Understanding undergraduates' sense of achievement: The entrepreneurial mindset approach

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Abstract
Purpose: In the face of rising youth unemployment, this study explores the entrepreneurial mindset of undergraduate students. The study focuses on comprehending their mindset, pinpointing entrepreneurial traits in high-achieving undergraduates, and uncovering the interplay between mindset and these traits.
Design/methodology/approach: Employing qualitative methods, the study engages in in-depth interviews with 50 graduating students. The interview data is transcribed and undergoes additional scrutiny through NVivo software for thematic analysis.
Findings: The research identifies 11 entrepreneurial traits within the respondents, spanning self-esteem, drive for achievement, leadership, risk-taking, visionary thinking, problem-solving skills, locus of control, ambiguity tolerance, communication, perseverance, and innovativeness. Notably, the study establishes connections between entrepreneurial traits and both growth and fixed mindsets.
Research limitations/implications: This study stands out by integrating entrepreneurial traits, mindsets, and the sense of achievement, revealing interconnections. It shows the profound impact of achievement on entrepreneurial traits and vice versa, suggesting unexplored connections and avenues for future research.
Practical implications: This study offers practical advantages for students entering the workforce. Universities can use its insights to bolster both soft and hard skills. Employers, especially those hiring millennials, can gain valuable insights to cultivate entrepreneurial traits in their workforce.
Originality/value: This research emphasizes the contrasting views on challenges for those with growth versus fixed mindsets. Promoting a growth mindset, where learning is seen as limitless, is crucial. Employers should provide achievement opportunities, boosting self-motivation, productivity, and potentially lowering turnover.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial mindset, undergraduates, sense of achievement, mindset, qualitative research

Introduction
Unemployment is one of the main problems people encounter in their lifetimes (Vera-Toscano & Meroni, 2020). Notably, in Malaysia, the rate of unemployment among graduates surged by 22.5%, escalating from 165,200 in 2019 to 202,400 in 2020 (Theedgemarkets.com, 2021). The escalating youth unemployment scenario in Malaysia presents formidable challenges. The

labor market grapples with structural issues stemming from shortcomings in educational quality, mismatches in skills, and the prevalence of low-quality employment opportunities (Aun 2020). This isn't a recent phenomenon; the occurrence of graduate unemployment has long haunted Malaysia, with reports indicating that as much as 40.5% of the country's total unemployment in 2017 was attributed to unemployed graduates (MIDF, 2018).

Efforts to combat youth unemployment have primarily focused on technical, vocational, and skills development, yet their effectiveness remains uncertain, as evidenced by persistent high youth unemployment rates. Existing strategies often overlook the potential impact of mindset transformation, despite employers identifying attitude problems as a significant contributor to youth unemployment. The capacity to find job that matches people abilities and their physical and mental capabilities is one of the most fundamental human rights that the unemployed are denied, along with the resources they need (Xolmamatovich & Ugli, 2021; Okpalaojiego, 2021).

Mindset, as posited by Ackerman (2019), plays a pivotal role in shaping human behavior and attitudes. However, there is a notable gap in academic exploration regarding the development of the right mindset among undergraduates (Li et al., 2023) to address these nuanced issues. The Growth Mindset theory, championed by Dweck et al. (2014), holds promise in molding character and attitudes, especially in navigating challenges. Understanding the significance of Growth Mindset in preparing undergraduates for graduation and fostering entrepreneurial traits is crucial for shaping character and achieving a sense of accomplishment. According to Alolaqi et al. (2022) research, many factors can influence a student to start their own business, like entrepreneurship education, individual social support, and an entrepreneurial university environment.

Mindset, encompassing an individual's thinking and psychological activities, is a crucial determinant of behavior. The Growth Mindset theory, particularly influential in managing challenges, remains understudied concerning its role in shaping the character and attitudes of undergraduates. A Growth Mindset is integral in fostering entrepreneurial traits and a sense of achievement, believed to be pivotal in molding the right character. Individuals with a strong sense of achievement are thought to embody a certain level of growth mindset (Chao et al., 2017). This study bridges the gap, exploring the significance of Growth Mindset in preparing undergraduates with the right character and attitude before graduation, thereby offering potential solutions to youth unemployment.

Aligned with the aforementioned research problem, this study aims to unravel the pivotal role of mindset in shaping entrepreneurial traits among undergraduate students, ultimately enhancing their alignment with market expectations. Hence, the paper serves the following three research objectives:

RO1: To discover the mindset among undergraduate students.
RO2: To discover the entrepreneurial traits among undergraduate students who have a high sense of achievement.
RO3: To discover the role of mindset in molding the entrepreneurial traits among undergraduate students.

Literature Review

Entity Theory versus Incremental Theory

The concept of a blended personality has wielded a considerable impact on discussions within the realm of social psychology (Freudenstein et al., 2019; Dweck et al., 1993). Within this discourse, some subscribe to the belief that personality is comprised of fixed traits, a perspective denoted as entity theory. This viewpoint accentuates the enduring nature of individual attributes, as posited by Dweck et al. (1993), asserting that these attributes form the foundational structure of research, shaping individuals' perceptions of the social world. In contrast, incremental theories propose a more flexible outlook, viewing individuals as adaptable entities capable of modifying even fundamental characteristics. Advocates of incremental theories, such as Trinh (2019) and Dweck et al. (1993), contend that characteristics are not immutable entities but rather labels subject to change based on goals, desires, and emotions.

Implicit theories further explore assumptions regarding the malleability of attributes. One strand of thought treats valuable attributes as fixed and unalterable entities, while the other acknowledges attributes as cultivable, enabling individuals to enhance their intelligence through deliberate actions (Dweck et al., 1995). Incremental theorists, as observed in the works of Levy and Dweck (1999) and Levy et al. (2001), ascribe greater causal significance to situational changes when explaining the actions of others compared to their entity theorist counterparts.

Fixed and Growth Mindset

Various research findings consistently demonstrate that students tend to excel when adopting a growth mindset—an outlook that centers on the belief in the evolution of one's intellectual abilities, in contrast to a fixed mindset (Seabrook, 2017). Regarding the malleability of intelligence, morality, or personality, various people may hold different opinions. The majority of study to far on the subject of mindsets in the workplace has been personality-focused rather than intelligence-focused (Madan et al., 2023). A prevalent misconception involves exclusively associating effort with success. While effort is undeniably crucial, individuals who view their intelligence as malleable and capable of improvement tend to outperform those anchored in a fixed mindset. Dweck's (2015) research indicates that placing emphasis on the learning process, including attributes such as hard work and the exploration of new strategies, has a positive impact on children.

Table 1 illustrates the sheer difference between a growth mindset, characterized by a commitment to development, and a fixed mindset, characterized by a steadfast belief in unalterable abilities. This dichotomy underscores the profound influence of mindset on academic performance.

Table 1: Characteristics of Growth Mindset versus Fixed Mindset

Growth Mindset	Characteristics	Fixed Mindset
Can Change	Intelligence	Cannot Change
Productive	Effort	Undermining
High	Persistence	Low
See as opportunity	Mistake	See as failure

Eager/ Excited	Willingness to take Challenge	Unlikely
Proactive	Learning Strategies	Passive
Continuous Learning	Life Goal	Validating their Effort
Mastery Orientation	Reaction to Setbacks	Helpless
Process	Focus	End Result

Source: Authors.

Sense of Achievement

Achievement, as suggested by Al-Abyadh and Abdel Azeem (2022), encompasses the successful outcome resulting from an individual's dedicated efforts and honed skills. It requires ongoing progress towards set goals, consistent daily exertion, and a rewarding sense of success. In exploring Keller's (1987) theoretical model, which centers on elevating motivation through the satisfaction derived from problem-solving and performance, we aim to gain deeper insights. Wiyono and Wu (2022) stated, that in terms of knowledge, skills, or attitudes, students' achievement reflects their learning outcomes. They can be divided into two categories: academic achievement and non-academic achievement. Grade point average, also called academic achievement, measures performance in class. In contrast to non-academic achievement, which refers to success in extracurricular activities like comprehension, art, sports, and organization, academic achievement is the outcome of learning in the form of knowledge, attitudes, or skills the students have completed (Thalib et al., 2022). Since student learning experiences are reflected in achievement, it can be inferred that achievement affects students' leadership and entrepreneurial spirit.

The subjective nature of the sense of accomplishment introduces complexity, as its definition varies among individuals. Cappa et al. (2020) highlight that contributing to a worthy cause can trigger a profound sense of personal accomplishment, and similarly, engaging in less preferred activities can evoke the same feeling. Additionally, Chatfield (2017) underscores the pivotal role of perseverance in cultivating a profound sense of accomplishment and fostering skill development.

Entrepreneurial Traits

Pinpointing a precise definition for an entrepreneur proves to be a challenging endeavor, as the entrepreneurial persona is more aptly described than precisely outlined. As stated by Wiyono and Wu (2022) an individual must possess an entrepreneurial spirit in order to be an entrepreneur. The entrepreneurial spirit is defined as the attitude, willingness, and behaviors of people handling businesses or activities that motivate them to put forth the effort to find, create, and apply new working methods, technologies, and products in order to offer services or make money. It can also be seen in traits like having a strong desire to work independently, making wise judgments, being courageous enough to take chances, being inventive and creative, persevering, being diligent and productive, and having a sense of community and corporate ethics (Wiyono & Wu, 2022).

Vartanova and Kolomytseva (2019) argue that identifying a single individual embodying the entirety of entrepreneurial attributes, akin to an archetypal entrepreneur, is highly improbable. Instead, it is anticipated that various enterprises will manifest diverse personalities, characteristics, and attitudes. Although there exists no universally agreed-upon set defining entrepreneurial traits, Table 2 presents nine primary characteristics frequently emphasized in research: tolerance of ambiguity, self-esteem, risk-taking ability, locus of control, need for

achievement, innovativeness, thinking big, problem-solving skills, and communication. The nuanced meanings behind these entrepreneurial traits demand a thorough exploration that goes beyond surface-level understanding.

Methods
Positioned as exploratory research, this study endeavors to uncover the prevailing mindset among undergraduates and delve into its influence on entrepreneurial traits, subsequently examining its impact on their sense of achievement. Recognizing the noted disparity between the expectations of graduates and employers, undergraduates emerge as a crucial cohort for investigation, as they stand on the cusp of imminent entry into the workforce. The qualitative research delves into the personal traits of undergraduates, facilitating a nuanced comprehension of their mindset.

Table 2: Most Common Entrepreneurial Traits from Different Researchers

Entrepreneurial Traits	Güro & Atsan (2006)	Arasteh et al. (2012)	Sharif & Saud (2009)	Salamzadeh et al, (2014)	Zaman (2013)	Raguz & Dulcic (2011)	Izquierdo & Deschoolmeester (2010)	Neneh (2011)	Vogel (2012)	He, Standen, & Coetzer (2017)
Tolerance for Ambiguity	√	√		√	√	√	√	√		
Self-Esteem	√		√		√	√		√		√
Risk-Taking Ability	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Locus of Control	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Need for Achievement	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Innovativeness	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Dream Big		√					√	√	√	
Problem Solving Skills							√	√		
Communication							√			

Source: Authors.

Interview Questions and Samplings
The selection of in-depth interviews aligns with the research objective of exploring the mindset and diverse personality traits among undergraduates. Tailored open-ended questions are designed to extract nuanced responses, fostering a profound understanding of experiences and emotions. The filtering questions are structured as follows:

Q1) Do you possess a sense of achievement in your life? (Operationalized definition provided)
        Yes (Proceed to Q2); No (Proceed to Q3)

Q2) Elaborate on the type of sense of achievement you've encountered (Proceed to Q4)
Q3) If no, specify the area contributing to the absence of a sense of achievement.
Q4) How do you approach challenges? Do you seek solutions, ask for help, or ignore them?
Q5) Reflect on your decision-making process during challenges.

These questions directly address the research objectives (RO1, RO2, RO3) pertaining to the sense of achievement, entrepreneurial traits, and mindset in undergraduates. Drawing inspiration from Pihie and Sani (2009), Rau (2016), and Nixdorff (2008), the questions aim to delve into various facets of mindset, personal traits, and opportunities recognition.

Kuala Lumpur is reported to take the lead in Malaysia's startup scene with a staggering 304 startups, constituting approximately 82% of the country's startup landscape (StartupBlink, 2023). This notable status prompts our study to center its attention on the final year undergraduate demographic among private universities in the Klang Valley. To ensure impartial data gathering and enable thorough analysis, a random sample of 50 respondents has been selected for inclusion in the research. Adhering to the saturation principle advocated by Saunders et al. (2018), recurring themes observed three or more times contribute significantly to the richness and depth of the study's findings.

Data Collection and Analysis
In-depth interviews were conducted from September to November 2019, using an unstructured format and filtering questions, deliberately excluding external influences. The use of audio recording ensures precision in representation, and all interactions strictly adhere to participant consent. Subsequently, the interview content is transcribed into textual form and subjected to further analysis through NVivo software. We approached the coding process with a foundation built upon insights from previous literature reviews on entrepreneurial traits and the sense of achievement. The key dimensions were delineated into thematic categories, resembling nodes in a tree structure. Within these nodes, we conducted coding based on the principles of thematic analysis. Retrieving relevant statements associated with each theme involved a meticulous exploration of interconnected themes and nodes.

To strengthen the robustness of our findings, the NVivo results were cross-referenced with notes from interview sessions, undergoing multiple scrutinies independently by both authors. This iterative method facilitated the validation of codes and themes, aligning with the principles outlined by Gibbs (2007). Each researcher meticulously compiled a list of themes and sub-themes, fostering a platform for comparative analysis and reasoning. The subsequent collaborative process involved the development of mutually agreed-upon themes. In instances of thematic discord, a recourse to additional literature review or seeking expert opinions was deemed necessary, forming an integral part of the data triangulation process. These meticulous steps were indispensable, safeguarding the reliability and validity of our qualitative findings. Finally, to safeguard respondent anonymity, coded identifiers such as R11_M_C are employed. These codes denote the respondent's position out of the 50 participants, followed by gender, and lastly, ethnicity.

Findings
This study delves into its findings through in-depth one-on-one interviews conducted with a diverse group of respondents, encompassing both male and female perspectives. Out of the 50 participants, 17 are male and 33 are female. Notably, female respondents exhibit a higher inclination to engage in in-depth interviews, displaying a willingness to open up about their inner thoughts. The age range of all respondents falls between 19 to 25 years, targeting specifically undergraduate students, comprising a mix of both diploma and final-year

bachelor's degree students. Among the participants, 10 are pursuing diploma programs, while 40 are enrolled in bachelor's degree programs. This cohort represents students from various disciplines across different universities in the Klang Valley, offering a diverse range of experiences to inform the research objectives.

The Mindset Among Undergraduates Students

As Franklin (2016) posits, an individual's mindset can be categorized as either a growth mindset, fixed mindset, or a hybrid form referred to as a neutral mindset. In addressing RO1, our findings reveal that a mere 4 respondents (8%) exhibit a fixed mindset. On the other hand, 19 respondents (38%) display a blend of both mindsets, falling into the category of a neutral mindset. The majority, comprising 27 out of 50 respondents (54%), showcase a growth mindset.

A growth mindset is characterized by the belief that intelligence is malleable. As shown in Table 3; High Persistence, Process as the Focus point, and Productive and Valuable Effort cover almost 50% of the characteristics among those who possess Growth Mindset. For example:

High persistence is emblematic of the growth mindset, as illustrated by R34_F_C, a school athlete, who affirms, "I will find a way, I will keep doing training, I never give up because I will always motivate myself to do better and try harder to achieve my goals."

Moreover, a growth mindset emphasizes the importance of the process over the outcome. R37_F_C underscores this perspective: "I focus more on the process as if you want to get a good outcome, first you need to plan really well and put so much effort in the process."

Productivity and valuing effort are integral components of the growth mindset, as articulated by R29_M_C: "I would say I am kind of grateful I did at least put in some effort to try, although I have to admit that I am not as good as those competitors."

Furthermore, a growth mindset perceives mistakes as opportunities for learning. R12_F_I emphasizes this perspective, stating, "I will straight away tell them what is wrong because to me you learn from the mistakes. Making mistakes is okay. You know, because of failure, we succeed."

Proactively seeking help for learning is a key strategy for those with a growth mindset. R19_F_C highlights her proactive approach: "... I wanted to learn this (rubric cubes) since primary … and a few years ago, when I started to take the initiative to YouTube to go into YouTube and search for videos."

When facing setbacks, the growth mindset adopts a mastery orientation. R11_M_C elucidates this approach: "Exit just try to have a framework, you know, go and discover and like to examine the root of the problem...surround yourself with people who you can trust and you can rely on instead of people who turn your backs against you when you have obstacles."

Table 3: Summary of Respondents that possess each Characteristics

Characteristics of Growth Mindset	Frequency	(%)
Intelligence - Can Change	23	9.6
Effort - Productive and Valuable	36	15
Persistence - High	40	16.7
Mistake - See as Opportunity	14	5.8

Willingness to take Challenge - Eager / Excited	27	11.3
Learning Strategies - Proactive	33	13.8
Life Goal - Continuous Learning	8	3.3
Reaction to Setbacks - Mastery Orientation	21	8.8
Focus - Process	38	15.8
Total	240	100

Source: Authors.

On the other hand, only four respondents portrayed a fixed mindset, cited with the following conversations:

R29_M_C candidly acknowledges his admiration for skilled Rubik's Cube solvers in movies, expressing a sense of awe at their abilities. Despite recognizing the improbability of reaching such proficiency, he takes pride in his current achievements with the cubes, viewing them as a significant accomplishment. Additionally, he also demonstrates a lack of self-awareness regarding his feelings and interpersonal skills. He mentions, "I will say that I notice any significant changes from the time before I know how to play them." He views solving Rubik's Cubes more as a leisure activity than a means of intellectual enhancement.

In contrast, R49_F_C articulates a sense of failure based on a comparative analysis with her high-achieving friends. Her disappointment in receiving a B instead of an A in A-levels alters her academic plans, deeming herself a failure for not pursuing science courses. She also recounts an experience of isolation and frustration when she couldn't integrate into a group. Her feelings of helplessness and dissatisfaction with social interactions highlight unexpected setbacks, causing her to consider skipping events or dropping out altogether.

The blend of both mindsets forms the neutral mindset. For example, though the respondent displays high persistence and proactive learning characteristic, indicative of a growth mindset, the individual also do not believe in the malleability of intelligence levels and do not perceive mistakes as failures, resembling aspects of a fixed mindset. Hence, such mindset is prevalent among individuals who may not have received adequate education on the principles of a growth mindset. Consequently, through personal efforts and experiences, their mindsets undergo a gradual transformation. To transition individuals from a neutral mindset to a growth mindset, it is imperative to design academic learning environments that actively instill and foster the principles of a growth mindset.

The Entrepreneurial Traits Among Undergraduates Students who have a High Sense of Achievement

Each of the 50 respondents has confirmed the presence of a sense of achievement, aligning with the definition applied in this study (Gürol & Atsan, 2006; Zaman, 2013; Raguz & Dulcic, 2011). Consequently, the findings from these 50 respondents reveal that the prominent entrepreneurial traits encompass self-esteem, need for achievement, leadership, and risk-taking, constituting the primary traits as outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Summary of Respondents that possess each Entrepreneurial Traits

Level	Entrepreneurial Traits	Frequency	(%)
Primary	Self-Esteem	43	16.10
	Need of Achievement	33	12.36
	Leadership	31	11.61
	Risk Taking	30	11.24
Secondary	Dream Big	27	10.11
	Problem Solving Skills	24	8.99
	Locus of Control	24	8.99
	Tolerance for Ambiguity	21	7.87
Tertiary	Communication	17	6.37
	Perseverance	10	3.75
	Innovativeness	7	2.62
	Total	267	100

Source: Authors.

Primary Traits
A notable trend among respondents is the prevalence of self-confidence, evident in their willingness to share experiences without apprehension. R1_M_I articulates this confidence, stating, "During that challenge, I would say I wasn't scared or anything. I was confident because I have my friends supporting me, so it will be fine." Additionally, some respondents have actively cultivated and increased their self-confidence over time. R32_F_M proudly asserts, "At first, I wasn't really confident about it, but then I realized, yeah, maybe I could do it. And at the end of the day, I won first place. So that is one of my personal esteem."
Surprisingly, a significant number of respondents exhibit the entrepreneurial trait of a strong need for achievement. R5_M_I highlights this aspect, expressing, "If I were to actually call anything an achievement, I would say that if I were to make any films for myself...I would actually call that a sense of achievement." For him, the absence of creating films within a specific timeframe induces a sense of internal disquiet.
Leadership emerges as a primary trait among the respondents, with some naturally assuming leadership roles. R1_M_I exemplifies this, stating, "Every group assignment that happens, sometimes, if you don't know each other, you have to pick the leader formally. For me, I'm always a leader, no one has to say let's pick a leader; it's just always me." This form of leadership is viewed as a source of achievement and respect, motivating individuals to contribute more effort to collaborative endeavors.
Risk-taking, a fundamental aspect of the entrepreneurial mindset, is exemplified by R28_F_C. She acknowledges the varying levels of risk and notes, "It depends on whether I can actually cope with the risk. If the risk is low, maybe it is not challenging for me...But sometimes it might be a high risk, I feel like I can do it but maybe I need some help or someone must assist me." This pragmatic approach underscores the consideration of risks and the willingness to seek assistance when necessary.

Secondary Traits

Dreaming appears to be a common trait among individuals and is viewed as a constructive process for goal-setting. R11_M_C articulates this perspective, stating, "I feel like everyone should have a goal, everyone should have a dream, and it should be a goal so big that people somewhat doubt you won't be able to do it. But I feel like that is what a dream ultimately is." He emphasizes the importance of setting ambitious goals that challenge expectations, fostering self-expectations and growth.

Respondents also touch upon the concept of locus of control, albeit using different terms such as self-discipline and self-control. R41_F_I elucidates this by stating, "I'm not a consistent person, but then what keeps me going is my determination...anything to do with me, my principle, I am very disciplined in it." This highlights the distinction between consistency in certain matters and the overall discipline maintained, particularly in matters related to personal principles.

The trait of tolerance for ambiguity is evident among some respondents. R5_M_I reflects on the collaborative nature of teamwork, emphasizing the value of conflicting ideas. He notes, "Knowing that by doing it alone, you will not be able to create a quality product or quality outcome." In group settings, conflicting ideas are seen as an opportunity for fruitful discussions that lead to the generation of creative and high-quality ideas, a perspective embraced by R5_M_I.

Tertiary Traits

Effective communication holds paramount importance in our lives, serving as a crucial means to convey thoughts and prevent misunderstandings. R41_F_I highlights the significance of communication in collaborative settings, noting, "Challenges are overcome by developing social and communication skills. So that's the only thing that can help you to work collectively than individually for group assignments, especially."

R16_F_C echoes this sentiment, sharing her experience in an entrepreneurship competition where team members initially faced communication challenges due to their diverse backgrounds. She emphasizes the importance of overcoming these challenges by actively getting to know each other and seeking opinions, illustrating how effective communication fosters collaboration.

Despite being one of the prominent entrepreneurial traits, innovativeness garners fewer responses than anticipated. R5_M_I sheds light on this aspect, expressing his perspective on creating a unique film with a "unique selling point" derived from learning across the world. This emphasizes the notion that innovativeness is intricately linked to a broad and global perspective rather than a localized approach.

The Role of Mindset in Moulding the Entrepreneurial Traits Among Undergraduate Students

Table 5 illustrates that the impact of mindset on shaping entrepreneurial traits among undergraduate students is notably distinct, except for "need for achievement" and "leadership." The frequencies of these two traits show minimal variance compared to other entrepreneurial traits. This observation can be attributed to the pervasive nature of the need for achievement, which seems to be universally present regardless of whether individuals harbor a growth or fixed mindset. The innate drive to accomplish tasks and fulfill desires is inherent in everyone.

Even seemingly mundane achievements contribute to a sense of completion and satisfaction, such as staying updated with popular trends or checking out the latest places and products.

Among the 27 students exhibiting a growth mindset, the majority display key traits encompassing self-esteem, locus of control, problem-solving skills, risk-taking, need for achievement, tolerance of ambiguity, and the inclination to dream big.

The growth mindset emerges as a catalyst for enhancing self-esteem, as evidenced by R1_M_I's account of facing challenges with confidence. He emphasizes the support of friends and the shared conviction among them, contributing to a sense of assurance. Several respondents echo this sentiment, noting the progressive development of self-confidence throughout their experiences. R32_F_M, for instance, proudly recounts winning first place as a source of personal esteem, highlighting the positive impact of growth mindset on self-assurance.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Entrepreneurial Traits and Mindsets

Entrepreneurial Traits	Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
Tolerance for Ambiguity	16	5
Self-Esteem	25	18
Risk Taking	19	11
Locus of Control	20	4
Need of Achievement	17	16
Innovativeness	6	1
Dream Big	16	11
Problem Solving Skills	19	5
Communication	13	4
Perseverance	8	2
Leadership	16	15

Source: Authors.

Locus of control is identified as a significant element by those with a growth mindset. R41_F_I, while acknowledging her lack of consistency in certain matters, underscores the role of determination and discipline in fostering overall consistency. Her discipline is particularly evident in academic pursuits and matters related to personal principles, emphasizing how these qualities contribute to her ability to persevere and move forward.

Examining the fixed mindset, our findings indicate that individuals in this group prominently exhibit traits related to self-esteem, need for achievement, and leadership, with the highest frequency compared to other traits.

Interestingly, leadership emerges with a similar frequency in both fixed mindset and growth mindset individuals. For instance, R23_M_C describes how, during times of struggle, the coach

plays a crucial role in providing guidance and resolving issues, fostering stronger bonds within the team. This experience not only reflects a need for leadership but also serves as a learning ground for individuals, like R23_M_C, to develop their own leadership skills.

On the flip side, a notable characteristic among those with a fixed mindset is a tendency towards low self-awareness of their own feelings and interpersonal skills. R29_M_C exemplifies this by expressing a lack of awareness regarding any significant changes in himself resulting from playing with Rubik's cubes. He perceives the activity more as a form of recreation than a means of personal development.

Discussion and Conclusion

Mindset Among Undergraduate Students
Examining the results of Research Objective 1—The mindset among undergradute students, a noteworthy 54 percent of the respondents exhibit a growth mindset, while a mere 8 percent unequivocally showcase a fixed mindset. This stark contrast in mindset aligns with prior studies by Dweck (2018), highlighting the discernible differences in actions and thoughts between students identified as possessing a growth mindset and those with a fixed mindset.

While previous research primarily focuses on categorizing individuals into growth or fixed mindsets based on criteria such as intelligence, views on effort, and responses to setbacks, this study ventures into uncharted territory by acknowledging the existence of a third group—the neutral mindset (Madan et al., 2023). In our findings, 38 percent of respondents embody characteristics indicative of a neutral mindset. This mindset is characterized by traits like high persistence and proactive learning strategies akin to a growth mindset. However, individuals with a neutral mindset do not subscribe to the belief that intelligence can be changed and tend to perceive mistakes as failures, resembling traits associated with a fixed mindset. This neutral mindset is perceived as a transitional state, shaped by an individual's efforts and experiences, suggesting that targeted interventions in academic settings could facilitate the transition from a neutral to a growth mindset. Similar study by Kroeper et al. (2022), where college students classified specific teaching strategies as denoting fixed or growth mindset ideas.

The combined results of growth and fixed mindsets echo Franklin's (2016) assertion that intelligence is mutable under a growth mentality, while a fixed mentality views it as unalterable, posing a hindrance to progress. Furthermore, Dweck's (2000) research aligns with our findings, emphasizing that a focus on growth-oriented attitudes leads to heightened commitment and vigorous efforts in exploring new approaches, ultimately fostering a heightened sense of accomplishment. The study of Kim and Park (2021) used longitudinal data spanning six years from elementary to middle school, and this study looked at the fixed mindset trajectories of kids. A piecewise latent growth model was used to evaluate the long-term relationships between the trajectories and academic achievement, with behavioral engagement as a mediator.

Conversely, the fixed mindset findings are in harmony with Schleider and Schroder's (2018) theory, suggesting that individuals with an unchanging and static mindset encounter greater challenges, resulting in a negative sense of self. The Alloy et al. study (1990) and the observations by Webb et al. (2012) underscore that individuals with a fixed mindset often passively resist societal changes and persist in denying their ability to overcome challenges.

Entrepreneurial Traits Among Undergraduates Students who have a High Sense of Achievement
Analyzing the outcomes of Research Objective 2—The entrepreneurial traits among undergraduate students with a high sense of achievement—the findings, in comparison to

studies by Gürol and Atsan (2006), Zaman (2013), and Raguz and Dulcic (2011), reveal a pronounced emphasis on tolerance of ambiguity, risk-taking, need for achievement, and locus of control. This alignment with prior research underscores the significance of these traits in shaping the entrepreneurial personality. Therefore, it aligns with Wiyono and Wu's (2022) research explores the structural implications of motivation for and achievement in attainment for student leadership and entrepreneurial spirit.

The entrepreneurial trait of risk-taking ability correlates with research by Caniëls and Motylska-Kuźma (2023), asserting that embracing risks indicates self-confidence in tolerating uncertainty and fostering creativity. Our study further unravels that taking risks not only serves as a catalyst for personal growth but can also enhance one's sense of accomplishment. However, risks are not always synonymous with personal happiness, depiction of entrepreneurs as individuals marked by worry, poorly organized non-conformity, and a penchant for risky ventures—a behavior rooted in complex and tumultuous childhood experiences.

Locus of control, delving into an individual's perceived behavioral influence and challenges, aligns with Caird (1991) and Cromie and O'Donoghue (1992), illustrating that entrepreneurs exhibit a desire for autonomy, shunning external control. This heightened need for freedom and aversion to external constraints distinguish them from other professional groups. Entrepreneurs, as depicted in the findings, value autonomy, independence, and resist societal norms, traditions, and conventions. This inclination often leads them to rebel against restrictive environments, fostering a spirit of independence that may deviate from societal norms, as observed by Cromie (2000). Another research by Al-Qadasi et al. (2023) studies how personality traits, contextual factors, and situational circumstances affect young students development of entrepreneurial intention.

Our findings concur with Rotter's (1966) perspective, emphasizing that locus of control extends beyond self-discipline; it underscores the importance of heightened self-awareness. For instance, the ability to maintain self-control, as expressed by R15_M_C, involves presenting a composed demeanor in challenging situations, allowing individuals to reflect and devise solutions without succumbing to panic. This skill contributes to a composed and efficient response during emergencies. A study by Alolaqi et al. (2022) is similar to current research as it investigates the role of individual entrepreneurship in influencing undergraduate entrepreneurial goals, each suggested variable impacts how one becomes an entrepreneur.

The exploration of personal traits also reveals new insights into leadership. Similar to Fernald et al. (2005), our study establishes connections between personal characteristics associated with leadership and entrepreneurship principles. Attributes such as personal motivation, creativity, vision, and risk tolerance emerge as crucial facets of leadership. While entrepreneurship leans towards qualities like confidence in environmental control, uncertainty tolerance, flexibility, and a willingness to take chances, leadership emphasizes communication skills, trustworthiness, motivational capacity, and integrity—qualities that entrepreneurs may lack. This underlines the argument that a blend of entrepreneurial spirit and leadership skills is imperative for individuals embarking on the path of entrepreneurship.

The Role of Mindset in Molding the Entrepreneurial Traits Among Undergraduate Students
Finally, addressing Research Objective 3—The role of mindset in shaping entrepreneurial traits among undergraduate students—the results are generally highly distinctive, with the exception of the need for achievement and leadership. The frequencies of these two traits exhibit minimal variance compared to other entrepreneurial traits. This is rationalized by asserting that the need for achievement is a universal characteristic inherent in everyone, irrespective of possessing a growth or fixed mindset. Individuals are inherently driven to engage in activities, as idleness is discomforting. The need for achievement, a desire to accomplish tasks, big or small, unique

or mundane, transcends external rewards. For instance, young people often harbor the need for achievement when seeking out trendy places and products to stay in the cultural loop.

Another notable discovery is the analogous frequencies of growth mindset and fixed mindset towards entrepreneurial traits, particularly leadership. Leadership, a pervasive term in educational settings, becomes ingrained in individuals from early academic stages. The ubiquity of leadership education, both through formal curriculum and extracurricular activities, renders it a familiar and comprehensible concept. Consequently, individuals, irrespective of mindset orientation, can draw on theoretical knowledge and experiential learning to embody leadership qualities.

While need for achievement and leadership manifest in both growth and fixed mindsets, their impact hinges on how individuals deploy them in their daily lives. Examination of frequency distributions across entrepreneurial traits reveals that need for achievement and leadership are fundamental traits shared by the sampled individuals. This underscores the critical nature of both traits, requiring individuals to leverage them effectively to distinguish themselves from peers possessing similar entrepreneurial qualities.

The findings align with Hölzner and Halberstadt (2023) assertion that proper training and mindset cultivation can foster all entrepreneurial traits. Notably, the study suggests that the neutral mindset might signify an individual lacking the cultivation of a growth mindset. Consequently, the sense of achievement could serve as a motivational catalyst, propelling neutral mindsets to explore and cultivate entrepreneurial traits, empowering them to navigate diverse challenges in the industry.

Conclusion

The persisting issue of youth unemployment is attributed to factors such as graduates being selective in job choices, exhibiting attitude problems, and facing challenges with language proficiency (i.e. English). However, a noteworthy observation in the upcoming generation is the coexistence of both growth and fixed mindsets among undergraduates, indicating a certain degree of flexibility in self-exploration and adaptation. The responsibility lies with the social environment and the education system to instill adaptability and acceptance of the rapidly evolving world in the younger generation. Embracing a growth mindset equips students to not only align themselves with job requirements but also retain their entrepreneurial traits. This "entrepreneurial mindset" is perceived as not only distinctive but also trainable, with the potential for deliberate development through practice (Li et al., 2023). The traits cultivated during students' educational journeys can serve as a motivating force propelling them forward, fostering a sense of achievement. This, in turn, holds the promise of mitigating youth unemployment in Malaysia.

Theoretical Implications

This research yields substantial contributions on both theoretical and practical fronts. While prior studies have independently explored various entrepreneurial traits, mindsets, and the sense of achievement, this research uniquely amalgamates these components. By establishing connections among mindset, sense of achievement, and entrepreneurial traits, the study unveils reciprocal influences between these elements. It demonstrates that the sense of achievement profoundly impacts the augmentation or reduction of entrepreneurial traits, and conversely, entrepreneurial traits can serve as determinants for the presence of a growth or fixed mindset in an individual. These mindsets, in turn, influence an individual's awareness of their sense of achievement. The intricate interplay of these three components presents unexplored connections, promising new avenues for future research and discoveries.

Practical and Social Implications

Practically, this study extends its benefits to students preparing for the workplace industry. Universities, utilizing the study's findings, can enhance students' soft skills alongside the hard skills acquired through academic pursuits. Additionally, employers in the corporate world, particularly those hiring fresh graduates or millennials—the demographic represented in this research's sample—stand to gain insights. Employers can leverage this study to identify and nurture specific mindsets conducive to building entrepreneurial traits among their employees. The research underscores the divergent perspectives toward challenges and difficulties held by individuals with growth mindsets versus fixed mindsets. Encouraging a growth mindset, characterized by the belief that everything can be learned, becomes crucial. Employers are advised to create opportunities for employees to experience a sense of achievement, fostering self-motivation among those with growth mindsets. This, in turn, is anticipated to enhance productivity and potentially reduce employee turnover rates.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study engages with certain limitations in its approach to secondary data collection for the literature review. The dominance of Carol Dweck as a central figure in this field poses a challenge, as only a limited number of researchers delve into such comprehensive studies. The majority of existing studies tend to mirror Dweck's research, hence, may be leaving little room for meaningful comparisons. Additionally, the term "Sense of Achievement" is not universally employed by researchers, leading to difficulties in its identification. Consequently, synonyms such as accomplishment, attainment, acquirement, and fulfillment were utilized during data collection. Another limitation in the primary data collection through interviews is the reluctance of some respondents to share their experiences, hindering the full expression of their thoughts despite consistent probing.

While this study sheds light on a fresh perspective regarding how mindset contributes to the development of entrepreneurial traits, it is crucial to note that statistical analysis is recommended for future research endeavors. A quantitative approach could assess the significance of data on a larger scale, particularly when the study is done nationwide instead of focusing on the Klang Valley area. Furthermore, prospective studies could delve deeper into the methods for studying and fostering growth mindsets and the personal development of entrepreneurial traits. These methodologies might find application in higher educational institutions' teaching and learning systems and corporate staff training manuals. Additionally, future research could explore in-depth interviews with employers to compare their expectations with the attributes of graduates. By integrating employer perspectives with the results of this study, which centers on students' viewpoints, researchers could formulate a shared understanding of entrepreneurial mindsets and traits. This could lead to the development of questionnaires that effectively gauge mindset and entrepreneurial traits, offering valuable insights for both employers and students in the realms of job selection criteria and decision-making in hiring processes.

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