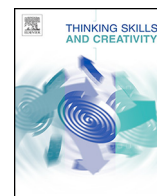




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# The influence of creative mindsets on achievement goals, enjoyment, creative self-efficacy and performance among business students



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## ABSTRACT

In two studies, we examined the influence of a growth and a fixed creative mindset on task-approach, other-approach and other-avoidance achievement goals, creative self-efficacy, enjoyment, and perceived performance and effort exerted among college business students from Mexico. We conducted both studies in a business educational setting where the development of creative skills is highly valued. Results from study 1 showed a positive influence of a growth creative mindset on task-approach achievement goals and creative self-efficacy. Results from study 2 showed a positive influence of a growth creative mindset on task-approach achievement goals. Similarly, a fixed creative mindset had a positive influence on other-approach achievement goals. Last, a growth mindset had a direct, positive influence on creative self-efficacy and perceived performance/effort exerted and an indirect influence on enjoyment. From our results, we can conclude that holding a growth creative mindset was related to adaptive motivational and performance outcomes. The theoretical and applied implications of our results were discussed.

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## 1. Introduction

Can everyone be creative? If the answer is not, can someone become more creative with practice? The answers to these two questions, and others, lie at the heart of the theoretical model of implicit theories (Dweck, 2000) and of a recent theoretical development called creative mindsets (Karwowski, 2014), with important implications for contexts that value the development of creative skills such as business education. Both theoretical developments seek to understand the motivational and performance implications of individuals' beliefs about the malleability of intelligence and creativity skills, respectively. The focus on our investigation is on creativity where two beliefs have been identified: fixed and growth creative mindsets. A fixed creative mindset is characterized by the belief that creativity and creative skills are fixed and there is no much one can do to improve. Conversely, a growth creative mindset deals with the belief that creativity and creative skills can improve with time and practice (Karwowski, 2014). A recent integration and theoretical development on creative mindsets suggest that researchers need to continue examining the motivational and performance consequences of both mindsets. Hence, the purpose of our investigation is to examine, in two different studies, the implications of having high/low levels of a fixed

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and/or growth mindset in terms of four motivational and performance indicators: achievement goals, creative self-efficacy, enjoyment, and perceived performance/effort exerted among business students from Mexico.

We suggest that the motivational and performance implications of creative mindsets are particularly relevant for business education because companies value and encourage creativity and innovation. Hence, it seems appropriate to understand how mindsets influence motivational and performance outcomes among students who would like to become employees in the private sector. In order to accomplish our research goals, we first briefly describe why creativity is important in the business sector and the role of business education. We then review the original postulates of implicit theories (Dweck, 2000), followed by a discussion of how implicit theories can be used to understand creativity (Karwowski, 2014). Last, we review the scant literature on creative mindsets and their implications for achievement goals and emotions, creative self-beliefs, and perceived effort and performance.

## 2. The context of business and business education

In order to put our investigation in context, we need to explain why creativity is important for business leaders and the role of business education. Different surveys with business leaders consistently find that the ability to have creative employees is at the heart of business growth (IBM, 2006). Business leaders believe that in extremely competitive environments where economic resources are limited, only companies that are able to transform creative ideas into tangible products and services (going from creativity to innovation) would survive. Indeed, scholars suggest that one key difference between creativity research conducted in business, education, and psychology is the emphasis given to the consequences of creativity (Reiter-Palmon, Beghetto, & Kaufman, 2014). In order to make creativity research relevant, one needs to consider that business leaders do not see the enhancement of the ability to generate novel ideas or creative self-efficacy as a mean in itself, but rather as a mean to an end.

Hence, it is not surprising that business education tries to meet the needs of companies by designing and delivering educational programs that emphasize the development of the ability to generate novel and useful ideas. For example, it is common to find classes on new product development, creativity and innovation, and entrepreneurship, among others, as part of the training that students get in business education. Hence, we suggest that it is relevant to examine how creative mindsets relate to different motivational and performance outcomes among business students.

## 3. Implicit theories

Implicit theories give personal beliefs a central role (Dweck, 2000). Beliefs help organize and shape individuals' experiences in achievement settings (Dweck, 2008). Since beliefs shape experiences, they are likely to influence important motivational and performance outcomes such as goals, efficacious beliefs, enjoyment, and perceived effort and performance, among others (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995a). The original formulation of implicit theories focuses on the role of two beliefs systems of intelligence: entity versus incremental. An entity belief system of intelligence is characterized by the idea that intelligence is fixed and one cannot do much about it. Conversely, an incremental view of intelligence is characterized by the belief that intelligence is dynamic, malleable and developable (Dweck et al., 1995a). Empirical investigations on implicit theories have established their influence on a wide variety of outcomes including goals (Dweck, 2000), resilience (Yeager & Dweck, 2012), school grades and emotions (Romero, Master, Paunesku, Dweck, & Gross, 2014), among others. Empirical findings suggest that holding an incremental view of intelligence leads to choosing more mastery goals (Dweck, 2000), showing more resilience (Yeager & Dweck, 2012), obtaining better grades and reporting fewer depressive symptoms (Romero et al., 2014) as compared to holding an entity belief of intelligence.

The wide-ranging implications of implicit theories have led researchers to expand their examination to other domains beyond education (Dweck, 2000; Dweck, 2008). Hence, implicit theories have been used to explain personality change (Dweck, 2008), moral behavior (Dweck, 2008), motivational focus (Sevincer, Kluge, & Oettingen, 2014), consumer evaluations (Mathur, Block, & Yucel-Aybat, 2014), and creativity (Karwowski, 2014). Our investigation focuses on the role of implicit theories of creativity and creative skills known as creative mindsets.

## 4. Creative mindsets

Following the theoretical development of implicit theories, two creative mindsets or belief systems have been identified: fixed and growth mindsets (Karwowski, 2014). As stated earlier, a fixed mindset is characterized by the belief that creativity and creative skills are fixed and there is no much one can do to improve. A fixed creative mindset is equivalent to an entity view of intelligence. Conversely, a growth mindset deals with the belief that creativity and creative skills can improve with time and practice (Karwowski, 2014). A growth mindset is equivalent to an incremental view of intelligence. The relevance of the examination of creative mindsets as separate, additional constructs comes from three main sources: 1) the examination of belief systems of creativity is justified given that intelligence is not the same as creativity (Sternberg & O'Hara, 1999). Hence, individuals might have different beliefs about the nature of creativity as compared to intelligence. 2) The myth that one has to be born creative (a fixed mindset) is one of the most detrimental and harmful beliefs if one wishes to enhance creative performance (Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004). 3) There is some empirical evidence supporting the construct validity of creative mindsets and their incremental contribution. For example, whereas one investigation found that implicit theories of

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