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Are Scientific Minds Evaluated Better? Unveiling the Effect of Scientific Thinking Training on the Evaluation of Entrepreneurial Narratives

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Entrepreneurs preparing their pitch narratives are routinely advised to articulate a clear problem their venture aims to solve and to support their claims with compelling evidence. This approach, which resembles the way scientists present their research, has received mixed support in the literature: some studies emphasize its benefits, while others argue that appearing "too scientific" when presenting a business venture may ultimately harm founders. In this paper, we combine evidence from a randomized controlled trial embedded in an entrepreneurship training program and an online experiment to test whether training entrepreneurs to think scientifically when developing their ventures, and to incorporate this thinking into their vision narratives, affects how external audiences perceive these narratives. We find that incorporating scientific thinking into entrepreneurial narratives positively affects audience perceptions, and we document heterogeneity in these effects across audience types and over time. Overall, our findings extend prior work on theory-based, scientific approaches to entrepreneurial strategy to the context of early-stage entrepreneurial narratives, and present opportunities for future research in this domain.