

## Growth Mindset Intervention in Teaching and Learning: Meta-Analysis

การส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ด้วยกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตในการเรียนการสอน:

การวิเคราะห์ทอภิมาน

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### Abstract

In this study, meta-analysis was employed as to examine the effect sizes of growth mindset interventions on students' learning achievement and outcomes. Based on the inclusion criteria (Prisma, Moher et al., 2009), master's theses and doctoral dissertations in English publication, across the globe, from the years 2010 to 2019 were accumulated to find the effect sizes of growth mindset interventions on students' learning achievement and outcomes. After passing all of the inclusion criteria, ten of the master's theses and doctoral dissertations in full-text were obtained with the pretests and posttests scores that appeared in the quasi-experiments using growth mindset interventions on achievement and outcomes, in teaching and learning, with the samples of students at pre- to high school levels. Accordingly, the Comprehensive Meta-Analysis Software (CMA, version 3.0) was applied to calculate the effect sizes (Hedges, 1985) of the growth mindset interventions on learning achievement and outcomes, by choosing random-effects model for the mean effect sizes, with a confidence interval of 95%.

A new finding was found related to the growth mindset interventions in teaching and learning in that motivation was reported to have the largest effect with  $g = 1.53$  and the significant level of  $p = 0.00$ . According to the result, it appeared that growth mindset interventions, effectively, helped intrinsically motivate students to challenge themselves in achieving their ultimate goals for better learning outcomes. Thus, it was recommended that

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growth mindset interventions should be integrated into higher education in order for higher levels of students to intrinsically challenge themselves to achieve their ultimate goals for better outcomes in a realm of both living their lives and learning effectively.

**Keywords:** growth mindset, growth mindset intervention, teaching and learning, meta-analysis

### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ใช้การวิเคราะห์ห่อภิมาณเพื่อศึกษาค่าอิทธิพลของการสอนโดยวิธีส่งเสริมกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตที่มีผลต่อความสำเร็จและผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักเรียน โดยคัดเลือกงานวิจัยตามเกณฑ์คัดเข้า (Prisma, Moher et al., 2009) โดยรวบรวมวิทยานิพนธ์และดุษฎีนิพนธ์ที่ตีพิมพ์เป็นภาษาอังกฤษจากทั่วโลกตั้งแต่ปีค.ศ. 2019 ถึง 2010 เพื่อหาค่าขนาดอิทธิพลของการสอนโดยใช้วิธีการส่งเสริมกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตที่มีผลต่อความสำเร็จและผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักเรียน หลังจากผ่านเกณฑ์คัดเข้าจึงได้วิทยานิพนธ์และดุษฎีนิพนธ์ฉบับเต็ม จำนวน 10 เล่ม ที่ใช้ผลคะแนนก่อนทดสอบและหลังทดสอบในงานวิจัยเชิงทดลองด้วยการสอนโดยวิธีการส่งเสริมกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตที่มีผลต่อความสำเร็จและผลสัมฤทธิ์ของนักเรียนชั้นอนุบาลจนถึงมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย จากนั้นได้นำโปรแกรม Comprehensive Meta-Analysis Software (CMA) เวอร์ชัน 3.0 มาใช้ในการคำนวณหาค่าขนาดอิทธิพล (Hedges, 1985) ของการสอนโดยวิธีการส่งเสริมกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตที่มีผลต่อความสำเร็จและผลสัมฤทธิ์ โดยเลือกใช้โมเดลแบบสุ่มในการคำนวณหาค่าเฉลี่ยของค่าขนาดอิทธิพลและระบุช่วงความเชื่อมั่นที่ระดับ 95%

การศึกษาในครั้งนี้ก่อให้เกิดข้อค้นพบใหม่ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการสอนโดยวิธีส่งเสริมกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตที่ส่งผลสูงสุดต่อแรงจูงใจของผู้เรียน โดยมีค่าขนาดอิทธิพลขนาดใหญ่ที่ระดับ  $g = 1.53$  และมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่  $p = 0.00$  จากผลของการวิจัยจึงสรุปได้ว่าการสอนโดยวิธีส่งเสริมกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตนั้นสามารถสร้างแรงจูงใจอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพทำให้นักเรียนสามารถท้าทายตนเองสู่เป้าหมายสูงสุดเพื่อให้ได้มาซึ่งผลสัมฤทธิ์และผลของการเรียนที่ดีขึ้น ดังนั้นจึงควรมีการบูรณาการการสอนโดยวิธีส่งเสริมกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโตให้กับนักศึกษาในระดับอุดมศึกษาเพื่อให้เกิดแรงจูงใจภายในใจสามารถท้าทายตนเองสู่เป้าหมายของชีวิตควบคู่ไปกับการเรียนรู้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

**คำสำคัญ:** กรอบความคิดแบบเติบโต การส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ด้วยกรอบความคิดแบบเติบโต การเรียนการสอน การวิเคราะห์ห่อภิมาณ

### Introduction

In recent years, the concept of growth mindset, has been popularly applied into the field of educational psychology all over the globe with the belief that growth mindset interventions, in particular, could help promote positive learning achievement and outcomes (Boylan et al., 2018; Burgoyne et al., 2018; Castiglione, 2019; Outes-León et al., 2020; Rintaro,

2019; Rissanen et al., 2019; Zeng et al., 2016). Several studies posited that the more positive growth mindset interventions were given, in teaching and learning, the more motivation students would gain (Haimovitz et al., 2011; Ng, 2018; Rhew et al., 2018).

When it comes to mindset, it has been defined under the notion of motivational and intelligence model involving individual differences in achieving their goals with either fixed or growth mindset (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). While a fixed mindset reflects a maladaptive or helplessness pattern with the belief that intelligence was a static trait and unable to be developed or changed overtime, a growth mindset exhibits adaptive or mastery-oriented ways of thinking and behaving in that it could help bring about an intelligence of how to achieve ultimate goals in life (Cook & Artino Jr., 2016; Dweck, 2017). In other words, the more of the positive growth mindset, the more of the positive self (Dweck, 2017; Cook & Artino Jr., 2016; Lauria, 2018), a person will hold (Peterman & Ewings, 2019; Samuel & Warner, 2019).

While growth mindset is considered as a psychological intervention that could be applied into a field of education, especially, in teaching and learning as expected to help develop students' ultimate goals in achieving better learning outcomes (Dweck, 2017; Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017). It was shown in several research that growth mindset has been heavily studied in various levels of education, especially, from preschool to high school (Allen, 2018; Boylan et al., 2018; Ronkainen et al., 2019; Schmidt et al., 2015; Snipes & Tran, 2017; Zeng et al., 2016). Among those dependent variables experimented, academic achievement, motivation, goal-orientations, learning attitudes, perseverance, psychological well-being, self-development, and self-efficacy, were mostly popular (Andersen & Neilsen, 2016; Bettinger et al., 2017; Burnette et al., 2017; DeBacker et al., 2018; Mofield & Peters, 2018; Ng, 2018; O'Brien & Lomas, 2017). Hypotheses relating to students' growth mindset and motivation happened to be mostly correlated with the notion that the more growth mindset interventions were imposed on motivation, the more students' positive attitudes (Ng, 2018) and learning involvement would become (Bedford, 2017).

From those research findings, it was evident that growth mindset interventions have positive impact on students' achievement and outcomes. For instance, even for the students at the levels of preschool, with carefully prepared experiments, enthusiasm and the positive attitudes towards the engagement catered for effective self-development and self-regulation were demonstrated (Cancelliere, 2016; O'Brien & Lomas, 2017; Schrodts et al., 2019). For both of the junior- and senior high school students, growth mindset interventions illustrated

a positive impact on their academic achievements, learning attitudes, mindset, motivation, school persistence, and self-efficacy (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2018; DeBacker, et al, 2018; Dringenberg, 2020; Yeager et al., 2016).

While it has been widely argued, in the last decade, that growth mindset interventions have been prominence in teaching and learning, however, up to present, very few works have been done to examine the effect sizes of growth mindset interventions, especially, in the areas of students' learning achievement and outcomes. Apparently, only two articles had shown to explore the effect sizes of neuroplasticity on motivation, achievement, and brain activity (Sarrasin et al. , 2018) and the effect of growth mindset and academic achievement (Sisk et al. , 2018). Not enough work, especially, in meta-analysis had been done to confirm the effects of growth mindset interventions on students' achievement and outcomes. Thus, in order to fill the gap and added up the research in this area, meta-analysis was employed to examine the effect sizes of the growth mindset interventions, in teaching and learning, on students' learning achievement and outcomes to pre- to high school students, in the period of the last ten years.

Clearly, because of its notable results from the previous research, it appeared to be worthwhile to explore the effect sizes of growth mindset interventions, on learning achievement and outcomes. Hence, in this study, a meta-analysis was designed based on the inclusion criteria of the pretests and posttests scores occurred in the quasi-experiments using growth mindset interventions on learning achievement and outcomes, with the samples of pre- to high school students, found from master's theses and doctoral dissertations in full-text English publication, across the globe, from the years 2010 to 2019.

## Objective

The objective of this meta-analysis, thus, was to examine the effect sizes of growth mindset interventions on students' learning achievement and outcomes with the samples of pre- to high school students occurred in the master's theses and doctoral dissertations in English publication, across the globe, from the years 2010 to 2019.

## Method

### 1. Population and sample

1.1 The population of the study was the master's theses and doctoral dissertations, in English publication, across the globe, of which focused on using growth mindset interventions in teaching and learning, with the samples of pre- to high school students from the years 2010-2019.

1.2 The sample of this study was ten out of master's theses and doctoral dissertations, in English publication, across the globe, of which focused on using growth mindset interventions in teaching and learning, with the samples of pre- to high school students from the years 2010-2019.

## **2. Research instrument**

The selected master's theses and doctoral dissertations were coded by using the Research Characteristics and Effect Size Coding Form which comprised of:

Part 1: Research characteristics: the information of study number, title, author, publication year, dependent variables, population and sample, and research methodology.

Part 2: Effect size information: the number of samples and statistical information regarding experimental and control groups.

## **3. Data collection**

Systematic searching for master's theses and doctoral dissertations focusing on growth mindset interventions in teaching and learning from the years of 2010 and 2019 were conducted, using seven of the most relevant databases for theses and dissertations (i.e., EBSCO Open Dissertations, Proquest Dissertations and Theses Database (PQDT Open), Open Access Theses and Dissertations: OATD, Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD), British Library Ethos, Google Scholar, and CU reference databases). All the keywords relating to mindset concepts and theories were accumulated -- growth mindset, implicit theories of intelligence, or growth mindset, implicit theories of intelligence, and growth mindset intervention, or teaching of growth mindset, and growth mindset intervention.

### ***Inclusion Criteria and the coding process***

Along the searching process of inclusion criteria, (i.e., identifying, screening, eligibility, and included), 910 studies of which titles and abstracts with the results yielded were compiled in an excel spread sheet in order to be examined to identify whether those master's theses and Doctoral dissertations matched the following criteria:

1. Using growth mindset interventions in teaching and learning from 2010 and 2019;
2. Were written in English and could be accessed via open access databases;
3. Were published in full-text; and
4. Contained with the pretest and posttest scores of means and standard deviations derived from control and experimental design studies using growth mindset interventions in teaching and learning with the samples of the students at any levels of pre - to high school

(i.e., preschool/early years, primary/secondary school, middle school, and high school) so that the effect sizes of growth mindset interventions could be obtained.

Based on the format of PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram of the included studies (Moher et al., 2009), 10 doctoral dissertations and master's theses were obtained. The search and exclusion process were illustrated in Figure 1.

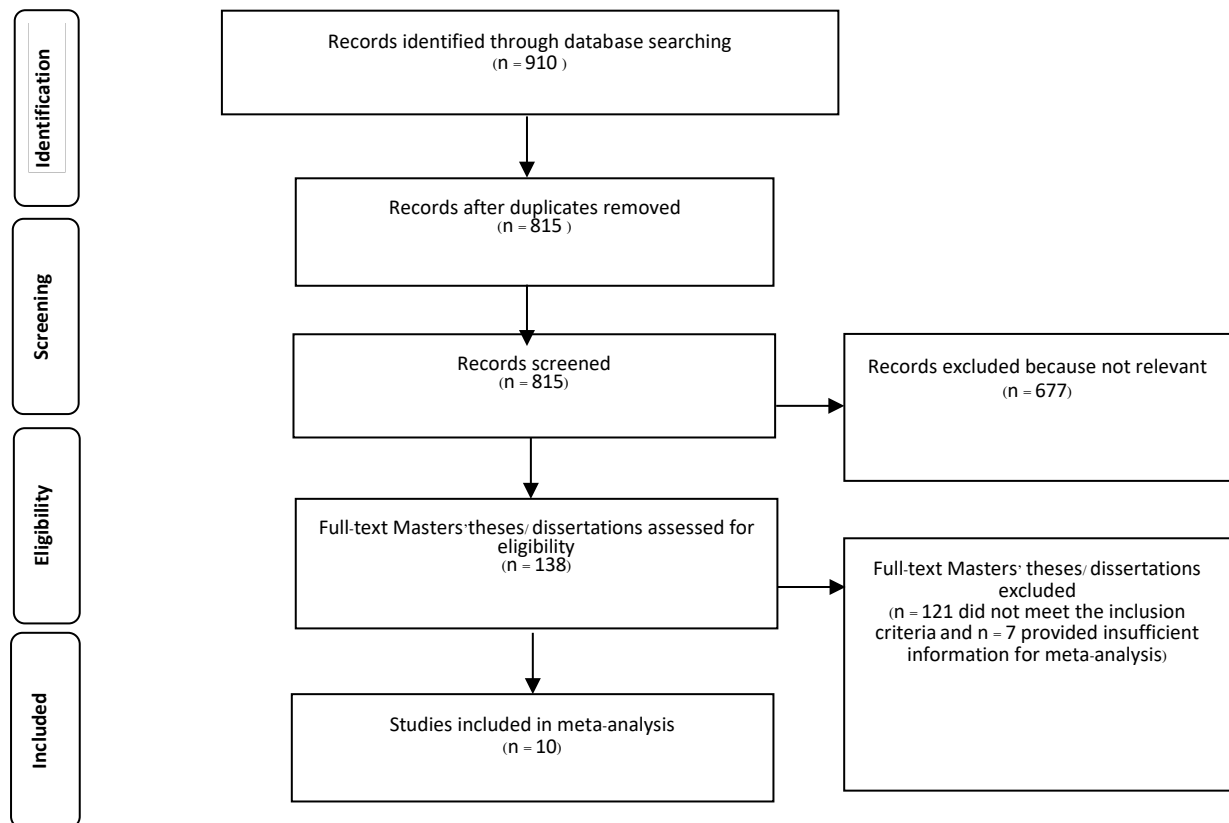


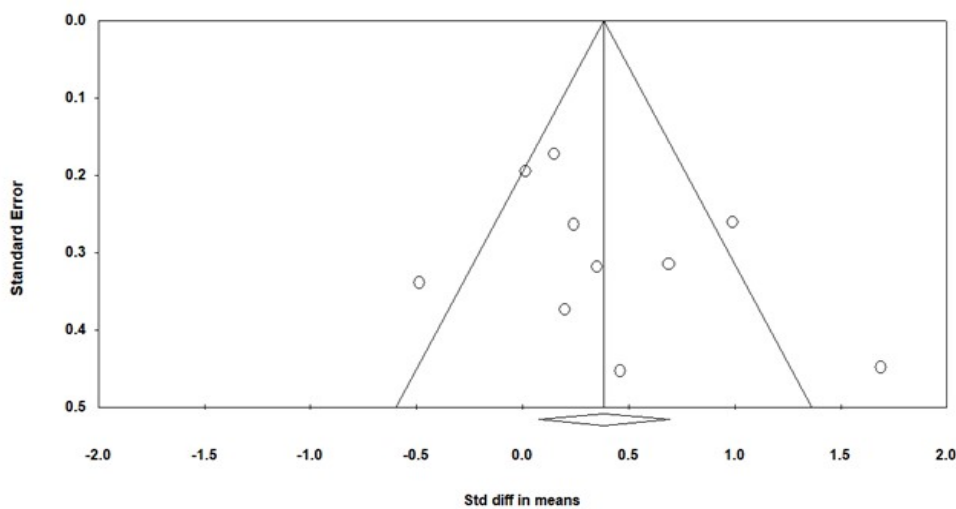
Figure 1. Adapted from PRISMA 2009 flow diagram of the included studies

Next, the coding pilot was performed as to check for its reliability by the researcher and two co-coders who are the experts in the field of education, using the Research Characteristics and Effect Size Coding Form.

### ***Publication bias***

In order to prevent publication bias and any problems of methodology used, it must be done by considering the information contained in the distribution of the effect sizes from the selected theses and dissertations. Funnel plot, then, was suggested as a tool for investigating publication bias in that no bias would appear in symmetric with respect to the distribution of effect sizes (Cooper, 2009).

Figure 2 presented a funnel plot with the approximate expected 95 percent confidence intervals around the pooled estimate for the expected shape of the funnel under a random effect assumption plotting standard error on the y-axis. The guidelines were straight lines and thus the theoretical underlying shape of the funnel was also straight sided. Because the majority of the points, illustrating seven out of ten studies, lie within the guidelines of being un-bias according to the propose by Simmonds (2015) in that with ten studies in a meta-analysis, an imbalance of at least five all together in the same side of funnel is needed to conclude for the publication bias. If not so, all of the ten studies could be included into the analysis.



**Figure 2.** Funnel plot for the included master’s theses and doctoral dissertations focusing on growth mindsets interventions in teaching and learning.

#### 4. Data analysis

After the coding was performed, it showed that the majority of the studies employed in this meta-analysis carried small sample sizes, with the pretests and posttests scores of the students’ learning achievement and outcomes derived from the variables found in those studies which were identified and categorized into academic achievement, mindset, motivation, character strengths, learning attitudes, math anxiety, and self-efficacy. The Comprehensive Meta-Analysis software (CMA) version 3.0. was used for all the associated calculations.

With the small sample sizes of the majority of the studies, Hedges’g was applied, with a 95% confidence interval, to calculate the effect sizes of the interventions, in that the standardized mean difference of the study was computed by subtracting the mean of the control group from the mean of the experimental group, divided by the pooled standard

deviation. In so doing, all the effect sizes were adjusted, accordingly, the bias, particularly, in overestimating the effect sizes in small samples was assured (Borenstein et al, 2009; Hedges & Olkin, 1985).

Q heterogeneity test was, also, conducted. While Q test confirmed whether the effect sizes are heterogeneous, the  $I^2$  index, ranged from 0% to 100%, represented the percentage of total variation in a set of effect sizes. The  $I^2$  index of 25% equals low, 50% equals medium, and 75% equals high heterogeneity (Higgins et al., 2003). While  $I^2$  index is used to facilitate the choice of either a fixed- or random effects model, a fixed- effects model is for homogeneity, and a random-effects model was for the heterogeneity (Borenstein et al, 2009). Given the nature of heterogeneity of the distribution of the  $I^2$ , 25 to 75 percent among the studies indicates the random-effects model rather than fixed-effects model.

## Results

### 1. Descriptive analysis

In table 1. Descriptive statistics of master's theses and doctoral dissertations of using growth mindset interventions in teaching and learning with sample of students from pre- to high school were shown. A total of 10 included studies were displayed with equal numbers of the master's theses (50%), and the doctoral dissertations (50%). In terms of the years of publication, the most frequent years of publication were 2016 (20%), 2017 (20%), and 2018 (20%) with 10 % for the rest of the years 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2019. However, no master's theses and doctoral dissertations found in the year of 2010, 2012, and 2014.

**Table 1.** Years and types of publication

| Types of publication | No. of studies | Years of publication |        |      |        |      |        |        |        |        |        | Total | %   |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-----|
|                      |                | 2010                 | 2011   | 2012 | 2013   | 2014 | 2015   | 2016   | 2017   | 2018   | 2019   |       |     |
| Master               | 5              |                      |        |      |        |      |        | 1      | 2      | 1      | 1      | 5     | 50  |
| Doctoral             | 5              |                      | 1      |      | 1      |      | 1      | 1      |        | 1      |        | 5     | 50  |
| Total (Percentage)   | 10 (100)       |                      | 1 (10) |      | 1 (10) |      | 1 (10) | 2 (20) | 2 (20) | 2 (20) | 1 (10) | 10    | 100 |

### 2. Meta-analysis

In table 2, among 10 studies of the master's theses and doctoral dissertations, that were subjected to meta-analysis for the effect of growth mindset interventions on learning achievement and outcomes, seven outcome variables were found: academic achievement, mindset, motivation, character strengths, learning attitudes, math anxiety, and self-efficacy.



However, since the effect size is for reporting and interpreting effectiveness of a particular intervention (Coe, 2002), when analyzing the mean effect sizes for each dependent variable, in this study, motivation turned out to have the largest effect size of 1.53 with the statistically significant at the level of 0.00. In terms of Q value, it was shown to be statistically significant ( $Q = 5.80, p = 0.05$ ), with moderate heterogeneity ( $I^2 = 65.54$ ). Accordingly, with moderate heterogeneity, random-effects model for the meta-analysis was preferably than the fixed model which yielded similar pooled estimates. Since the random-effects model incorporated the differences between studies in the calculations to maximize the width of the confidence interval around the pooled estimate, so lending a more conservative estimate of effect (Borenstein et al., 2009). While, the remaining variables, in meta-analysis were revealed to have small effect sizes, with no significant differences: the academic achievement ( $g = 0.34, p = 0.12$ ); and mindset ( $g = 0.12, p = 0.48$ ). However, the rest were inconclusive: the character strengths; math anxiety; reading attitudes; and self-efficacy.

**Table 2.** Effect sizes related to all dependent variables

| Variable             | <i>k</i> | <i>g</i> | 95% CI        | Z-value | <i>p</i> -value | Test of heterogeneity of effect size |                 |       |
|----------------------|----------|----------|---------------|---------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
|                      |          |          |               |         |                 | Q-value                              | <i>p</i> -value | $I^2$ |
| Academic achievement | 6        | 0.34     | [-0.08, 0.66] | 1.52    | 0.12            | 11.12                                | 0.04            | 55.03 |
| Character strengths  | 1        | 0.08     | [-0.29, 0.46] | 0.43    | 0.66            | 0.00                                 | 1.00            | 0.00  |
| Math anxiety         | 1        | 0.60     | [-0.05, 1.28] | 1.80    | 0.07            | 0.00                                 | 1.00            | 0.00  |
| Mindset              | 7        | 0.12     | [-0.21, 0.44] | 0.69    | 0.48            | 12.31                                | 0.05            | 51.29 |
| Motivation           | 3        | 1.53     | [0.77, 2.35]  | 3.88    | 0.00***         | 5.80                                 | 0.05            | 65.54 |
| Reading attitudes    | 1        | -0.20    | [-0.93, 0.52] | -0.55   | 0.58            | 0.00                                 | 1.00            | 0.00  |
| Self-efficacy        | 1        | 0.01     | [-0.47, 0.49] | 0.04    | 0.96            | 0.00                                 | 1.00            | 0.00  |

*Notes.* *k* = number of studies; *g* = Effect size; CI = confidence interval; Q = test of heterogeneity; significant level at  $p = p < 0.05^*$ ;  $I^2$  = 95% uncertainty interval.

## Discussion

In this meta-analysis, the new finding revealed that the effect of growth mindset interventions had illustrated a significant impact on motivation ( $g = 1.53, p = 0.00$ ). As growth mindset interventions worked its way through motivation, students intrinsically or inherently aroused inside their minds and attitudes of being more capable of effective-self-determination (Rhew et al., 2018). As such, students became more aware of their ability not only to challenge themselves, accept mistakes, and/or obstacles but also to seek encouragement in order to pursue their ultimate goals in achieving better learning outcomes (Dweck, 2017). Hence, encouraging a growth mindset, particularly, on motivation, students tended to be more responsible in their learning (Anindito, 2015, Yeager & Dweck, 2012) and be able to develop a sense of success, as well as, to manage a process of their learning as to attain intrinsic value of achievement (Jordan, 2010; Ng, 2018).

By so doing, when students were intrinsically motivated with high levels of growth mindset, the levels of higher effort and persistence in school would directly go up and be encouraged to achieve their goals in better learning outcomes (Logan et al., 2011). Along with this finding, in the last decade, apparently, several studies constantly confirmed the relationships of the positive impact of growth mindset interventions with intrinsic motivation in association with the better learning outcomes in different educational levels (Albalawi, 2017; Cook & Artino Jr., 2016; Hodis et al., 2011; Park, 2016; Richardson et al., 2020; Verberg et al., 2018).

## Recommendation

### 1. Implication for practice

Evidently, this study has contributed a new and significant finding to the area of growth mindset interventions on motivation of pre- to high school students. Since growth mindset interventions seemed to be effective in motivating students at school levels to be better in their learning, thus, it should also be integrated into higher education in order for students in higher levels to intrinsically challenge themselves to achieve their ultimate goals for better outcomes in a realm of both living their lives and learning effectively.

### 2. Recommendation for future research

Since the scope of this study was about the effect sizes of growth mindset interventions, the future research should further more with the moderator analyses on various types of variables such as students' educational level, intervention characteristics, and research design to identify and effectively determine possible variables or characteristics moderating the effect sizes.

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