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## Impact of Growth Mindset on Career Decisions among Students to Work Abroad in Higher Education Institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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**Abstract:** The present aimed to examine the impact of a Growth mindset on Career decisions among students working abroad in Higher Education Institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Positivism research philosophy was applied. Therefore, a Causal research design was employed. A sample of 389 students were selected out of 27438 from the Department of Social and Natural Sciences of four universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A questionnaire was used with 32 items related to Growth Mindset (GM) developed by Chen et al. (2021) and Campbell (2019) and 25 items related to Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) developed by Gati et al. (1996). The overall validity was completed through expert judgment by using the index of Item Objective-Congruence (IOC), whereas the reliability of the questionnaire was estimated at .829. Researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis. The result of the study depicts that Growth Mindset (GM) has a significant impact on the Career Decision (CD) made by students for work abroad. In addition, attitude has been found to be one of the most dominant elements in the GM of students, which significantly impacts the decision of career selection. The study recommended that HEIs organize a workshop regarding growth mindset and career counselling.

**Key Words:** Growth Mindset (GM), Career Decision (CD), HEIs

### Introduction

Career direction is defined by education. Students from kindergartens to university may have been subjected to the same question from all around the world, but particularly in Asian societies: what would you like to be? Surprisingly, the majority of responses fall under the cultural, environmental, and societal biases characteristic of their parents' background. It implies that the variables affecting career choice will differ between societies and cultures. Most of the time, students wish to continue their studies in fields with plenty of employment opportunities. In recent years, graduates have shown a great deal of interest in professions abroad, such as commerce, medicine, engineering, pharmacy, and agriculture, because of their high market acceptability, alluring compensation packages, and status quo (Bulo & Azis, 2024).

Theory of Mind (ToM) refers to the ability to attribute mental states—beliefs, intents, desires, emotions, and knowledge—to oneself and others and to understand that others have beliefs, desires, and intentions that are different from one's own. This cognitive skill is crucial for effective social interactions and decision-making. In young adults, ToM is particularly influential in shaping career choices and decisions related to working abroad. In Pakistan, where socio-economic and cultural factors play significant roles in career planning, understanding the impact of ToM can offer valuable insights into the career aspirations and mobility of young professionals (Yeager & Dweck, 2020).

According to Yeager et al. (2019), adopting a growth mindset (GM) is the conviction that one's abilities, skills, and talents are malleable. On the other hand, the idea that a person's skills are unchangeable and undevelopable is known as a fixed mindset. These opinions are consistent with implicit theories of intelligence. Some theorists could regard them as a person's fundamental beliefs regarding their

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perception of their own intelligence. Studies have indicated that a fixed mindset can lead to poor performance and reduced adaptability in various contexts (Yang & Ke, 2023).

The progression of a person's job experiences throughout time defines their career. Both objective and subjective career success are commonly used to conceptualize and operationalize the actual or perceived work-related achievements that arise from a person's work experiences. Objective career success includes results that can be measured, observed, and independently confirmed by a third party (e.g., salary and promotions). Only the person providing care can directly experience subjective career success, which is usually gauged by job happiness or, more generally, career satisfaction (Chuang et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, the process of selecting a career or profession was once thought to be simpler and less stressful. The most respectable and wealthy members of the upper class prepare their children to be future pioneers, but generally speaking, a person's career is determined primarily by following their father's footsteps. For example, a child of a carpenter would grow up to be a carpenter, and a child of a cobbler would learn how to become a cobbler like his father. For students, making a career decision is extremely difficult since it determines the type of work they want to pursue in the future. The majority of pupils choose their careers while still in high school. Their issue is balancing their academic performance and hobbies with their professional choices while also taking their parents' wishes into consideration (Akbar et al., 2023). The present aimed to examine the impact of a Growth mindset on Career decisions among students working abroad in Higher Education Institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were made to achieve.

1. To find out the relationship of growth mindset with career decision to work abroad among students in HEIs
2. To examine the influence of a growth mindset on career decisions to work abroad among students in HEIs

### Literature Review

#### Growth Mindset

Dweck's mindset theory is based on his 2007 classification of human thought into two categories: growth mindset and fixed mindset. The idea that skills and intelligence can be acquired with consistent practice and effort is known as a growth mindset. According to Yeager et al. (2019), those who possess a strong growth mindset are more likely to successfully negotiate the highs and lows of their professional path. For instance, unlike students with a fixed mindset, individuals with a growth mindset do not see a drop in performance following an exam failure (Blackwell et al., 2007). New graduates frequently face difficulties and barriers when they first start working, which might have an effect on their careers (Yulianti et al., 2020).

It has been demonstrated that growth mindset interventions improve students' professional development by raising their sense of entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Burnette et al., 2020).

Moreover, a growth mentality has been shown to promote resilience in the face of industrial practice failures, facilitating a speedier recovery (Caniëls et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs with a growth mentality are more likely to pick themselves up after a business failure and try again, which helps them recover from the stress that comes with failure faster, according to Burnette et al. (2013). Likewise, a growth mentality fosters resilience, which helps people overcome setbacks in their jobs and move on, according to Marques (2013). Adolescent special education participants' motivation significantly changed after a growth mindset intervention (Rhew et al., 2018).

According to Burnette et al. (2013), having a growth mindset motivates people to get back up and try again, which helps them bounce back from setbacks faster. A growth mindset is crucial for personal development because it allows one to see obstacles as chances for learning and improvement. According to Buvana and Talwar (2023) pupils that demonstrate a development mindset, high levels of grit, and great self-efficacy are positively correlated.

## Career Choice

According to Inkson et al. (2012), a person's career is defined as the advancement and development in their life, role, or employment. A person's career is the series of work-related experiences and attitudes they have during their working life. A career is the progression of a person's work experience over time. When making a choice, one must separate or choose a favoured alternative from a wide range of options. Therefore, choosing a career is one of the many crucial life decisions that help one achieve their long-term objectives. Because of its importance, career choice has attracted a lot of attention from researchers and academics in recent years. Indeed, scholars have investigated the impact of both external (market acceptability, employment prospects, pay scale, career advancement, etc.) and internal (attitude, aptitude, personal interests, education, family history, etc.) aspects on profession choice (Bulo & Azis, 2024).

## Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



## Research Methodology

### Research Philosophy

Researcher adopted positivism research philosophy. A research philosophy known as positivism holds that reason and logic can be used to factual knowledge from sensory experience. It is predicated on the notion that objective, quantifiable observations of behaviors, responses, or activity can disclose information. According to positivists, anything cannot be known for definite if it cannot be measured (Maretha, 2023).

### Research Design

Causal research design was employed by the researcher. Causal research design is a research method that explores the cause-and-effect relationships between two or more variables. In the present study, growth mindset acts as independent and Career decision act as dependent variable.

### Population and Sample Size

Researchers selected departments of social sciences and physical sciences of four well-reputed Universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, i.e. University of Peshawar (UOP), Gomal University D. I. Khan (GU), University of Science and Technology Bannu (USTB), Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST). There are 27438 students enrolled in the selected departments. A sample of 389 students was selected through a stratified sampling method and stratification based on university. In the current study, the population was dispersed, and stratified sampling was suitable for the present study; stratification was based on districts.

Table 1

Population and Sample

Population (N)	Sample formula Yamene (1967)	Estimation	Required sample
27438	$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$	$n = \frac{27438}{1 + 27438(.05*.05)}$	389

### Research Instruments

A questionnaire was used, which was divided into three sections. The first section related to demographic attributes like gender and districts, whereas the second section related to 32 items of the Growth mindset developed by Chen et al. (2021) and Campbell (2019) was employed by the researchers. The third part contained 25 items related to Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) developed by Gati et al. (1996).



### Validity and Reliability

After 50 students participated in a pilot test, the questionnaire was validated using the index of Item Objective–Congruence (IOC). IOC is a method by which experts validate the relevancy of an item. The proper statistical techniques. Experts peer-reviewed the instrument to assess its face validity for language use and readability and its content validity based on expert review. The overall reliability of the questionnaire, the value of Cronbach Alpha, was found to be .829. The construction validity was also estimated by using factor analysis.

### Data Analysis

Researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 2**

*Presenting KMO and Bartlett’s Test for GM and CD*

<b>Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</b>		<b>.734</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS)	Approx. Chi–Square	66231.231
	df	388
	Sig.	.000

Table 2 reveals the result of construct validity by using KMO and BTS. The result depicts that the value of KMO=.762>.60, which indicates that sample adequacy of the item was found to be appropriate, whereas the value of BTS=.000<.05, reveals that the gathered data was found to be fit for factor analysis.

**Table 3**

*Showing the Relationship of Growth Mindset (GM) and Career Decision (CD) of students to work abroad*

Research Variable	Statistics	r	p-value
GM ↔ CD	Pearson Correlation	.672**	.000

Table 3 indicates the relationship of GM with CD. The result shows that a positive correlation (r=.512\*\*) was found between TMP and WP. In addition, the result depicts the value of p=.000<.05, which shows that TMP positively correlated with WP.

**Table 3**

*Correlation Matrix between components of GM and CD*

Variables	CD	Intelligence	Attitude	Grit
CD	1			
Intelligence	.521**	1		
Attitude	.610**	.623**	1	
Grit	.653**	.621**	.644**	1

Table 3 shows the Correlation matrix by applying Pearson Product Moment Correlation between the three key components of growth mindset and Career Decision (CD). The matrix shows that Career Decision was found to be positively correlated with intelligence (r=.610\*\*), attitude (r=.623\*\*) and grit (r=.653\*\*).

**Table 4**

*Regression output about the impact of GM on CD*

IV	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	β	Sig.	D–W
GM	.672	.524	.522	212.19	.627	.000	2.19

Outcome variable: CD

Table 4 reveals the overall regression summary about the impact of GM on CD. The result indicates that  $R^2 = .524$ , which shows 52.4% variation, was found in CD due to GM. F-statistics shows the overall model fitness. The value of  $p = .000 < .05$  depicts that GM has a significant impact on CDs made by students. The value of positive beta indicates that a single unit increase in GM would result in a .627 SD increase in CD. The value of Durbin Watson (2.19) indicates no auto-correlation was found between GM and CD.

**Table 5**

Regression output about the impact of components of GM on CD

IV	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	Sig.	D-W
Intelligence					.525		
Attitude	.618	.472	.471	129.26	.640	.001	2.28
Grit					.582		

Outcome variable: CD

Table 5 reveals the overall regression summary about the impact of components GM on CD. The result indicates that  $R^2 = .472$ , which shows 47.2% variation, was found in CD due to different components of GM. F-statistics shows the overall model fitness. The value of  $p = .001 < .05$  depicts that different components of GM have a significant impact on CD made by the students. There are three different values of positive beta. The highest beta value was found in a student's attitude towards work abroad, and then a .640 variation was found in CD. The value of Durbin Watson (2.28) indicates no auto-correlation was found between components of GM and CD.

## Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the impact of a Growth mindset on Career decisions to Work Abroad among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The result found that Growth Mindset (GM) has a significant impact on the Career Decision (CD) made by the students for work abroad. A similar result was found in Bulo and Azis (2024). They found that overseas study tours can influence a student's expectations, emotions, and perceptions, which may influence their decision to pursue a job working overseas if they have a growth mindset. A similar study was found by Zingoni (2022). He found that higher education students' career choices and results might be positively impacted by a development mindset. Furthermore, those who have a growth mindset are more confident when choosing a career because they think that hard effort and dedication can help them expand their abilities. This way of thinking promotes accepting difficulties and growing from mistakes, which improves job choices. Self-efficacy.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that a growth mindset plays a vital role among students in the development of the right decision about a career section to work abroad. The study concluded that attitude has been found to be one of the most dominant elements in GM of students, with a significant impact on career selection. The study concluded that those who accept challenges, endure hardships, and see work as a means of mastery are better able to make confident and informed career decisions. The study recommended that HEIs may foster an atmosphere where students are encouraged to take chances, think critically about setbacks, and get feedback, all of which might boost their confidence in their capacity to handle obstacles in career selection. The study recommended that HEIs organize workshops regarding growth mindset and career counselling.

## Limitations

The result could only be generalized to the students of selected HEIs.

## Implication of the Study

This study contributes theoretical and practical knowledge regarding the growth of the mindset of students and its impact on the decision of career selection to work abroad.



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