

The Impact of Growth Mindset on the Preferred Employer after Graduation

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Abstract

The objective of this paper was to identify factors related to the preferred employer among future job seekers who are preparing to enter the labor market. A measure of ‘mindset’ as well as three measures associated with expectancy theory (expectancy, instrumentality, valence) were tested for association with personal preference for employment after graduation. Data were drawn from a work-attitude survey of 477 Thai students in Years 3 and 4 of undergraduate education. Binary logistic regression analysis showed that having a “growth” mindset was positively related to preference for joining government service (AOR=1.63) and negatively related to preference for working in the private sector (AOR = 0.67). Among the expectation theory variables, valence influenced the preference for a type of employer. The health benefits for themselves and their family members, together with the state pension attracted this sample of pre-graduates to consider joining government service. By contrast, the lure of a bonus made working in the private sector attractive to prospective job-seekers. Notably, intrinsic valences (e.g., being respected) were positively related to the motivation to go into business for oneself, i.e., becoming a nascent entrepreneur (AOR = 1.44). In addition, if a respondent had a more traditional lifestyle (compared to one that was more open to diversity) then they were more likely to prefer joining governmental service (AOR=1.41) or becoming a nascent entrepreneur (AOR=1.40).

Keywords: 1) Growth mindset 2) Mindset 3) Job choice 4) Expectancy 5) Organization

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Introduction

Employee potential plays an important role in contributing to progress in an organization. Employees who possess a high level of creativity can lead an organization toward sustainable progress (Getz and Robinson, 2003, pp. 133-136), especially in times of economic transition. Other things being equal, business activities are carried out within the limits set by the government, market potential, and changing consumer behavior (Ibrahim, Kamaludin and Sundarasan, 2020, pp. 11-15; Hashem, 2020, pp. 72-74), thus forcing organizations to adapt to a changing environment. Employees at all levels can participate in creating new strategic plans and cooperate to create the survival of the organization.

Accordingly, attracting talented job applicants is equivalent to the first line of defense in the recruitment process that will lead the organization toward survival and success through human resource (HR) management mechanisms (Taylor and Collins, 2000, pp. 11-15). Success in both the quantity and quality of applicants (Rynes and Barber, 1990, pp. 289-291) will increase the chances of recruiting the highest-potential candidate for the organization. New strategies for recruitment are constantly being developed, such as advertising vacancies through international business publications, and advertising through recruitment websites (Taylor and Collins, 2000, pp. 11-15; Baum and Kabst, 2014, pp. 353-355). One of the strategies to attract high-value applicants is portraying the prospective employer as the 'dream organization' by creating a distinctive brand to encourage applicants

to choose on the basis of values. Job seekers often compare corporate brands using strategies that are linked to the properties of the organization and the applicant's own abilities (Thorne and Pellant, 2007, pp. 33-42). For example, an organization which markets itself as unique in social service should be able to attract candidates with a public-service mindset. An organization with an outstanding image in terms of innovation and modernity should be able to attract applicants who have an affinity for technology and the ability to apply it creatively.

Every organization aims to attract talented employees. However, in a period of economic uncertainty, definition of 'talent' probably no longer means 'elite' worker or those who excel only in hard skills (Gladwell, 2002, pp. 28-33; Pollet and Schnell, 2017, pp. 1473-1479; Vreys, Venderickx, and Kieboom, 2016, pp. 56-60). Instead, in an era of accelerating global flux, workers need to be ready to adapt and learn on-the-fly, and focus on continuous self-development. These attributes are linked to a 'growth' mindset which is the key to organizational agility and success.

For more than a decade, the different dimensions of a person's 'mindset' have been of particular interest in the science of HR development. Research has shown that employees with a "growth" (as opposed to a "fixed") mindset are a valuable resource for the organization. When a critical mass of staff have a growth mindset, the organization can more efficiently promote participation and generate engagement to increase productivity, build leadership, fortify willpower, encourage

creativity, keep employees open to new ideas, expose flaws, and improve performance from constructive criticism (Han and Stieha, 2020, pp. 310-312). Carol Dweck, who pioneered the application of mindset in the context of human resources, felt that this facet of an individual is something that can be developed and modified (Dweck, 2015, p. 20). Accordingly, the science of organizational HR has focused on how to instill a growth mindset through training, leadership, and the right kind of experience (Caniëls, Semeijn and Renders, 2018, pp. 58-61; Lyons and Bandura, 2020, pp. 635-637). The study of mindset in the process recruitment is still limited generally, but even more so in the context of Thai employees and organizations. Thus, this research was interested in exploring the relationship between growth mindset and planning in organizations by using a group of Thai undergraduate students who are preparing to enter the labor market. This research controls for environmental factors in accordance with expectancy theory, and the principal research question is: "What is the preferred employer for members of the new generation of job-seekers who possess a growth mindset?"

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

A 'mindset' is the foundation of belief(s) which determines the proclivity (or the conceptual disposition of a person) to accept or resist events, and which crystallizes in a person's mind (Silpakit, Silpakit and Chomchuen, 2015, pp. 168-169). Carol Dweck, a psychologist, posited that the connections

between the thoughts, beliefs, and concepts of individuals can be crystallized into a set of ideas (or conceptual framework) that prescribes certain dimensions of behavior and human decision-making (Dweck, 2016). In Dweck's lexicon, an employee's disposition to life and work can be categorized into two groups: Fixed and growth mindsets. These are not static groupings, and a person's mindset is usually located along a continuum from fixed -> growth. However, each person's mindset tends to be inclined toward one side or the other based on their accumulated thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes.

Someone who has an ingrained mindset regarding individual talent believes that a person's character, aptitude, and creativity are inherited, fixed, and immutable. A person's abilities depend on their pre-existing potential (Dweck, 2008, p. 392). From this perspective, ability is immutable, inelastic, and not subject to improvement. Each person has a potential that may be reached, but not altered. People with a fixed mindset value their self-image and being accepted in society. They determine their own worth by evaluating the appreciation received from others. When a task is accomplished and is praised, that person will gain confidence and self-worth based on those compliments. Therefore, those with a fixed mindset will shy away from new or unfamiliar work assignments (Dweck and Yeager, 2019, p. 482). They are afraid to make a mistake and, thus, do not try to take on challenges. Unless the person feels that success is guaranteed, they will avoid tasks that carry a risk of failure, and stick to familiar routines that have worked



in the past. These individuals are difficult to change, hard to motivate to think or perform “outside the box,” and are steadfast in remaining in their “comfort zone.” They will not risk being blamed, but need to be recognized as smart and good.

By contrast, people with a growth mindset will believe that talent is something that can be developed; talent can be nurtured and cultivated with perseverance, a good strategy, or the application of expert advice. These people will strive to prevail over challenges, and face problems head on (Dweck, 2009, pp. 4-7). People with a growth mindset are more interested in learning and trying new approaches without undue concern about whether they will succeed or not. They know there is a chance of failure, but they believe that one can learn from trying, and that is more important than trying to protect oneself from criticism. They are not obsessed with self-image, but are more focused on the challenge of finding answers or solutions to problems.

Mindset can manifest across various domains and dimensions. Although its origins originated from research in the field of education, the concept of mindset has been applied to family dynamics, social status, sports, management systems, and leadership (Zhao, et al., 2021, pp. 4-5; Dweck, 2009, pp. 4-7; Jen, Chen and Wu, 2019, pp. 1718-1719.; Nemova, et al, 2016, pp. 6228-6236; Kouzes and Posner, 2019, pp. 831-833). In the area of HR management in organizations, it was found that the mindset of the employees was related to the efficiency and learning style of the organization. A growth mindset positively affects the performance

of a worker, and fosters constructive working relationships (Han and Stieha, 2020, p. 310), which contribute to the overall success of the organization.

Expectancy Theory

The choice a person makes to work in one or another organization is often based on the desire for certain outcomes, and to receive a return from perseverance and dedication to the job. Victor Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation addresses this relationship. Vroom points out that people tend to act in the direction of their motivation, which derives from the person's expected outcome (Vroom, 1964, pp. 17-22). In Vroom's typology, motivation is the result of three variables: The value of rewards (Valence); tools (Instrumentality); and expectations (Expectancy). Thus, the shorthand for Vroom's theory is “VIE,” based on its primary components:

(1) Expectancy is an individual's belief that concerted effort will lead to intended performance goals. In the work setting, an employee needs to believe that “I can do it,” and the grounds for that belief depend on experience, inherent self-confidence, and an acknowledgement of the obstacles which might impede reaching the goal;

(2) Instrumentality is the belief that a person will achieve the desired results if a task is successfully performed. The reward may come in the form of a wage increase, promotion, acceptance, or an intrinsic sense of accomplishment;

(3) Valence is the value of successful performance of a task, and the reward can be quite diverse, depending on personal needs,

goals, preferences, and ethos. For example, bonuses can be very important rewards for certain employees, but less significant for others.

Expectancy theory has been applied widely in the field of HR management, especially in the domain of strategies to motivate employees (Kumar and Prabhakar, 2018, pp. 175-176). In the process of recruiting new staff, expectations were found to be a key component of decision-making, both in the organization's selection of job candidates, and the applicant's selection of the workplace (Chapman and Webster, 2006, pp. 1035-1039; Wanous, Keon and Latack, 1983, pp. 66-71.)

Methodology

This research studied the influence of mindset on the preference for a certain type of employer among a sample pre-graduate Thai students. The main research question was: "What kind of organization do young people with a growth mindset want to join after graduation?" This research applied quantitative methods to analyze relationship of variables using secondary data from the project "Happy 4G Organization: Understanding, Prepared and Breaking the Gap." That project conducted a survey of attitudes among 477 undergraduate students from eight higher-education institutions in the North, Northeast, Central, and Southern regions of Thailand. The survey was conducted by the Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR), of Mahidol University together with the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) in 2021. The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the IPSR Human Research Ethics Committee (IPSR-IRB) COA. No. 2020/12-428.

The researchers conducted a binary logistic regression analysis to assess the influence of mindset and factors under expectancy theory on preference of type of employer. The analysis controlled for demographic factors and lifestyle among a sample of Thai students nearing graduation in institutions of higher education.

Variables in the analysis

Preference for type of prospective employer

The research focused on which type of organization or career a 3rd or 4th year college student would choose after graduation. The dependent variable is, therefore, the preference for an employer by type. The binary logistic regression analysis categorized the models into three sets according to the types of organizations or career path. Consequently, there are three dependent variables: (1) Preference for joining government organization; (2) Preference for join a private sector organization; and (3) Preference to join a career as a novice entrepreneur. (Novice or 'new' entrepreneur refers to those who plan to launch and run their own business; it does not include those who would inherit a business from the family, and does not include those who wish to work as freelancers). The response option codes are 1 = join; and 0 = not join.

Mindset

The mindset variable combines the response to two questions that reflect the respondent's attitude toward a disliked task or unfamiliar assignment in the past (Dweck, 2017, pp. 17-19). These questions are as follows: (1) "The last time your teacher instructed you to perform a task or prepare a report that did not



interest you, how did that make you feel?” and (2) “The last time your teacher asked you to work on a project that you were not good at or had no previous experience in, how did that make you feel?” Both questions consisted of four response options: (1) Irritated; I did not want to do it, and I would find a way to get out of doing it; (2) I felt bored doing it, but I got it done; (3) I did not obsess about it, and just decided to do it; and (4) I did it, but I would try to make it not boring.

The researchers used Principal Component Analysis (PCA), with the eigenvalue set at greater than 1 and the KMO set at 0.50, indicating that the dataset is suitable for PCA. Bartlett's test of sphericity generated a value of Chi-square = 268.41 (P -value < 0.01), indicating that the variables are related. The factors in this sample can be combined into one which accounts for 83.0% of the variance. The variables are grouped into a ‘mindset’ variable; respondents with scores equal to or below average were assigned to the fixed-mindset category.

Variables under expectancy theory

The VIE metrics consist of Expectations (E), Tools (I), and Value of Rewards (V). The three-part questionnaire in the were based on attitudes toward the following statements: “Effort Can Help Succeed in Work Life,” as a measure of expectations (E); and “Work is a means to another, more important goal,” as a measure instrumentality (I). This approach was an application from Renko, et al. (2012, pp. 672-673). Response options to both statements used a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. However, in the analysis, three of the

response options were collapsed into one: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree. This was done because the number of responses for the latter three categories was too small.

The Reward Value Indicator (V) is based on questions that reflect the evaluation results of the reward for work. The value of individual rewards is diverse (Renko, et al., 2012, pp. 672-673). Some people value income the most, while others focus on long-term welfare. In this study, the value of the reward (V) was measured by two indicators:

1) The level of importance of each type of extrinsic valence, i.e., salary/wages, bonuses, medical benefits for oneself and one's family, and pension. The respondent's attitude toward each type of reward is assessed by a 4-point Likert scale: Primary Importance; Secondary Importance; Tertiary Importance; and No Expectation. The test of the data yielded a KMO lower than 0.5, indicating that PCA was unsuitable for this part of the analysis. Therefore, the researchers focused on the significance level of each reward type.

2) The intrinsic valence is a function of the respondent's attitude of what constitutes success. The researchers then performed an Exploratory Factor Analysis using PCA. The eigenvalue was set > 1 , and the test had a KMO value of 0.66, indicating that the data is suitable for using PCA; Bartlett's test of sphericity had a Chi-square value = 457.14 (P -value < 0.01), indicating that the variables were related. The factors in this sample can be combined into a single factor, accounting for 69.9% of the variance among the variables (Table No. 1).

Table No. 1 Factor Loading for the Questions Probing whether Intrinsic Value of Return is Considered a Measure of Success (N=477)

Order	Question	Loading
1	Being accepted by one's boss is a measure of successful work	.890
2	Favorable recognition from one's colleagues is a measure of successful work	.860
3	Being promoted is a measure of successful work	.753

Remarks: There are five levels of the Likert scale for this indicator: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree

Demographic factors

The demographic variables in this study consist of gender, age, and personal life-style.

Gender is classified into female, male, and alternative (i.e., LGBTQ+).

Age is a ratio scale variable of the age of the sample who are 3rd- and 4th-year undergraduate students. The sample's age ranges from 20-25 years.

Personal lifestyle is a ratio scale, based on the respondent's lifestyle characteristics.

The researchers subjected the data to

Exploratory Factor Analysis with PCA, rotating the axis by the Varimax method, and setting the eigenvalue > 1 . The test obtained a KMO value of 0.55, indicating that PCA is suitable for this dataset. Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a Chi-square value = 575.16 (P-value < 0.01), indicating that the variables were related. For factor grouping in this sample, two factors can be combined, accounting for 82.6% of the variance in the group of variables, namely, traditional lifestyle and lifestyle that is open to diversity (Table No. 2).

Table No. 2 Factor Loading after Axis Rotation for the Individual Lifestyle Questionnaire Response (N=477)

Order	Question	Factor Loading	
		Traditional Lifestyle	Open to Diversity
1	Do you live your life in a self-sufficient way?	0.89	
2	Do you adhere to customary practices?	0.87	
3	Do you accept different cultures?		0.92
4	Are you open to cross-cultural learning?		0.92

Results

Table No. 3 shows the demographic characteristics and mindset used to analyze the decision to join an organization, by type. The sample is undergraduate students in their final two years of study, and who are preparing

to enter the labor market. Over one-third of the sample expressed a preference for joining a private-sector employer (36.3%), followed by joining a government agency or state enterprise (28.1%). Only one in six (16.4%) planned to become a novice entrepreneur (excluding



those inheriting the family business and those who plan to freelance).

The majority of the sample was female (84.7%), one in seven was male (14.3%), and about 1% self-identified as an alternative gender (i.e., LGBTQ+). The respondents were age 20-25 years old, and the mean age was 21.6 years.

Nearly three out of five of the respondents had traditional lifestyles (58.7%). The lifestyle characteristic of the sample was significantly related to preference for a particular type of prospective employer ($P < 0.01$). Respondents who wished to join a government

agency/state enterprise or work in the private sector were more likely to practice a traditional lifestyle (72.4% and 66.7%, respectively).

The mindset variable was also significantly correlated with the type of organization or career path the respondent intended to join after graduation ($P < 0.01$). Two out of three (67.5%) who preferred the idea of working for a government agency/state enterprise had a growth mindset, while under half (46.2%) of those who planned to work in the private sector had a growth mindset.

Table No. 3 Demographic Characteristics and Mindset Classified by Preferred Employer Type

	Preferred Employer/Career Type					Test (P)
	Gov't. / State Enterprise (N= 134)	Private Sector (N= 173)	Entrepreneur (N= 78)	Other (N= 92)	Total (N= 477)	
Demographic Characteristic						
Male (%)	12.7	12.1	14.1	20.7	14.3	$\chi^2 = 4.68$ (P=0.59)
Female (%)	85.8	87.3	84.6	78.3	84.7	
Alternate (%)	1.49	0.6	1.3	1.1	1.05	
Age [mean (SD)]	21.6 (1.2)	21.7 (1.1)	21.5 (1.3)	21.4 (1.01)	21.6 (1.6)	F=1.48 (P=0.22)
Mindset Classified						
Has a Traditional Lifestyle (%)	72.4	50.9	66.7	46.7	58.7	$\chi^2 = 22.21$ (P<0.01)
Has a Growth Mindset (%)	67.5	46.2	56.2	52.9	54.9	$\chi^2 = 13.44$ (P<0.01)

The analysis of variables under the expectancy theory (Table No. 4) shows that almost all of the respondents agreed that hard work can help one succeed in one's professional life. Indeed, nearly three out of five (57.6%) strongly agreed with this proposition. However, only a third (32.4%) strongly agreed that performance leads to the desired outcome or reward. This opinion was found to be significantly associated with the preference for a certain type of employer ($P < 0.05$), with those who intend to become a nascent entrepreneur having a more favorable attitude toward this proposition (41.1%). By contrast, only one in four (26.0%) of those who intend to work in the private sector strongly agreed with the statement.

When considering the reward value indicators (Valence), it was found that monetary reward was highly valued by the sample, with 30.0% and 32.7% citing salary/wages and bonuses as of primary importance. The test of association also found a significant relationship between valence and type of preferred employer ($P < 0.05$). The students who would prefer to join a government agency or state enterprise gave higher importance to the health benefits for themselves and their families, while those who would prefer to work in the private sector value bonuses more than other rewards.

Table No. 5 presents the results of the binary logistic regression to test the influence of factors on preference for a prospective employer by type. The analysis created the following three models for predicting employer/career-path preferences: (1) Working in a

government agency or state enterprises; (2) Working in the private sector; and (3) Working as a novice entrepreneur.

The tests of the three models show that mindset significantly influenced the respondent's preference for a type of prospective employer or career path. The 3rd and 4th year college students with a growth mindset were 1.6 times more likely to prefer to join a government organization or state enterprise than those with a fixed mindset ($p=0.05$). Conversely, students with a growth mindset had less preference for work in the private sector than those with a fixed mindset (Adjusted odds ratio: AOR = 0.67; P -value = 0.05). Mindset had no statistically-significant influence on preference for becoming a novice entrepreneur as a career path.

The variables under expectation theory had a significant influence on preference for type of employer or career path of this sample of students. That is, the reward value (V) indicators had a positive influence on prospective employer/career preferences in all models. However, there was no statistically-significant influence of expectation (E) and instrumentality variables on prospective employer/career preferences.

**Table No. 4** Variables under the Expectancy Theory, by Preferred Employer Type

	Type of Preferred Employer				Total	Test (P)
	Gov't. / State Enterprise (N= 134)	Private Sector (N= 173)	Entrepreneur (N= 78)	Other (N= 92)		
Expectancy Theory						
(E) Expectancy						
Neutral	4.5	4.6	3.8	5.5	4.6	$\chi^2 = 2.36$ (P=0.88)
Agree	33.6	37.6	42.3	40.7	37.8	
Strongly agree	61.9	57.8	53.8	53.8	57.6	
(I) Instrumentality						
Strongly Disagree			1.3		0.2	$\chi^2=29.53$ (P<0.05)
Disagree		0.6	2.6	2.2	1.1	
Neutral	13.4	16.8	9.0	27.5	16.6	
Agree	47.0	56.6	46.2	44.0	49.8	
Strongly Agree	39.6	26.0	41.0	26.4	32.4	
(V) Valence						
Wages, salary						
Primary Importance	25.4	33.5	34.6	26.1	30.0	$\chi^2=12.35$ (P=0.19)
Secondary Importance	22.4	30.1	17.9	23.9	24.7	
Tertiary Importance	15.7	11.0	15.4	12.0	13.2	
Bonus						
Primary Importance	24.6	38.7	35.9	30.4	32.7	$\chi^2=18.42$ (P<0.05)
Secondary Importance	16.4	23.1	12.8	14.1	17.8	
Tertiary Importance	17.9	12.1	15.4	13.0	14.5	
Health benefits for oneself and family						

	Type of Preferred Employer					Test (P)
	Gov't. / State Enterprise (N= 134)	Private Sector (N= 173)	Entrepreneur (N= 78)	Other (N= 92)	Total	
Primary Importance	37.3%	20.2%	16.7%	14.1%	23.3%	$\chi^2=39.10$ (P<0.01)
Secondary Importance	20.1%	20.2%	19.2%	12.0%	18.4%	
Tertiary Importance	11.9%	10.4%	9.0%	5.4%	9.6%	
Pension						
Primary Importance	8.2%	4.0%	6.4%	3.3%	5.5%	$\chi^2=15.23$ (P=0.09)
Secondary Importance	12.7%	6.9%	6.4%	4.3%	8.0%	
Tertiary Importance	17.9%	19.7%	16.7%	10.9%	17.0%	

Table No. 5 Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing Preferred Employer

	Gov't. / State Enterprise (N=452)		Private Sector (N=452)		Entrepreneur (N=452)	
	AOR	P	AOR	P	AOR	P
Demographic Variables						
Gender (Ref: Female)		0.56		0.77		0.97
Male	1.02	0.96	0.89	0.71	1.02	0.81
Alternate	2.97	0.28	0.46	0.52	0.91	0.99
Age	1.01	0.88	1.15	0.10	0.88	0.24
Traditional Lifestyle	1.41	0.01	0.71	0.00	1.40	0.04
Open to Diversity	0.72	0.01	1.07	0.55	0.82	0.15
Mindset (Ref: Fixed)						
Growth Mindset	1.63	0.05	0.67	0.05	0.85	0.58
Expectancy Theory						
Expectancy (Ref: Disagree-Neutral)		0.99		0.69		0.23
Agree	0.91	0.88	0.94	0.91	0.95	0.94
Strongly Agree	0.92	0.89	1.16	0.79	0.55	0.43



	Gov't. / State Enterprise (N=452)		Private Sector (N=452)		Entrepreneur (N=452)	
	AOR	P	AOR	P	AOR	P
Instrumentality (Ref: Disagree-Neutral)		0.75		0.31		0.40
Agree	1.24	0.54	1.24	0.46	1.54	0.33
Strongly Agree	1.34	0.46	0.84	0.62	1.97	0.17
Valence						
Earned rewards are a measure of success	1.09	0.55	1.11	0.41	1.44	0.03
Wages, salary (Ref: No Expectation)		0.71		0.59		0.41
Tertiary Importance	1.15	0.71	0.83	0.61	1.67	0.24
Secondary Importance	0.78	0.44	1.33	0.33	0.78	0.53
Primary Importance	0.80	0.49	1.14	0.66	1.14	0.72
Bonus (Ref: No expectation)		0.93		0.03		0.60
Tertiary Importance	0.92	0.83	1.51	0.24	0.99	0.99
Secondary Importance	0.81	0.55	2.48	0.00	0.56	0.20
Primary Importance	0.85	0.64	1.60	0.11	0.81	0.55
Benefits for self and family (Ref: No Expectation)		0.00		0.63		0.14
Tertiary Importance	2.81	0.01	1.24	0.56	0.89	0.80
Secondary Importance	2.53	0.01	1.18	0.57	0.70	0.35
Primary Importance	4.76	0.00	0.77	0.37	0.38	0.02
Pension (Ref: No Expectation)		0.03		0.53		0.96
Tertiary Importance	0.95	0.88	1.41	0.24	1.06	0.89
Secondary Importance	2.68	0.02	1.03	0.93	0.75	0.60
Primary Importance	2.50	0.04	0.68	0.46	0.95	0.93
Constant	0.09	0.27	0.02	0.04	4.54	0.56
χ^2	8.28		14.04		6.07	

The expectation of receiving health benefits for oneself/family members and pension influenced the preference of the students to seek employment with a government agency or state enterprise. Students who saw health benefits as of primary importance were 4.8 times more likely to prefer joining a

government/state enterprise ($p=0.00$). Those who place the highest priority on a pension were 2.5 times more likely to prefer joining a government/state enterprise ($p=0.04$) compared to those with no expectations for such rewards. Having an expectation of receiving bonuses increases the preference for joining an

employer in the private sector. Students who assigned secondary importance to bonuses were 2.5 times more likely to prefer joining a private-sector entity than those who gave less importance to bonuses ($p=0.00$).

Intrinsic valence as a measure of success had a positive effect on prospective employer preferences. Respondents who viewed non-monetary rewards (e.g., recognition or personal advancement) as the principal indicator of success were more likely to consider being a novice entrepreneur than another career path ($AOR=1.44$; $P\text{-value} = 0.03$).

The self-classified lifestyle of the 3rd and 4th year college students affects the preference of a prospective employer or career path. Those respondents who described themselves as having a traditional lifestyle (as opposed to one that is open to diversity) the greater the likelihood that they will prefer to join a government/state agency, or become a novice entrepreneur ($AOR=1.41$; $P\text{-value} = 0.01$ and $AOR=1.40$; $P\text{-value} = 0.04$, respectively). By contrast, having a traditional lifestyle reduces the likelihood of preferring to work in the private sector ($AOR=0.71$; $P\text{-value} = 0.00$). Those who accept diversity and are open to cross-cultural learning are less likely to want to join a government agency or state enterprise after graduating from college ($AOR=0.72$; $P\text{-value} = 0.01$). The analysis also found that gender and age of the respondent did not have a statistically-significant influence on preference for prospective employer or career path across all models.

Conclusions and Discussion

Mindset affects a worker's disposition and action in certain domains. Employees with a growth mindset will practice diligence and patience, and be able to learn new things and improve themselves in ways that boost productivity and commitment to an employer or career path. This research studied the role of mindset in influencing the preference for different types of prospective employers among a sample of 3rd and 4th year college students, i.e., those about to enter the professional job market for the first time. The analysis controlled for environmental variables under the specifications of expectation theory.

Overall, it was found that most of the respondents were interested in joining the government or state enterprise, and working for a private-sector entity. The binary logistic regression analysis found that mindset influenced the preference of pre-graduate students for a type of prospective employer. Those who had a growth mindset were more inclined to prefer joining a government agency or state enterprise after graduation than working for a private-sector business. It should be noted that the age range of the sample placed them squarely in Generation Z (Montana and Petit, 2008, pp. 140-143). This generation prioritizes job security (Gaidhani, Arora and Sharma, 2019, p. 2809) as it is the generation that grew up with stark fluctuations in economic boom and bust. Gen Z has seen people lose their jobs, companies abruptly shutting down, and lived through various cataclysms that have swept across the cohort for a decade. The quest for stability is, thus, understandable. Members of



Gen Z are also considered to be part of the knowledge society or a “learning generation.” They have come of age in an era when home schooling is more accepted, and the formal educational system allows learners to choose a curriculum based on their preferences more than in the past (Gaidhani, Arora and Sharma, 2019, p. 2809). People with a growth mindset are, therefore, ready to learn new things, but within the context of a stable organization and secure employment.

When looking at the variables under expectation theory, this study found that the value of the reward (Valence) influences the choice of the type of prospective employer based on the health benefits the individual and their family would enjoy, as well as the job-related pension. Having those values steers this sample of pre-graduates to seek employment with the government or a state enterprise. Those who value bonuses more will gravitate toward work in the private sector. The value of incentives varies according to individual characteristics. In fact, anxiety about one’s career prospects and future prosperity increases the value of work rewards in the eyes of the job applicant (Rynes and Barber, 1990, p. 295). Today’s cohort of students who are about to graduate from college and join the job market are concerned about future uncertainty and the welfare of their immediate family members. Thus, they will assign more value to employer benefits for themselves and their family, including a defined-benefit pension.

In the analysis, mindset of the respondent (i.e., fixed or growth) did not have a significant influence on the interest in becoming a

novice entrepreneur. It is the group of students who measure success in terms of intrinsic valence who are more likely to pursue a career as a novice entrepreneur (at least initially) after graduation. When an employee internalizes the rewards of the job, they will see the work as intrinsically valuable. The organization can build upon this through job security, promotion, modification of responsibilities, respect, showing acceptance, and conferring dignity (Li, et al., 2012, p. 433).

The lifestyle of the new generation affects the preference for type of prospective employer or career path of this sample of pre-graduate students. Respondents who described themselves as having a more traditional lifestyle were more inclined to seek employment with a government/state enterprise, as well as choosing to become a novice entrepreneur. Those who have a lifestyle that is more open to diversity and cross-cultural learning are less likely to seek work with the government. People tend to equate their own values with organizational values (Thorne and Pellant, 2007, pp. 33-42). Accordingly, the job-seeker attempts to assess what the prospective employer is looking for in a new hire, and then weigh that against how well they match up.

Recognizing the factors that influence the preference for a prospective employer or career path can be beneficial for the management and development of the HR function in an organization. Organizations that want to attract the new generation of professional job seekers should create an image of the organization that matches the needs of the target group. The

organization needs to find a way to stand out in the niche area where they want to advance. Next, they need to market themselves as being outstanding and widely-acknowledged in that segment of the marketplace. They must be open and informative about the prospects for income, bonuses, benefits, pensions, etc. That said, work rewards should not be limited to extrinsic valence. Organizations should also give attention to rewards with intrinsic valence such as honour, praise, and recognition.

According to Dweck, an individual's mindset is something that can be changed and developed (i.e., into a growth mindset). However, recruiting employees with a fixed mindset does not necessarily create a disadvantage for the organization. That is because every employee has potential to contribute to the organization's success. Every organization faces the challenge of building a collective mindset

that encourages inquisitiveness, persistence, and a determination to prevail over obstacles. For their part, employees who have a fixed mindset should be encouraged to progress to a mindset that is more open to a broader awareness, and acceptance of the possibility of different paradigms in how one views the work and success. Employees who already possess a growth mindset should receive continuous reinforcement to maintain and nurture that outlook in order to bolster the development of the organization. The mindset of the candidates who will be interested in joining an organization should be aligned with the corporate mindset of that organization. In that way, both the employer and employee will be in sync, and work in tandem to build capacity toward becoming a learning-oriented collaboration so that both can grow and develop together.

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