who did not have a native French accent were considered to have a gap with the audience. Table 1 presents the outcome and conditions.

Table 1. Crisp set membership calibration.

Outcome	Fully in (1)	Fully out (0)
High evaluation by participants	• The participants' evaluation score must be higher or equal than 33 out of 100	• The participants' evaluation score must be less than or equal to 32 out of 100

Condition	Fully in (1)	Fully out (0)
Newness: its degree of originality and its paradigm relatedness	• The score of the evaluation by the researchers must be higher or equal than 3 out of 5	• The score of the evaluation by the researchers must be less or equal than 2 out of 5
Feasibility: its social acceptability and its technical implementability	• The score of the evaluation by the researchers must be higher or equal than 3 out of 5	• The score of the evaluation by the researchers must be less or equal than 2 out of 5
Relevance: its effectiveness in solving a problem of everyday life (scale of 5) and the social and environmental objective of the project (scale of 5)	• The score of the evaluation by the researchers must be higher or equal than 6 out of 10	• The score of the evaluation by the researchers must be less or equal than 5 out of 10
Specificity: need, solution target, story, and project title	• 3 of these 5 criteria are required to be coded 1	• Below 3 required criteria, the condition was coded 0
Enunciation: no written notes, speech fluency, low level of hesitation or blockage, grammar, and time	• 3 of these 5 criteria are required to be coded 1	• Below 3 required criteria, the condition was coded 0
Presence: voice flow, smiling person, body use, interaction	• 3 of these 5 criteria are required to be coded 1	• Below 3 required criteria, the condition was coded 0
Physical appearance: age range (above majority), body shape (above majority), and geographical origin (not originating in the country in which the start-up weekend takes place)	• Only 1 criterion is required to be coded 0	• No criteria are required to be coded 1

Table 2. Truth table (39 configurations).

Configuration number	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	Number of cases	Output value*	Cases
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	Phoenix
2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	3	1	Willo, Safe Hear, Demeure
3	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	Habitus
4	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	Hogo
5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	CRMI
6	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	Prollix, Schuss
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	Time to learn
8	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	Refuel, Home Stylist
9	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	Immo Etudiant
10	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	Hero Bot, Annophilia
11	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	Agriplan
12	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	Agence Web
13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	AFD Watt
14	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	Conciergerie, Escape Gift
15	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	Randoski
16	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	La Coulisse
17	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	Les Pierres, Solal, Humus
18	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	Gaiac
19	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	0	Simon, Sens, Chanclas
20	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	0	Lokki, By by le Fisc, Formation Etudiant, BAO
21	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	Eureka
22	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	Conseil Elus
23	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	Adé
24	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	Bougez Plus, Café All Around
25	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	Tably Power, Improjecteur
26	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	0	Mobilier C, Impact, Smart Travel
27	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	Ecolove
28	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	Talentueux, VR School
29	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	Toy
30	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	My Radio
31	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	Together
32	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	PixAI
33	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	Gasto
34	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	Tech Po
35	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	Ubyks
36	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	U Trip
37	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	Prêt à lire
38	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	Sauv Me
39	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	Pariez sur vous

* Sufficiency inclusion score greater than 0,832 - Conditions: a = newness, b = feasibility, c = relevance, d = specificity, e = enunciation, f = presence, and g = physical appearance.

Our sample contains 39 configurations out of 128 possible configurations with 7 conditions.

Our overall coverage rate is, therefore, 30.47%.

IV. Results

The first phase of the QCA analysis addresses the necessary conditions. The consistency threshold of 0.92 is adopted to select configurations associated with the outcome and the outcome's negation. Our analysis reveals no necessary conditions for a high or low evaluation of the pitch (see Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of the necessary conditions with positive conditions and positive outcomes.

Conditions tested	Consistency	Coverage
Newness	0.561	0.512
Feasibility	0.770	0.448
Relevance	0.560	0.511
Specificity	0.666	0.486
Enunciation	0.861	0.459
Presence	0.320	0.390
Physical appearance	0.584	0.440

The second phase of the QCA analysis addresses sufficient conditions. We find three configurations of sufficient conditions that lead to a good pitch evaluation (see Table 4). Configuration 1 shows a pitcher who proposes a good idea in terms of newness, feasibility, and relevance, with a well-structured pitch (specificity condition) and mastery of enunciation and stage presence. However, in this case, the pitcher has a physical difference compared to most of the other participants.

Configuration 2 shows three pitchers who propose a good idea in terms of newness, feasibility, and relevance, with a well-structured pitch and mastery of enunciation. There is no mastery of stage presence and the pitchers do not present any physical differences compared to most of the other participants.

The pitcher in Configuration 3 proposes an idea that is less creative (not new) but that is feasible and useful, and his/her mastery of stage presence and physical resemblance to the majority of other participants are sufficient to obtain a good evaluation.

Table 4. Sufficient conditions for a high evaluation of pitches by participants*.

Conditions	Configurations		
	1	2	3
Newness	●	●	○
Feasibility	●	●	●
Relevance	●	●	●
Specificity	●	●	○
Enunciation	●	●	○
Presence	●	○	●
Physical appearance	○	●	●
Raw coverage	0,033	0,098	0,033
Unique coverage	0,033	0,098	0,033
Consistency	0,838	0,835	0,832
Number of cases	1	3	1
	Phoenix	Willo Safe Hear Demeure	Habitus

* Sufficiency inclusion score greater than 0,832

Black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition, and blank circles (○) indicate its absence. Blank spaces indicate the condition have no influence on the outcome.

In contrast, we find seven configurations of sufficient conditions that lead to a low pitch evaluation (see Table 5). Not surprisingly, Configuration 1 shows that the absence of a good idea is not compensated by a good pitch structure nor by good enunciation and stage presence. In this configuration, the physical differences compared to most of the other participants plays no role. In Configuration 2, despite a good idea and good enunciation and presence, the physical difference and the absence of stage presence lead to a low evaluation. The other configurations (from 3 to 7) present either new and feasible ideas, or ideas that are only feasible, and never more than two other positive conditions (specificity, enunciation, presence, or physical appearance). These results are consistent with the configurations that lead to a high pitch evaluation. However, we note that Configuration 4, with a new and feasible idea but no physical difference and stage presence, leads to a low evaluation. However, with a feasible and useful idea (see configuration 3 in table 4), this configuration of presentation (no physical difference and stage presence) leads to a high evaluation.

Table 5. Sufficient conditions for a low evaluation of pitches by participants*.

Conditions	Configurations						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Newness	○	●	●	●	○	○	○
Feasibility	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
Relevance	○	●	○	○	○	○	○
Specificity	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
Enunciation	●	●	●	○	○	●	○
Presence	●	●	○	●	○	●	○
Physical appearance		○	●	●	●	○	○
Raw coverage	0,057	0,027	0,029	0,03	0,027	0,029	0,029
Unique coverage	0,057	0,027	0,029	0,03	0,027	0,029	0,029
Consistency	0,901	0,852	0,901	0,95	0,852	0,901	0,923
Number of cases	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sauv me PixAI	Tech Po	Habitus	Pariez sur vous	Gastro	Ubyks	Prêt à lire

* Sufficiency inclusion score greater than 0,852

Black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition, and blank circles (○) indicate its absence. Blank spaces indicate the condition have no influence on the outcome.

V. Discussion

We propose to discuss our results on two main levels, mainly focussing on how the organization or small group of individuals can retain any creative idea. The first level of discussion, and perhaps the more "classical," is concerned with the quality of the idea per se: are its intrinsic qualities enough for it to be adopted? The second refers to the adoption of the idea depending on its newness.

V.1. Is a good idea enough?

Our results tend to show that proposing any good idea, in terms of newness, feasibility, and relevance, is not enough for the idea to be adopted. The quality of the ideator also matters, especially his/her capacity to present the idea clearly and to have presence. It is also interesting to note that such requirements are necessary when the ideator presents a different physical appearance to the "norm" of the group. When the ideator has a physical appearance that matches

the group, he/she has less need to emphasize the idea for it to be well evaluated. In our research, we find that stage presence is not necessary, but the ideator still needs a well-structured pitch (specificity) and good enunciation of the idea. These findings are consistent with the few research results that have already been obtained in management sciences (Parmentier & Le Loarne, 2018): the ideator him/herself matters. What is interesting here is that we are able to bring one other piece of knowledge to confirm this assumption. But how can we explain such results? One interpretation is the trust that the evaluators have in the ideator. Zucker (1986) explains that a group tends to choose to integrate people who express similar characteristics. Here, the idea is not to select the ideator per se but his/her ideas. However, we could argue that the more similar the ideator is to the group, the more likely that his/her idea will be accepted, assuming the idea already meets other criteria.

V.2. Is it more complicated to get a new idea adopted than any other idea?
Our results also reveal that the newer the idea, the less likely it is to be chosen. This is interesting in the sense that, to our knowledge, little is known on this subject. However, our findings are partly consistent with new research results, according to which any ideas – and all of the more innovative ideas – need to become socialized before being adopted by the organization (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). Moreover, this could explain why divergent ideas are often rejected by the group: when ideas are new, they must be "better" presented than any others and the pitch has to be "perfect" in almost all criteria.

VI. Contribution, limitations, and further research

Since, to our knowledge, very little is known about the criteria that really determine the adoption of any creative idea, we argue that our work brings some initial knowledge to better understand the phenomena.

Of course, this study suffers from many limitations and, therefore, demonstrates a need for further research. In our work, the rating level that determines a good idea is quite low since an idea is considered new, feasible or useful with a score higher or equal than 3 out of 5. We must also analyze the impact of presentation conditions in cases where ideas are very creative (with a score higher or equal than 4 out of 5). Moreover, we have not been able to integrate many criteria to measure the perception of how the ideator conforms to the norm, and we would like to have considered his/her clothing and education compared to the "average" clothing or education of the group who were invited to evaluate his/her idea. Finally, we have not been able to confirm the results we found in the literature on impact of gender on idea selection.

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