

Impact of Fixed and Growth Mindsets on Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment Among Young Athletes

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ABSTRACT

An individual's mindset forms the psychological framework that influences how athletes perceive challenges, cope with setbacks, apply effort, and interpret success. In the sports context, a strong mindset is as crucial as physical skill, as it sustains motivation, supports continued improvement, and helps athletes overcome obstacles. According to Havighurst (1972), social maturity refers to an individual's ability to meet societal expectations and perform age-appropriate social roles responsibly. Crow and Crow (1956) describe emotional adjustment as the capacity to face life's pressures with appropriate emotional responses, maintaining stability and preventing prolonged distress. Athletes with a fixed mindset tend to believe their abilities are innate and unchangeable, often avoiding challenges and withdrawing when confronted with difficulties. In contrast, athletes with a growth mindset hold that performance can be improved through effort, practice, and learning, viewing setbacks as opportunities for development. In the present study, a Psychological Intervention Training Programme of four weeks' duration, conducted three days per week was implemented to enhance the psychological competencies of the participants. The study investigated whether athletes with fixed and growth mindsets differ in social maturity, emotional adjustment, and personal integration. A sample of 72 athletes residing in sports hostels in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, was evaluated using the Implicit Theory of Intelligence Questionnaire developed by Carol Dweck (1999). Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment were assessed using the Social Adjustment Scale by Weissman and Bothwell (2006). Dependent t-test and ANCOVA were applied to determine significant differences between the groups. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in emotional adjustment or social maturity between athletes with fixed and growth mindsets.

Introduction

Social maturity, emotional adjustment, and personal integration represent key aspects of personality development that determine how individuals engage with their environment, maintain psychological stability, and progress toward becoming fully functioning adults. Developmental

theorists describe maturity as a stage in which an individual's potential is fully realized, both physically and mentally, enabling effective participation in the environment (Rashmi, 2019). Social maturity refers to an individual's capacity to behave responsibly, understand cultural norms, and apply this understanding effectively in daily life. It reflects age-

appropriate behavior that aligns with societal expectations and is influenced by factors such as independent functioning, interpersonal competence, and a sense of responsibility toward oneself and others. According to Hemlata (2020), social maturity involves acquiring attitudes, habits, skills, and values that enable individuals to contribute positively to social groups and function harmoniously within them.

Adjustment is viewed as the process by which individuals maintain balance between personal needs and situational demands. Drever (1952) defines adjustment as behavioral modification required to cope with changing circumstances, while Crow and Crow (1956) explain that well-adjusted individuals maintain healthy relationships with themselves and their social surroundings. Emotional adjustment, often referred to as personal or psychological adjustment, involves sustaining emotional equilibrium under stress. It reflects the ability to regulate inner feelings, remain resilient, and act with composure in challenging situations. Ameen (2020) says that emotionally adjusted individuals exhibit self-control, positive self-concept, and stable personality characteristics that support healthy functioning.

Together, these two dimensions determine how effectively individuals

manage emotions, interact with others, and build a cohesive identity. Higher levels of social maturity and emotional adjustment, promote stronger mental health, more satisfying interpersonal relationships, and enhanced functioning in daily life.

Methodology

To accomplish the objectives of the study, seventy-two athletes aged between 15 and 18 years who were residing in the sports hostel at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, were selected as participants. Based on their scores obtained from the Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale (ITIS) developed by Carol S. Dweck (1999), they were categorized into two groups, namely Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset. A Psychological Intervention Training Programme of four weeks' duration, conducted three days per week, was implemented to enhance the psychological competencies of the athletes during the study period. The study considered Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment as independent variables. Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment were assessed using the Social Adjustment Scale developed by Weissman and Bothwells (2006). The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained prior to data collection. The collected data relating to Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment were analyzed

using appropriate statistical techniques. An independent t-test was employed to determine group differences, and ANCOVA was used to account for baseline variations. The level of significance was fixed at 0.05.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

ANCOVA and dependent t-test results for Social Maturity and Emotional

Adjustment between the Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset groups have been analyzed and are presented in the following tables.

The analysis of Dependent 't'-test for the fixed and growth mindsets on Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment have been analysed and presented in Table 1

Table 1

Summary of Mean, SD and Dependent 't'-test for the fixed and growth mindsets on Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment

Tests		Pre Test	Post Test	't' – Value
Social Maturity (FIXED)	Mean	62.15	65.27	1.85
	SD	5.33	7.80	
Social Maturity (GROWTH)	Mean	58.18	60.98	2.05
	SD	5.40	5.76	
Emotional Adjustment (FIXED)	Mean	48.60	50.49	1.06
	SD	8.97	7.26	
Emotional Adjustment (GROWTH)	Mean	46.08	51.02	1.75
	SD	13.88	6.85	

*Significant at .05 level. The table value required for 0.05 level of significance with df 70 is 1.990

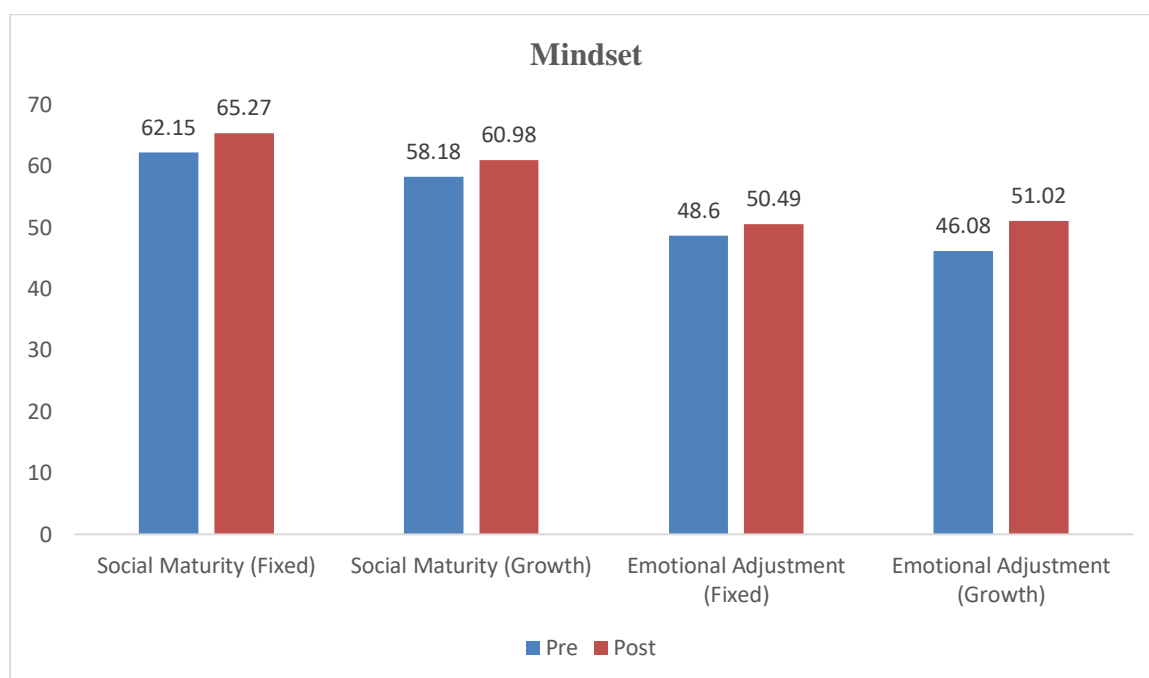
The Table 1 reveals that the pre-test mean value of Social Maturity for the Fixed Mindset group was 62.15 and the post-test mean increased to 65.27. Similarly, the Growth Mindset group showed an improvement from a pre-test mean of 58.18 to a post-test mean of 60.98. The obtained t-values for the Fixed and Growth Mindset groups on Social Maturity were 1.85 and 2.05 respectively. In the case of Emotional Adjustment, the Fixed Mindset group had a pre-test mean value of 48.60 and a post-test mean value of 50.49, while the Growth

Mindset group improved from 46.08 to 51.02. The t-values were 1.06 and 1.75. The table value required for significance at the 0.05 level with df = 70 is 1.990. Since the obtained 't' value of the Growth Mindset group on Social Maturity, 2.05 is greater than the table value, it is understood that this group showed a statistically significant improvement in Social Maturity. However, the Social Maturity (Fixed), Emotional Adjustment (Fixed and Growth Mindset) values 1.85, 1.06, and 1.75 are lower than the required table value of 1.990, indicating

that they were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The dependent-test means values of Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment

of Fixed and Growth Mindset groups are graphically represented in the Figure 1.



The analysis of covariance on fixed and growth mindsets on Social Maturity

have been analysed and presented in Table 2

Table 2
Analysis of covariance on fixed and growth mindsets on Social Maturity

Adjusted Post Test Means (Social Maturity)		Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Means Square	F-ratio	Sig
Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset						
65.56	60.81	Between Groups	352.58	1	352.58	7.43	.008
		Within Groups	3270.46	69	47.39		

*Significant at .05 level. The table value required for significance at 0.05 level with df 1 and 69 is 4.03

Table 2 shows that the adjusted post-test means of Social Maturity of Fixed and Growth Mindset groups are 65.56 and

60.81 respectively. The obtained F-ratio value is 7.43 which are greater than the table value 4.03 with df 1 and 69 required

for significance at 0.05 level. Since the value of F-ratio is greater than the table value, it indicates that there is a significant difference among the adjusted post-test means of Social Maturity of Fixed and Growth Mindset groups.

The analysis of covariance on fixed and growth mindsets on Emotional Adjustment have been analysed and presented in Table 3

Table 3

Analysis of covariance on fixed and growth mindsets on Emotional Adjustment

Adjusted Post Test Means		Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Means Square	F-ratio	Sig
Emotional Adjustment							
Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset						
50.54	50.97	Between Groups	3.26	1	3.26	0.065	0.800
		Within Groups	3485.14	69	50.50		

**Significant at .05 level. The table value required for significance at 0.05 level with df 1 and 69 is 4.03*

Table 3 shows that the adjusted post-test means of Emotional Adjustment of Fixed and Growth Mindset groups are 50.54 and 50.97 respectively. The obtained F-ratio value is 0.065 which are lesser than the table value 4.03 with df 1 and 69 required for significance at 0.05 level. Since the value of F-ratio is lesser than the table value, it indicates that there is no significant difference among the adjusted post-test means of Emotional Adjustment of Fixed and Growth Mindset groups.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

The purpose of the present study was to assess whether athletes with Fixed

and Growth Mindsets demonstrated significant improvements in Social Maturity and Emotional Adjustment following the training intervention. The analysis involved dependent 't'-tests conducted separately for both groups across the two psychological variables.

With respect to Social Maturity, the Fixed Mindset group showed an increase from a pre-test mean of 62.15 to a post-test mean of 65.27, resulting in a t-value of 1.85. Although this reflects positive improvement, the obtained value did not exceed the required critical value of 1.990 at the 0.05 significance level, indicating

that the change was not statistically significant. The Growth Mindset group, however, demonstrated a improvement, increasing from 58.18 to 60.98, with an obtained t-value of 2.05. Since this value exceeded the critical table value, the results are statistically significant in Social Maturity among Growth Mindset athletes. This suggests that athletes with a Growth Mindset have been more receptive to the developmental experiences provided through training, aligning with theoretical perspectives that propose mindset as a driver of adaptability and personal development.

Likewise in Emotional Adjustment, the Fixed Mindset group improved from 48.60 to 50.49 of t-value 1.06, while the Growth Mindset group increased from 46.08 to 51.02 of t-value 1.75. However, both t-values were below the critical value, indicating that neither group statistically significant improvement in Emotional Adjustment at the 0.05 level. Emotional regulation and adjustment are influenced by long-term developmental and environmental factors such as family background, personality traits, social experiences, and coping frameworks.

Overall, the findings reveal that while mindset plays a meaningful role in influencing developmental outcomes, its

impact may vary across psychological variables. Growth Mindset athletes demonstrated significant progress in Social Maturity, supporting the idea that mindset orientation can enhance engagement in socially challenging tasks, adaptability, and interpersonal competence. However, improvements in Emotional Adjustment were not statistically significant for either group, suggesting that emotional functioning may be shaped by deeper, more stable internal and contextual factors. Therefore, mindset may act as one contributing psychological factor rather than a sole determinant of social and emotional development.

Conclusion

The study concluded that Growth Mindset athletes showed a statistically significant improvement in Social Maturity, while no significant change was observed among the Fixed Mindset group. In the case of Emotional Adjustment, both groups demonstrated positive mean gains, but the improvements were not statistically significant. These results suggest that mindset may influence certain developmental domains, particularly those related to social interaction and adaptive behavior, but may not independently shape emotional functioning in a short-term training context. Social and emotional

outcomes appear to be influenced by a broader combination of personal characteristics, environmental support, and long-term developmental experiences rather than mindset alone.

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