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STATUS AND STIGMA: THE ACCEPTANCE OF BRICOLAGE PRACTICES (SUMMARY)

Jaume Villanueva

ESADE, Spain, jaume.villanueva@esade.edu

Ana Maria Bojica

University of Granada, Spain

E. Erin Powell

Clemson University, USA

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

**STATUS AND STIGMA: THE ACCEPTANCE
OF BRICOLAGE PRACTICES**

Jaume Villanueva, ESADE Business School, Spain

Ana Maria Bojica, University of Granada, Spain

E. Erin Powell, Clemson University, USA

Principal Topic

Despite an early emphasis on both positive and negative aspects of bricolage, the scholarly literature has increasingly portrayed it in an unrelentingly positive light. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that bricolage is often viewed as an illegitimate practice both by entrepreneurs and by stakeholders who evaluate them. Engaging in illegitimate and unconventional activities is likely to cause harsher evaluations of low status than higher status actors. In this paper we ask: is there a bricolage stigma? Does it affect key stakeholders evaluated judgments? If so, does the status of the entrepreneur influence these results?

Method

To explore these ideas, we conducted an experiment. We asked participants to review and evaluate a new venture opportunity on the basis of a written executive summary description that is the same for all participants, except for the differences due to our manipulations of two dimensions: the extent to which the entrepreneurs engage in bricolage and the social status of the entrepreneur. These manipulations resulted in four different versions of the new venture opportunity description, one of which was then randomly assigned to each participant (each participant reviewed only one version). Participants were then asked to evaluate the new venture opportunity in a general, holistic manner, as well as on a number of specific dimensions, such as the quality of the entrepreneur and the fitness of the product to the needs of the market. Our theory suggested that engaging in bricolage and status would interact to shape a variety of stakeholder evaluations.

Results and Implications

Preliminary results show that our instrument is highly effective in achieving the manipulations we intended and that the scales used to assess stakeholder evaluations have excellent psychometric properties. Our analyses show significant differences in the evaluation of several aspects of the opportunity presented, depending on the presence/absence of bricolage. We also find that entrepreneur's socio-economic status has both direct and moderating effects on the evaluation of different opportunity dimensions, suggesting that status of the entrepreneurs conditions the evaluation of their business practices. These results have significant implications for our theoretical understanding of the drivers and outcomes of entrepreneurial bricolage and for our practical understanding of its effectiveness.

CONTACT: Jaume Villanueva; jaume.villanueva@esade.edu; (T):+34.932.806.162; (F): +34.932.048.105; ESADE, Av. Pedralbes, 60-62, 08034 Barcelona, Spain.