Association Memory: Prototyping and evaluation of a new creativity method in the context of convergent and divergent approaches for application in innovation process

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Purpose: To showcase the concept and prototype of a creativity method developed for innovation processes in teaching as well as for a business context tested in the field.
The example of ‚Association Memory' is intended to investigate how individual methods could be composed based on a toolbox of key ideas of design.

Design/methodology/approach: The concept of the method is based on key ideas from design and particularly design research. ‚Association Memory' should provide a simple creativity tool for ideation, which expands the solution space and gains a wide variety of ideas in a short time.
Two user case studies are conducted amongst Master students, who are mostly employed at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The experimental groups apply the method ‚Association Memory' to an ideation phase during Design Thinking Process for solving a task and compare the experiences and outcomes with the method to those other creativity methods. The gained experiences and results from the case studies are reviewed by questionnaire, e.g. the perceived creativity scored according to the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) is questioned here.

Findings: This paper relates key ideas of creativity research to practice and showcases results and first experiences gathered with the new method "Association Memory". Summarized there is assumed a promising impact for coaching, because the method succeeded in most of the intended aspects within the experimental group.

Practical implications: A coach or teacher can gain knowledge and inspiration for creating own creativity methods applicated in innovation process.

Originality/value: While there is a lot of research about creativity itself on the one hand and there is a multitudinous variety of creativity methods in practical usage, which exhibits similar components, in this paper key ideas of design are used analogeous to a toolbox for concepting appropriate methods. First results with new method in reliance on those tested in the field are examined to criteria of creativity and experience.

Keywords: Innovation, Gamification, Creativity, Ideation, Design Methods

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