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Understanding the Effect of Growth Mindset on Psychological Wellbeing and Academic Performance

Fauzia Kaukab

PhD Scholar, Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore.

fauziakaukab909@gmail.com

Dr. Ijaz Ahmed Tatlah

Associate Professor, Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore.

tatlah@ue.edu.pk

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

This was a qualitative study conducted under Interpretivist paradigm to understand the effect of growth mindset on pupil teachers' psychological wellbeing and academic performance. The sample was selected with the help of Purposive sampling. The sample comprised on 14 pupil teachers enrolled in B.Ed Hons and B.Ed 1.5 years' program in the universities across Punjab. The data were collected with the help of a Semi-Structured Interview Protocol and were analyzed with the help of Thematic analysis. It has been concluded based on the results that the participants experienced the reduction in anxiety, self-criticism, and loss of motivation when they opted for the growth mindset. Similarly, participants were able to develop a problem-solving mindset, which increased their confidence and willingness to act. Furthermore, the majority of the participants reported that they felt a notable change in their academic performance. They also reported that Growth mindset helped them reduce their academic anxiety and they could excel in a better way as compared to earlier.

Keywords: Growth Mindset, Psychological Wellbeing, Academic Performance

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of educational psychology research and practice is centered on the notion of growth. This is defined as the ability to develop one's personal qualities, including one's aptitude and intelligence, through effective strategies and dedicated effort (Gazmuri, 2025; Hamid, 2025). This notion is grounded in Dweck's implicit theories on intelligence. In Dweck's theories, growth is also viewed in

contrast to the fixed mindset, where an individual's abilities are considered to be unchangeable. Contemporary research continues to elaborate on the existing theories and is concerned with the impact of growth mindset on various student outcomes, including psychological wellbeing and academic achievement across cultural and educational contexts (Li, 2025; Hamid & Abbas, 2025).

The concept of well-being involves several dimensions like positive emotions, stability, life satisfaction, and functioning well (Peng et al., 2025). Research in education shows that students with a growth mindset act like optimists, viewing problems as opportunities, persisting despite challenges, and employing better emotional coping strategies, all of which improve their psychological well-being (Kyeong et al., 2024). More specifically, studies have shown that a growth mindset is positively correlated with a reduced risk of experiencing negative emotional states like anxiety and depression, as well as improved social and emotional (psychological) functioning and well-being. Additionally, growth mindset seems to positively influence psychological well-being through academic self-efficacy and learning engagement. This shows that there are several ways with which a mindset can influence students' psychological well-being in educational settings (Hsu & Huynh, 2023; Peng et al., 2025).

Research on psychological outcomes, in particular, the studies on the relationships between the growth mindset and academic achievement, are quite extensive. Most studies consider growth mindset to be a positive predictor of academic achievement because of the self-belief, effort regulation, and, self-directed learning, the individual, and the self, learning, and the self (Li, 2025). However, some meta-analyses have shown the direct effect of the growth mindset on academic achievement is relatively small, and, in some cases, the effect may be positive conditional upon the context where the effect is implemented (Macnamara & Burgoyne, 2023). The different views on the same problem suggest there is a need to study, beyond correlation, the growth mindset and academic achievement, and consider self-efficacy and motivation in its different forms, as moderators (Correa-Rojas et al., 2024).

The contributions of various cultural contexts' studies further confirm the impact of growth mindset for psychological benefits as well as academic achievement. Mindset beliefs promote positive adaptive outcomes in educational settings for different ages and levels of educational institutions, such as the positive impact of growth mindset on psychological achievement and academic success in university students (Tabassum et al., 2024). Furthermore, the analyses of different studies on younger audiences and adolescent students showed positive growth mindset moderation on psychological achievement paired with academic self-efficacy, engagement, and grit (BMC Psychology, 2025; Peng et al., 2025).

Regardless of the advancements in the literature, the gaps and questions remain. For an integrated, comprehensive approach to the phenomenon of growth mindset and its impact, there is a need for deeper research on the psychological side and its correlation with academic achievement. In addition, the evidence-based

educational policies aimed at comprehensive student development are stalled as the impact of growth mindset on students across various educational levels, cultures, and fields remains unproven (Ba et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study was conducted to fill in the gaps regarding the role of growth mindset and its effects psychological well-being and academic performance, and the mechanisms involved in the effects of the relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is stated as under:

Fundamental Aspects of Growth Mindset

A growth mindset is defined as understanding that one's cognitive capabilities, as well as other personal characteristics, can change, and that striving, analyzing, and consistently applying one's self can improve skills and produce success. From a cognitive perspective, this construct is built on the so-called implicit theories of intelligence. It acts as a psychological variable that impacts learner behavior, motivation, and safe emotional expression (Iqbal et al., 2021; Xu, 2025). Individuals with a growth mindset view obstacles as a chance to gain knowledge. They are more likely to keep trying and, in addition, promote more positive self-regulation and goal-setting. Research on growth mindset is broadening from its original formulation toward comprehensive frameworks that involve self-efficacy, resilience, and engagement in educational contexts as primary intermediaries (Xu, 2025).

Academic Achievement and Growth Mindset

The connections between growth mindset and academic success have been widely studied. Many research reports have identified a growth mindset as one of the factors leading to improved academic success, including higher grade point averages (GPA) and improved performance on specific subjects, as a result of students' increased effort, positive learning behavior, and involvement (Ba et al., 2025; Wichaidit et al., 2025). For instance, research has shown that a growth mindset fosters self-regulated learning, including goal-setting, self-monitoring, and adjusting learning strategies, which are directly associated with achievement (Shah et al., 2025; Li, 2025).

Upon reviewing the literature, various angles and situational factors come to light. Certain findings from meta-analyses indicate that the effect of the interventions geared towards the growth mindset on academic results are minor and rely on the situation, often resulting in indirect improvements that through mediators and not through the mindset alone (Gazmuri, 2025; Masih et al., 2025). Although there is a correlation between a growth mindset and achievement goal as well as mastery orientation (which in and of itself is associated with GPA), there are, in these mediating pathways, evidence a strong belief that a mindset, in and of itself, is inadequate to impact academic results, in conjunction with some other motivational and cognitive processes (Aurangzeb et al., 2024; Wichaidit et al., 2025).

The research shows a general trend that a growth mindset is linked to better academic results, although the extent of the effect can be attributed to the sample,

the quality of the interventions and the situational context (Ba et al., 2025; Gazmuri, 2025; Xu, 2025).

Growth Mindset and Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being encompasses various interrelated constructs such as resilience, emotional stability, engagement, and life satisfaction. Mindset studies have demonstrated positive correlations with psychological well-being spanning various educational levels (Gazmuri, 2025). Recent studies with adolescents and college students reveal positive correlations with psychological well-being and growth mindset (BMC Psychology, 2025; Suharsono, 2024). For instance, BMC Psychology (2025) highlighted the role of grit and learning engagement as mediating factors of the positive correlation between well-being and growth mindset among adolescents. This asserts that psychological well-being is positively influenced by effort and active participation in learning.

Furthermore, growth mindset theory applied to elementary students has shown that self-efficacy in academics positively mediates the growth mindset and subjective well-being correlation (Hamid & Awhinawhi, 2025; Peng et al. 2025). This supports the emotional aspect of motivation theorists, where psychological constructs regarding one's perceived abilities affect emotional responses positively and constructively towards challenges and stressors.

METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative study conducted under Interpretivist paradigm to understand the effect of growth mindset on pupil teachers' psychological wellbeing and academic performance. The sample was selected with the help of Purposive sampling. The sample comprised on 14 pupil teachers enrolled in B.Ed Hons and B.Ed 1.5 years' program in the universities across Punjab. The data were collected with the help of a Semi-Structured Interview Protocol and were analyzed with the help of Thematic analysis.

Data Analysis & Results

The data analysis and the results are stated as under:

Growth Mindset as an Inductor of Emotional Resilience

The participants who reported the most noticeable positive psychological changes were the ones who adopted a growth mindset and who reported the most reduction in negative psychological feelings. Participants expressed feelings of anxiety, self-criticism, and loss of motivation, followed by disappointing grades, study-related challenges, and other difficult tasks. Adopting a growth mindset helped participants view failure as an opportunity to learn and shift their focus to learning. Participants were involved in question-asking, learned to adjust study strategies and methods, and used Reflective Problem Solving (RPS). After the adoption of a growth mindset, participants were able to develop a problem-solving mindset, which increased their confidence and willingness to act. After adopting a growth mindset, self-compassion, constructive patience, and emotional regulation were some of the attributes they exhibited. These also resulted in constructive

emotional engagement, psychosocial well-being, and better relationships with peers and instructors.

One Participant stated that:

As a learner who seeks perfection, I used to get anxious and unmotivated when I would get low grades. With self-blame, I made failures overwhelm me to the point that I would avoid doing anything challenging. When I learned about growth mindset, I started to view failures as learning opportunities, seeing them as proof of incapacity. I used to stress and retreat, but then I started to seek help from my professors and I changed my study methods. This change made me stress less and feel more confident while doing difficult academic tasks.

Similarly another Participant stated that:

When I failed in my academic tasks, my emotionally driven self would overwhelm me. I used to blame myself, and distance myself from doing any activities. Emotional pressure would come to me in the form of doing high stake tests. I learned to be calm in the face of high pressure. Once I internalized the mindset that I wasn't being challenged long term, and that challenge could be overcome with effort, I was able to invest myself in finding solutions and I overcame my fear of failure. This change helped me regulate my emotions, increased my confidence, and, most importantly, greatly reduced my academic pressure.

One of the Participants also stated similar to the previous one that:

I used to become very frustrated and stressed with the hard academic tasks that I undertook. When things became complicated, I lost my motivation and became discouraged. After reflecting on problems, having adopted a growth mindset, I began to view difficulty as a factor in the learning process. I focused on developing strategies to solve problems, and working in teams constructive ways in which to manage my emotions. This approach lessened my stress and increased my emotional resilience in the face of academic challenges.

Another Participant stated similarly that:

I felt worth less, stressed and emotionally drained when I experienced academic failures. I suffered from negative thinking that involved self-criticism. I learned to view failure as a loss through the growth mindset, I learned to view obstacles as problems that are temporary. I developed patience and self-compassion, and instead of worrying, I thought productively about how to improve. I felt emotionally balanced and my stress levels decreased. I also noticed that my anger decreased, which improved my relationships and helped me stay focused on my goals.

Similarly, one Participant stated that:

I remember experiencing doubt and tension when I faced even the smallest academic challenges. When I began to believe that I could improve my abilities through effort, I began to see challenges with the curiosity to learn. I began to cope with stress through planning and self-mentoring, and by reflecting on my successes and failures. This shift in thought helped me reduce emotional exhaustion, improve my overall well-being, and made periods of stress much more manageable.

Improved Self-Confidence and Positive Academic Self-Concept

Most of the participants commented that adopting a growth mindset changed their perception of their own abilities and transformed their relationships with other aspects of their academic identity. They understood that with effort, one could improve one's intelligence, which strengthened self-confidence and reduced fear of failure. This shift led to increased participation in the classroom, willingness to take on more difficult tasks, and the use of more adaptive learning strategies. A number of participants noted that the focus on effort and not on evaluation, judgments, or outcomes increased their perceived control over learning and resulted in more academic risk-taking. In addition, the increase in confidence positively affected non-academic aspects, including psychological well-being and the motivation to take on challenges. Overall, the growth mindset improved academic self-concept and self-belief, as well as associated behaviors to take initiative and to learn proactively.

One Participant stated that:

Adopting a growth mindset made me see that my abilities can improve through effort. This change made me see myself differently both academically and personally. I developed the self-confidence needed to take part in class discussions, lead group tasks, and ask questions. I stopped believing that intelligence determined my success, and I began to appreciate the value of effort put forth. This constructive academic identity encouraged me to develop goals and work steadily to accomplish them.

Similarly another Participant stated that:

The growth mindset helped improve how I viewed myself as a learner. I began to center my attention on self-improvement and I stopped being concerned about failure. This change improved my self-confidence and my perception of control in the learning process. I was able to manage and work on complicated activities that required me to apply higher order thinking activities, confidently.

One of the Participants also stated similar to the previous one that:

The failure that I experienced as an opportunity to learn helped me improve my self-confidence. I began participating more in class and group work, and even began to change the way I studied. This confidence improved my academic performance and my overall mental well-being.

Another Participant stated similarly:

In the past, I used to find it easy to shy away from difficult tasks due to the possibility of being judged for it. With a growth mindset, I concentrated on the process of learning instead of the opinions of others. This improved my overall confidence, and made me willing to take on risks academically. With time, I was able to build a solid academic identity, one that was truly reflective of my effort and persistence.

Similarly, one Participant stated that:

Acknowledging my potential had a motivating factor in and of itself. With effort and self-regulation, I began to come to the realization that I could conquer

difficult tasks. This confidence transcended into other areas of my life, and bolstered my psychological well-being, as well as my willingness to take on other challenges.

Motivation and Active Learning

After adopting a growth mindset, participants described a noticeable shift from procrastination, passive learning behavior, and avoidance, to self-directed, positive, and proactive behaviors. Reports indicated lower levels of delay, an increase in activities related to constructive confrontation with aggression and planning towards struggles, and more structured study efforts like goal setting, feedback, planning, practice, collaboration, and feedback. The shift also reinforced intrinsic motivation and personal responsibility for learning, which resulted in an increase in classroom engagement. Reports indicated that viewing mistakes as learning opportunities improved understanding and enhanced academic performance. Overall, a growth mindset improved learning behaviors characterized by high academic engagement, effort, and strategic activity.

One Participant stated that:

“I used to disengage from assignments because I would procrastinate. After developing a growth mindset, I started to create study plans and schedules, segment assignments, and seek feedback. I developed internal motivation and took responsibility for my own learning.”

Similarly another Participant stated that:

“I no longer avoided difficult subjects. I started to achieve daily learning targets. I also became more involved in the classroom, which resulted in satisfaction surrounding my learning and overall achievement.”

One of the Participants also stated similar to the previous one that:

“Rather than give up, I started to view challenges positively. I improved my efforts by practicing, continually reviewing, questioning, and collaborating. I increased my understanding and improved my academic performance.”

Another Participant stated similarly:

The growth mindset made me take charge of my learning. I focused on developing effective study routines and practicing consistently, rather than on my abilities. My motivation came from skill mastery which made me more involved in learning and increased my performance.

Similarly, one Participant stated that:

My willingness to answer questions in class and participate in group work increased. I was no longer afraid of making mistakes because I realized they were opportunities to learn. I was further motivated to stay focused because my level of engagement increased and my results improved.

Improvement in Academic Achievement

The majority of the participants reported that they felt a notable change in their academic performance. They also reported that Growth mindset helped them reduce their academic anxiety and they could excel in a better way as compared to earlier. Growth mindset helped them focus on their learning goals which improved their academic achievement.

One Participant stated that:

Identifying the study outcome goals was the most satisfying part of the learning event. Focusing on a single goal was tedious. Starting from the baseline and moving to learning new knowledge for goal achievement was great. The feeling of achievement is strength.

Similarly another Participant stated that:

Having a positive growth mindset directed my learning in a positive direction. I had concepts that I previously had problems mastering, but now I am able to master those concepts. Learning and knowledge retention improved markedly for me as a result of study practice coupled with feedback and the establishment of a positive study cycle. Improving via the process and focusing on growth rather than perfection not only increased my self-achievement but it also increased my confidence in my capability to achieve goals.

One of the Participants also stated similar to the previous one that:

I no longer felt anxious prior to the sitting of an exam as a result of focusing on effort and effective exam strategy. I was able to devote my time towards study, and in so doing my study and my understanding improved from what it once was. This increased my academic achievement.

Another Participant stated similarly:

Doing the learning activities and continually reflecting on what were the diverse aspects of the learning activities that were undertaken, employing various learning strategies that were available, persisting through the various strategies, and drawing upon the confidence that was developed through performance improvement was the most satisfying.

Similarly, one Participant stated that:

“With the help of self-reflection and assistance from others, I was able to conquer some of my academic challenges. Implementing new techniques changed my grades, level of perseverance, self-efficacy, and made unhealthy comparisons lessen.”

CONCLUSION

This was a qualitative study conducted under Interpretivist paradigm to understand the effect of growth mindset on pupil teachers' psychological wellbeing and academic performance. The sample was selected with the help of Purposive sampling. The sample comprised on 14 pupil teachers enrolled in B.Ed Hons and B.Ed 1.5 years' program in the universities across Punjab. The data were collected with the help of a Semi-Structured Interview Protocol and were analyzed with the help of Thematic analysis. It has been concluded based on the results that the participants experienced the reduction in anxiety, self-criticism, and loss of motivation when they opted for the growth mindset. Similarly, participants were able to develop a problem-solving mindset, which increased their confidence and willingness to act. Their perception of their own abilities and transformed their relationships with other aspects of their academic identity. They understood that with effort, one could improve one's intelligence, which strengthened self-

confidence and reduced fear of failure. Furthermore, the majority of the participants reported that they felt a notable change in their academic performance. They also reported that Growth mindset helped them reduce their academic anxiety and they could excel in a better way as compared to earlier.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, it is been recommended that the prospective teachers should be given the training to opt for the Growth mindset for enhancing their Psychological Wellbeing and academic performance.

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