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Mindset-Yourself: An exploratory analysis on Mindset and Organizational Absorptive Capacity

*Mindset-se: Uma análise exploratória sobre
Mindset e Capacidade Absortiva organizacional*




*Mentalidad: Un análisis exploratorio sobre
Mentalidad y Capacidad Absortiva organizacional*

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ABSTRACT

Goal: The Growth Mindset is an attitude geared towards continuous development and learning, while the Fixed Mindset is associated with maintaining the status quo and a particular aversion to change. It is believed that an organization with individuals possessing a Growth Mindset will positively influence its Organizational Absorptive Capacity, acquiring, absorbing, and utilizing knowledge for the organization's benefit. In contrast, an organization endowed with individuals with a Fixed Mindset will negatively impact Organizational Absorptive Capacity. Thus, this article aims to analyze the relationship between the Growth Mindset, the Fixed Mindset, and Organizational Absorptive Capacity. **Methodology/Approach:** To this end, 230 individuals within organizations were surveyed, and the data were analyzed through structural equation modelling. **Originality/Relevance:** Despite its application in strategyship between Mindset and Organizational Absorptive Capacity has yet to be tested. **Main findings:** The results confirmed the study's hypotheses, indicating that individual Growth Mindset positively influences Organizational Absorptive Capacity, while Fixed Mindset negatively influences it. **Theoretical Contributions:** The study contributes to the Mindset theory applied in management and to the literature on absorptive capacity by adding Mindset as one of the predecessors of Organizational Absorptive Capacity. **Management Contribution:** Since Mindset is a construct that can be developed through training, managers can invest in its development within their teams, especially in organizational cultures focused on innovation and learning.

Keywords: Growth Mindset; Fixed Mindset; Absorptive Capacity.

RESUMO

Objetivo: O Mindset de Crescimento é uma atitude voltada para o desenvolvimento contínuo e aprendizado, enquanto o Mindset Fixo está ligado à uma manutenção do status quo e uma certa aversão à mudanças. Acredita-se que uma organização dotada de indivíduos com Mindset de Crescimento influenciará positivamente sua Capacidade Absortiva Organizacional, adquirindo, absorvendo e utilizando o conhecimento a favor da organização, enquanto uma organização dotada de indivíduos com Mindset Fixo influenciará negativamente a Capacidade Absortiva Organizacional. Assim, o objetivo deste artigo é verificar os efeitos do *Mindset* de indivíduos na Capacidade Absortiva organizacional. **Metodologia/abordagem:** Para este fim, um survey foi aplicado junto a 230 indivíduos dentro de organizações, e analisados por meio de modelagem de equações estruturais. **Originalidade/relevância:** Apesar de ser aplicado no campo da estratégia, até o atual momento ainda não foram testadas a relação entre o Mindset e a Capacidade Absortiva Organizacional. **Principais resultados:** Os resultados confirmaram as hipóteses do estudo, indicando que o *Mindset* de Crescimento individual influencia positivamente a Capacidade Absortiva organizacional, enquanto o *Mindset* Fixo influencia negativamente. **Contribuições teóricas:** O estudo acrescenta à teoria do Mindset aplicada na gestão, bem como à literatura da capacidade de absorção, adicionando o Mindset enquanto um dos predecessores de uma Capacidade Absortiva organizacional. **Contribuição para a gestão:** Uma vez que o Mindset é um construto que pode ser desenvolvido por meio de treinamentos, gestores podem investir em desenvolvê-lo dentro de seus times, principalmente em culturas organizacionais voltadas para a inovação e aprendizado.

Palavras-chave: Mindset de Crescimento; Mindset Fixo; Capacidades absorptivas.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El Mindset de Crecimiento es una actitud orientada al desarrollo continuo y al aprendizaje, mientras que el Mindset Fijo está vinculado a mantener el status quo y una cierta aversión al cambio. Se cree que una organización dotada de individuos con Mindset de Crecimiento influiría positivamente en su Capacidad Absortiva Organizacional, adquiriendo, absorbiendo y utilizando el conocimiento a favor de la organización, mientras que una organización con individuos con Mindset Fijo influiría negativamente en la Capacidad Absortiva Organizacional. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este artículo es verificar los efectos del Mindset de los individuos en la Capacidad Absortiva organizacional. **Metodología/enfoque:** Para este fin, se aplicó una encuesta a 230 individuos dentro de organizaciones y se analizó mediante modelado de ecuaciones estructurales. **Originalidad/relevancia:** A pesar de ser aplicado en el campo de la estrategia, hasta el momento no se ha probado la relación entre el Mindset y la Capacidad Absortiva Organizacional. **Principales resultados:** Los resultados confirmaron las hipótesis del estudio, indicando que el Mindset de Crecimiento individual influye positivamente en la Capacidad Absortiva organizacional, mientras que el Mindset Fijo influye negativamente. **Contribuciones teóricas:** El estudio contribuye a la teoría del Mindset aplicada en la gestión, así como a la literatura de la capacidad de absorción, agregando el Mindset como uno de los predecesores de una Capacidad Absortiva organizacional. **Contribución a la gestión:** Dado que el Mindset es un constructo que puede desarrollarse mediante entrenamiento, los gerentes pueden invertir en su desarrollo dentro de sus equipos, especialmente en culturas organizacionales orientadas a la innovación y el aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Mindset de Crecimiento; Mindset Fijo; Capacidades absorptivas.

■ INTRODUCTION

Organizations, in their pursuit of building competitive advantages, are divided into outside-in and inside-out logics. The former emphasizes differentiated positioning or cost leadership in broad or niche markets grounded in the principles of industrial economics. In this approach, the firm identifies market opportunities and subsequently structures itself to meet the perceived value demand issued by the market (Porter, 1985). In contrast, the inside-out logic posits that competitive advantage resides within the organization itself, focusing on the identification and/or development of notable resources that create and deliver value simultaneously or subsequently fostering market development (Barney, 1991).

Grant's (1996) approach is particularly noteworthy within the organization's resource-based view. He defines knowledge as a valuable intangible resource that drives sustainable competitive advantage (Nagano, 2020; Turylia & Bajgoric, 2018). However, merely possessing knowledge does not automatically confer a competitive advantage upon an organization. It is essential to properly integrate this knowledge into organizational routines and tasks, assimilate it across different sectors, and transform it into new processes, products, or services. Ultimately, the knowledge must be exploited and commercialized to bring organizational benefits and advantages (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Zahra & George, 2002).

The leader plays a fundamental role in absorbing and assimilating new knowledge, providing support to stimulate and cultivate innovative potential in their followers. They guide individuals with clear and concrete objectives and goals, systematically aligning employees' personal goals with those of the organization (Flatten, Adams, & Brettel, 2015). In addition to the leader, organizational culture is a significant driver of absorptive capacity, consisting of institutionalized values and beliefs that direct behaviours toward a specific objective (van Doorn et al., 2016). Furthermore, research and development (Fabrizio, 2009), the quality and trustworthiness of the information source (Ferrerias-Méndez et al., 2015), and a workforce that is experienced and qualified (Cassol et al., 2016; Garrido et al., 2017) also contribute to enhancing absorptive capacity. A well-developed absorptive capacity leads to higher financial, international, and overall organizational performance (Iyengar et al., 2017; Koerich et al., 2015; Engelen et al., 2015; Patel et al., 2015).

Finally, an organization that effectively acquires, absorbs, transforms, and exploits its knowledge relies not only on organizational culture and leadership style but also on the individual attitudes of its organizational agents. The Growth Mindset, characterized by a continuous focus on development and learning (Dweck, 1999; 2012; 2017; Roux & Hartel, 2018), can be enhanced and encouraged through training (Blackwell et al., 2007; Yeager et al., 2016). This Mindset aligns with the theory as it remains open to new learning experiences, is flexible to change, adept at dealing with transformational leaders and oriented towards development (Gong et al., 2009; Căniels et al., 2018). It also adapts well to innovation cultures where Absorptive Capacity

is promoted to generate new insights that lead to competitive advantage (Keating & Heslin, 2015; Fabrizio, 2009).

An individual with a learning goal orientation (Growth Mindset) proactively seeks out challenging and motivating tasks, avoiding complacency with routines and current performance levels, and effectively dealing with change and flexibility (Dweck, 2017; Roux & Härtel, 2018; Bower & Konwerski, 2017). Considering that Absorptive Capacity directly depends on the level of experience and prior knowledge of individuals within an organization, one of the keys to enhancing it is fostering a Growth Mindset among employees.

An individual with a Growth Mindset seeks opportunities, pursues new knowledge, and is open to changes and anything that disrupts their status quo. Such an individual, as part of an organization with high Absorptive Capacity, will be able to utilize helpful information from the environment for the organization's benefit, filtering out content and knowledge beyond its scope, assimilating information, sharing it with peers, and contributing to its commercialization and subsequent competitive advantage (Bedford, 2017; Zingoni & Byron, 2017). Studies on Mindset primarily focus on pursuing new knowledge (Wheeler & Omair, 2016). Therefore, analyzing it in conjunction with organizational Absorptive Capacity presents an opportunity, as both concepts are linked to learning and organizational performance (Claro et al., 2016; Fagundes et al., 2014; Iyengar et al., 2017; Koerich et al., 2015; Engelen et al., 2015).

In contrast, a Fixed Mindset is an attitude oriented towards maintaining the status quo, where individuals with this Mindset resist change and learning, viewing development as a challenge to their current abilities (Dweck, 1999; 2017). Within a culture that promotes development, education, and innovation, such individuals can be counterproductive, focusing on their performance and avoiding new knowledge (Scott & Ghinea, 2013; Roux & Härtel, 2018). This study infers that a Fixed Mindset will have a negative influence on organizational Absorptive Capacity, as the latter values the absorption, assimilation, and utilization of new knowledge for the benefit and development of the organization (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Zahra & George, 2002).

Thus, in light of the previous discussion, this study is guided by the following research question: What is the influence of a development-oriented attitude (Growth Mindset) or a status quo-oriented attitude (Fixed Mindset) on the organizational capacity to absorb, assimilate, and utilize knowledge for the benefit of the organization (organizational Absorptive Capacity)?

Based on this research problem, the present study aims to verify the effects of Mindset on organizational Absorptive Capacity. Specifically, it seeks to analyze the positive influence of a Growth Mindset on organizational Absorptive Capacity and examine the negative influence of a Fixed Mindset on organizational Absorptive Capacity. The research employed exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modelling to achieve this.

The study contributes to the literature on behavioural strategy, particularly the theory of absorptive capacity, by suggesting Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset as potential antecedents, a relationship not previously explored in earlier studies. It also adds to the literature on Mindset applied in Management (Ferreira et al., 2020), which remains in an embryonic stage, by utilizing samples of individuals within organizations, aligning with other studies that use student samples (Ferreira et al., 2019).

Managerially, the study contributes by attempting to understand which factors influence and enhance organizational absorptive capacity. By suggesting that one of these factors is the Growth Mindset, an attitude that can be developed through training (Blackwell et al., 2007), this study offers a potential tool to help individuals within an innovation-oriented organizational culture achieve their full potential and performance.

MINDSET

Research on Mindset is underpinned by a bias that views intelligence as malleable, subject to development through training, alongside neuroscience studies illustrating the brain's growth as it acquires and learns new skills and competencies (Gardner, 1995). Dweck (1999; 2012; 2017) initiated studies on Mindset in the psychological and pedagogical realms, grounded in positive psychology (French II, 2016), advocating that individuals hold attitudes/beliefs guiding them towards two goals: learning and performance. This assertion was validated in a meta-analysis conducted by Burnette et al. (2013).

When an individual is oriented toward learning goals - that is, possessing a Growth Mindset - they will pursue and make choices for personal improvement, whether in work, education, relationships, or other aspects of life. This enhancement involves their development, the pursuit of new knowledge, challenges, new learning experiences, and changes that continually challenge their status quo, which, in this context, is not seen as an obstacle (Dweck, 1999; 2012; 2017).

On the other hand, an individual oriented toward performance goals - a Fixed Mindset - believes in the immutability of their abilities and intelligence. They are overly attached to their status quo, thinking they have already reached their entire state of development, and any effort towards change seems unnecessary and often painful. Consequently, this individual may block any opportunity for growth and change that arises for them (Dweck, 1999; 2012; 2017).

According to Dweck (1999; 2017), everyone possesses both types of Mindset, depending on their situation. The Fixed Mindset is not always detrimental; for instance, professionals dealing with basic programming may not require new knowledge (Scott & Ghinea, 2013), and the same may apply to those working in environments where changes and new knowledge are not welcomed. However, this is not the case for many organizations in a contemporary environment surrounded by technology, constantly receiving new information and competing in a dynamic environment, which demands flexibility in the face of changes (Roux & Härtel, 2018).

Studies on Growth Mindset primarily focus on the pedagogical and psychological domains (Wheeler & Omair, 2016), linking Growth Mindset to increased performance (Claro et al., 2016; Fagundes et al., 2014), ease of learning (Bedford, 2017), increased engagement (Zeng et al., 2016), enhanced resilience (Yeager et al., 2014; Leite et al., 2023), reduced stressors, and psychosomatic issues such as anxiety and depression (Schroder et al., 2016; Schroder et al., 2017), as well as persistence in diets and healthy eating habits (Burnette & Finkel, 2012).

Within management studies, research in this area is still in its infancy, with some studies being conducted within the realm of consumer behaviour (Murphy & Dweck, 2016; Puente-Díaz & Cavazos-Arroyo, 2019; Carnevalle et al., 2018; Song et al., 2019; Japutra et al., 2019), leadership (Wang et al., 2018; Caniëls et al., 2017), and strategy (Özduran & Tanova, 2017; Zingoni & Byron, 2017; Rattan & Dweck, 2018; Ferreira et al., 2019). Nonetheless, there are works insisting that the field of management is fruitful for such studies, highlighting the benefits of an organization with employees possessing this type of Mindset, as well as the importance of developing such an attitude in employees through specific training mentioned in the literature (Roux & Härtel, 2018; Bower & Konwinski, 2017; Ferreira et al., 2023; Blackwell et al., 2007; Yeager et al., 2016).

Within studies of strategy and leadership, there is a noticeable concern with behaviours such as organizational citizenship (Özduran & Tanova, 2017), receptivity to feedback (Zingoni & Byron, 2017), leader humility (Wang et al., 2018) with Growth Mindset, resistance to workplace biases (Rattan & Dweck, 2018), and the link between employees with a Growth Mindset, transformational leaders, proactivity, and work engagement (Caniëls et al., 2017). Keating and Hesling (2015) point out leadership style as one of the pillars for fostering a Growth Mindset in an organizational setting, a notion supported by Caniëls et al. (2017), who argue that transformational leaders can effectively synergize with those possessing a Growth Mindset, while individuals with a Fixed Mindset, when faced with transformational leaders, may feel pressured, uncomfortable, and develop heightened anxiety and stress.

Studies have suggested a relationship between individuals' entrepreneurial potential and Growth Mindset, both for business students (Ferreira et al., 2019) and individuals within startups (Ferreira et al., 2023). Additionally, a series of works link Mindset to other management fields, such as consumer behaviour (Ferreira et al., 2020). However, the application of Mindset in management studies is still in its infancy and has the potential to be studied alongside a range of other strategic constructs (Ferreira et al., 2020), including absorptive capacity – a topic that will be addressed in the next section.

■ ORGANIZATIONAL ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY

The knowledge-based view, stemming from the approach that perceives the organization's internal resources as the driving force behind sustainable competitive advantage, prioritizes tacit (know-how) and explicit (know-about) knowledge as the most important asset (Grant, 1996; Nagano, 2020). However, knowledge must be effectively assimilated by the organization and utilized to its benefit to be considered a competitive advantage, making it essential to discuss the concept of Absorptive Capacity for this purpose.

The concept of Absorptive Capacity emerged with Cohen and Levinthal (1990), describing an organization's ability to acquire, assimilate, and transform knowledge to be used for commercial purposes, thereby generating innovative potential. Cohen and Levinthal (1990) emphasize the importance of developing individual absorption capacity, which consequently leads to the systemic development of organizational Absorptive Capacity.

For personal development purposes, it is necessary to consider the level of prior knowledge and investment in research and development.

To develop Absorptive Capacity, organizations need to focus on investment in research and development (Fabrizio, 2009; Fosfuri & Tribó, 2008), quality and trustworthiness of external knowledge sources (Ferrerias-Méndez et al., 2015), employees' prior educational level (Seo et al., 2015; Cassol et al., 2016), organizational culture (van Doorn et al., 2017), management of information technologies (Iyengar et al., 2015), types of leadership (Flatten et al., 2015; Ferreras-Méndez et al., 2018), and past performance (Garrido et al., 2017). As a result of high Absorptive Capacity within an organization, studies have linked the concept to the development of an orientation towards innovation and tangible innovative performance (Fabrizio, 2009; Cassol et al., 2016; Kostopoulos et al., 2011; Ferreras-Méndez et al., 2015; Garrido et al., 2017; Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). There is also evidence of its association with financial performance (Iyengar et al., 2015; Koerich et al., 2015), entrepreneurial orientation (van Doorn et al., 2017), creativity (Seo et al., 2015), and the organization's international performance (Wu & Voss, 2014).

The organization acts as an encourager of organizational Absorptive Capacity. Such capacity, systematically linked to the organizational culture in which the organization operates, including its workforce, must possess a Mindset focused on learning and absorbing this information to transform it into a competitive advantage. Following this theoretical framework, one can perceive the importance of human knowledge as a resource leading to sustainable competitive advantage, as the tacit knowledge contained within the organization underpins its premises and processes, which competitors can imitate if not correctly managed.

A growth Mindset is positively related to learning (Dweck, 2012; 2017), linked to ease of understanding (Bedford, 2017), and better assimilation of feedback (Zingoni & Byron, 2017). Individuals with a Growth Mindset are inclined towards continuous learning and seek new knowledge and skills that motivate and challenge them. To learn, externally acquired knowledge must be adequately absorbed, disseminated internally, transformed, and exploited, concepts that characterize organizational absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Zahra & George, 2002). Thus, the growth Mindset is expected to positively affect potential and realized absorptive capacities.

An adequate absorptive capacity considers the prior knowledge of its individuals (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). When individuals are committed to continuous evolution and development, enhanced by a Growth Mindset, within an organizational environment, they can contribute to organizational absorptive capacity. These individuals will not fear challenges but instead face them in pursuit of personal growth, and this quest for knowledge and learning will positively correlate with organizational absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Zahra & George, 2002; Dweck, 2012; 2017; Roux & Härtel, 2018).

Individuals with a Fixed Mindset, focused on performance and prioritizing their development and continuous learning, tend to avoid challenges and changes that disrupt their routines (Dweck, 2012; 2017). Such an individual will resist acquiring new knowledge, struggle to assimilate it within organizational boundaries, and avoid organizational changes, as they value institutionalized routines and rituals (Bedford, 2017; Roux & Härtel, 2018). Moreover, this individual will face difficulties working in teams, adopting a

competitive stance that hampers sharing tacit knowledge with peers, thereby impairing organizational absorptive capacity. Thus, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H01: The individual Growth Mindset positively influences organizational Absorptive Capacity.

H02: The individual Fixed Mindset negatively influences organizational Absorptive Capacity.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research, although proposing to investigate a previously unexplored relationship between constructs, fits the mould of an exploratory study but can also be considered descriptive and confirmatory in nature, as its objective is to associate different variables with inferring a causal relationship (Hair et al., 2009; Malhotra, 2019).

The sample consisted of 230 individuals, employees from various organizations, collected through non-probabilistic sampling via the internet, from October 16, 2019, to December 12, 2019. The sample size aligns with the recommendation of Hair et al. (2009), suggesting 10 respondents per questionnaire item - the instrument used in the study comprised 23 items.

The questionnaire used to measure the Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset was adapted from the instrument suggested by Vandewalle (1997), which utilizes the concept of the Growth Mindset tailored to questions applicable in an organizational context from the original questionnaire consisting of 13 questions, five items characterizing the Growth Mindset and four items characterizing the Fixed Mindset were selected. The Performance Fixed Mindset statements were excluded, as this study follows Dweck's binary view, focusing on a Mindset either blocking growth or oriented toward learning and development, with no middle ground.

On the other hand, the questionnaire employed to measure Absorptive Capacity was adapted from Flatten et al. (2011). It originally comprised 14 questions encompassing four constructs: acquiring, assimilating, transforming, and exploiting information. The questionnaire was used in its entirety. For both scales, a 7-point Likert scale was used, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 7 representing "strongly agree."

Both questionnaires were translated into Portuguese and validated through pilot tests with five managers. No semantic or grammatical discrepancies were found that would invalidate any questions. Thus, both questionnaires underwent validation through exploratory factor analysis, wherein Cronbach's alpha, KMO, Bartlett's sphericity test, total variance, and loadings of each questionnaire and each construct were calculated subsequently (Hair et al., 2009).

The questionnaire by Flatten et al. (2011) encountered issues with Cronbach's alpha, reaching a value of 0.927, indicating the presence of redundant items in the instrument - the recommended range is between 0.70 and 0.90 (Hair et al., 2009). Upon reviewing the questionnaire, items CA4, CA5, CA10, and CA12 were removed, which indeed showed redundancy with the

constructs they aimed to measure. With the exclusion of these items, Cronbach's alpha was 0.897, a high value falling within the recommended range in the literature, demonstrating reliability and validity, with KMO = 0.885, var = 53.090, Bartlett = 1174.495, df = 45, and $p < 0.000$ - values consistent with Hair et al. (2009). However, exploratory factor analysis indicated a reduction in constructs, grouping all remaining items into a single construct. On the other hand, the questionnaire adapted from Vandewalle (1997) exhibited an alpha within the expected range (0.784), with KMO = 0.829, var = 67.916, Bartlett = 966.513, df = 36, and $p < 0.000$. The Growth Mindset construct demonstrated $\alpha = 0.861$, KMO = 0.854, var = 64.771, Bartlett = 510.594, df = 10, and $p < 0.000$, while the Fixed Mindset construct indicated $\alpha = 0.864$, KMO = 0.812, Bartlett = 433.184, df = 6, and $p < 0.000$. Thus, the questionnaire demonstrated validity and reliability and is presented in Appendix 1.

Following the approach of prior studies (Maia et al., 2012; Río-Ramírez et al., 2017; Júnior et al., 2019; Ramirez-Garcia et al., 2019; DAmario & Comini, 2020), after the instrument validation based on exploratory factor analysis, the data were exported to SmartPLS software, employing structural equation modelling to test the proposed hypotheses. The preliminary and subsequent data preparation and analysis procedures in the selected software (SmartPLS SEM 3.0) were conducted following the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2017).

Hair et al. (2017) argue that structural equation modelling comprises two essential components: (i) the structural model, or "path model," which relates independent variables to dependent variables, and (ii) the measurement model, which allows the use of indicators to assess the contribution of each in representing (or conceptualizing) a dependent or independent variable.

According to Hair et al. (2017), evaluation of reflective measurement models includes (i) analysis of composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and outer loadings to assess internal consistency; (ii) examination of indicator reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for convergent validity; and (iii) assessment of Fornell-Larcker criterion, Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and cross-loadings for divergent validity. Conversely, the structural model was analyzed based on hypothesis testing (t-test), coefficient of determination, and assessment of predictive relevance.

To address potential biases in the research instrument, the recommendations of Podsakoff et al. (2003) were followed, informing participants that there were no correct answers and encouraging them to respond based on their perceptions of the accuracy of the statements about their expectations and experiences while ensuring respondent anonymity and information confidentiality. Additionally, a standard method bias was conducted to examine possible distortions by comparing responses between the first and last 25% of respondents - this analysis did not indicate any bias (Aker et al., 2017). Regarding missing data, since the questionnaires were administered via Google Forms, the "required response" feature was enabled for all items, ensuring no questionnaires had missing data. This measure was also applied in studies by Christino et al. (2018). Subsequently, an outlier assessment was performed. No problems of this nature were identified in the dataset, indicating data normality.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The study sample consists of 51% female participants, the majority belonging to the age group of 18 to 38 years (72%), with undergraduate (39%) or completed postgraduate degrees (50.43%), all currently employed, and the majority from Minas Gerais (77%). 45% are from Belo Horizonte, 3% are from the metropolitan area, and 29% are scattered mainly in the South and Midwest regions of Minas. Table 1 provides an overview of the sample.

Table 1

Sample Characteristics

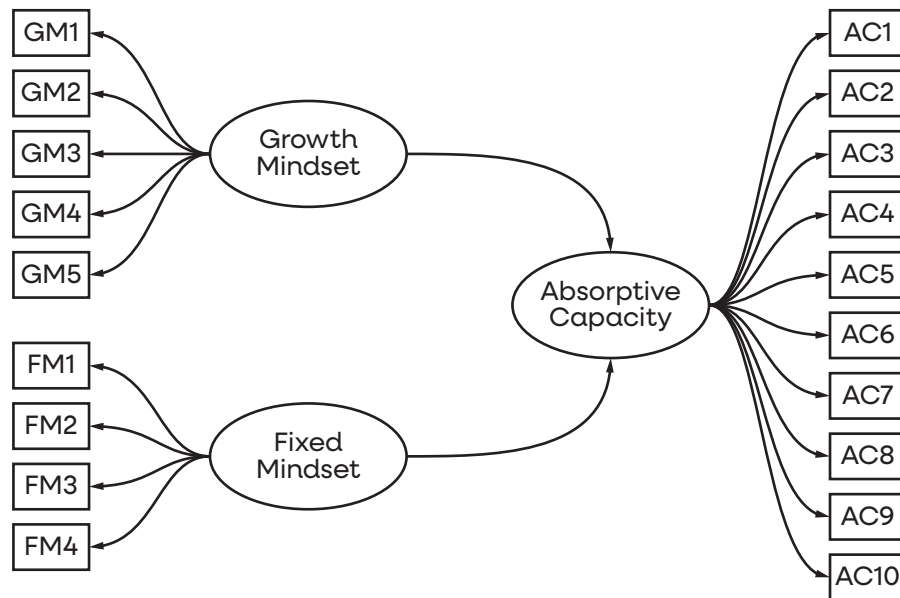
Gênero		
Female	117	50,87%
Male	113	49,13%

Idade		
18 to 28 years	82	35,65%
29 to 38 years	84	36,52%
39 to 48 years	43	18,70%
49 to 58 years	21	9,13%

Escolaridade		
High School	24	10,43%
Undergraduate	90	39,13%
Postgraduate	116	50,43%

Região		
AM	12	5,22%
BA	2	0,87%
BH	104	45,22%
Metropolitan region	6	2,61%
MG	67	29,13%
CE	3	1,30%
ES	3	1,30%
GO	2	0,87%
PB	1	0,43%
PR	2	0,87%
RS	2	0,87%
RJ	4	1,74%
SC	2	0,87%
SP	20	8,70%
Southeast	204	
Northeast	6	
North	12	
Midwest	2	
South	6	

Considering the aim of this research to investigate the effects of individuals' Mindsets on organizational Absorptive Capacity, the following reflective model, represented in Figure 1, was developed.

Figure 1*Hypothetical Model*

The model was estimated using the PLS algorithm, employing SmartPLS software, following the parameters recommended by Hair et al. (2017), including the stopping criterion for the algorithm when reaching the maximum number of 300 iterations or achieving the stop criterion of 1.0E-5. The measurement model explains how well the theory fits the data and the requirements for analysis. The first analysis comprises the convergent validity of the measurement model – that is, to what extent an indicator correlates positively with indicators of the same construct (Hair et al., 2017). Convergent validity comprises the analysis of outer loadings and the average variance extracted.

In the analysis of outer loadings, indicators with outer loadings below the reference value of 0.700 were excluded: MC5 (0.687), belonging to the Growth Mindset construct, and CA3 (0.478), belonging to Absorptive Capacity. AVE establishes convergent validity at the construct level (Hair et al., 2017). All constructs exhibited AVE values higher than the suggested minimum of 0.50. The lowest obtained value, 0.565, occurred in the Absorptive Capacity construct. AVE values can be seen in Table 2.

On the other hand, reliability tested by the model's internal consistency indicates the degree to which the measures are free from errors that affect measurement randomly – formed by Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability. According to Hair et al. (2017), Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0 to 1, where values from 0.70 to 0.90 are satisfactory and those above 0.90 are undesirable. Absorptive Capacity exhibits a value of 0.904, exceeding the suggested threshold of 0.900. It was retained due to its proximity to the limit. Composite reliability, on the other hand, displayed values above 0.70, falling within the range recommended by the literature (Hair et al., 2017). The values can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2

Internal consistency of the measurement model

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Absorptive Capacity	0,904	0,915	0,921	0,565
Growth Mindset	0,859	0,859	0,905	0,703
Fixed Mindset	0,866	0,888	0,908	0,711

Finally, discriminant validity is evaluated, which consists of the extent to which a construct differs from the other constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2017) – formed by the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and HTMT criterion. The Fornell-Larcker criterion indicates that the square root of the AVE of each construct should be greater than the highest correlation with each construct (Hair et al., 2017). Table 3 reveals that all constructs meet the criteria.

Table 3

The Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Absorptive Capacity	Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
Absorptive Capacity	0,752		
Growth Mindset	0,474	0,839	
Fixed Mindset	–0,191	–0,108	0,843

Cross-loadings should be higher than all other loadings of the constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4 shows that the cross-loadings are adequate.

Table 4

Cross-loadings of the measurement model

	Absorptive Capacity	Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
CA1	0,713	0,379	–0,134
CA10	0,824	0,433	–0,197
CA2	0,722	0,266	–0,132
CA4	0,728	0,280	–0,174
CA5	0,709	0,265	–0,119
CA6	0,759	0,354	–0,105
CA7	0,738	0,300	–0,143
CA8	0,74	0,359	–0,181
CA9	0,826	0,476	–0,107
MC1	0,400	0,849	–0,017

Mindset-Yourself: An exploratory analysis on Mindset and Organizational Absorptive Capacity

	Absorptive Capacity	Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
MC2	0,392	0,814	-0,108
MC3	0,400	0,873	-0,121
MC4	0,396	0,817	-0,117
MFD1	-0,112	-0,070	0,816
MFD2	-0,190	-0,162	0,884
MFD3	-0,152	-0,047	0,802
MFD4	-0,171	-0,067	0,868

Note. AC = Absorptive Capacity; GM = Growth Mindset; FM = Fixed Mindset

Like the previous ones, the HTMT criterion (Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio) aims to determine whether the construct is unique. HTMT values between construct relationships should be less than 0.9. Table 5 reveals that all constructs satisfy this condition.

Table 5

HTMT of the measurement model

	Absorptive Capacity	Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
Absorptive Capacity			
Growth Mindset	0,522		
Fixed Mindset	0,21	0,136	

The assessment of the reflexive measurement model reveals that it exhibits internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Therefore, it becomes possible to proceed with evaluating the structural model.

The structural model examines the predictive capability of the model and the relationships between constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The assessment of collinearity in the structural model is carried out by examining the tolerance values and VIF, considering values of tolerance equal to or greater than 0.20 and VIF values equal to or less than 5.00 as not indicative of collinearity between constructs (Hair et al., 2017). None of the constructs in the model exhibited collinearity issues, as indicated by the tolerance and VIF values obtained. In other words, statistical collinearity among predictors is not a critical issue in the structural model (Table 6).

Table 6*Assessment of collinearity in the structural model*

	Capacidade absorptiva	Mindset de Crescimento	Mindset fixo
Capacidade Absortiva			
Mindset de Crescimento	1,012		
Mindset Fixo	1,012		

After addressing the measurement model, the evaluation of the structural model is where the research hypotheses are tested, following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2017). The research hypotheses are visualized in the path diagram presented in Table 7 below. To identify the significance of a coefficient, the T-test value was used, which should be equal to or greater than 2.58, 1.96, and 1.57 for significance levels of 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, hypothesis 1, that the Growth Mindset influences Absorptive Capacity, and hypothesis 2, that the Fixed Mindset negatively influences organizational Absorptive Capacity, are entirely accepted.

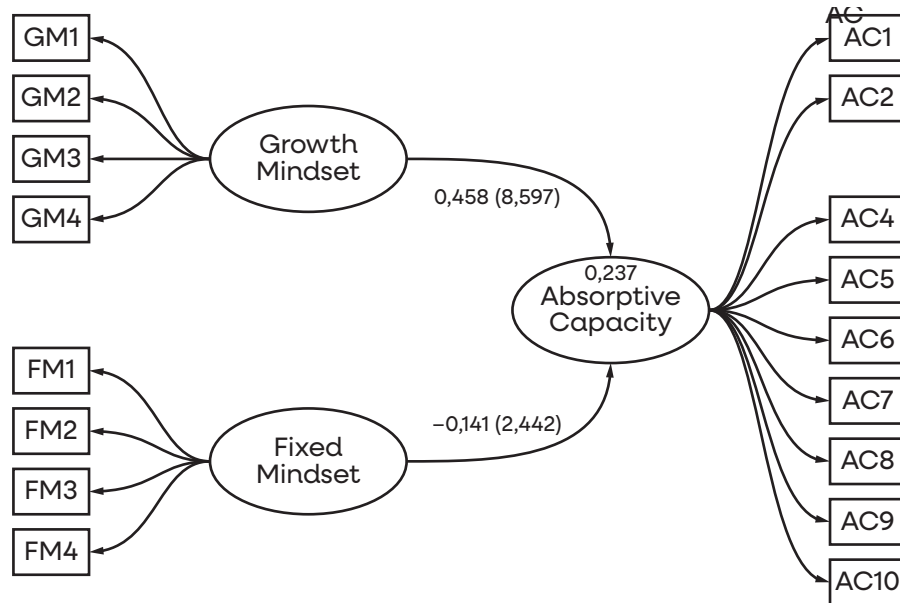
Table 7*Hypothesis Testing*

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t-statistic (O/STDEV)	p value
Growth Mindset + Absorptive Capacity	0,458	0,461	0,053	8,597	0,000
Fixed Mindset + Absorptive Capacity	-0,141	-0,149	0,058	2,442	0,015

The R^2 , known as the “Coefficient of Determination,” represents the combination of the effects of exogenous (independent) constructs on a specific endogenous (dependent) construct (Hair et al., 2017). The coefficient of determination measures the model’s predictive power, representing the combined effects of latent variables on the endogenous variable. Determination coefficients are evaluated by values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67, corresponding to weak, moderate, and substantial effects, respectively (Hair et al., 2017). The R^2 of the study was 0.244, and the adjusted R^2 was 0.237. Thus, the predictive capacity of Mindset on Absorptive Capacity is 23.70%, as depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Structural model



In turn, predictive relevance assessment (f^2) aims to evaluate whether the omission of a particular construct in the model significantly impacts the endogenous constructs. When the R^2 of a particular endogenous construct decreases after excluding a specific exogenous construct, it signifies that the latter has predictive relevance for the former. As a reference for evaluating f^2 values, Cohen (1988) provides values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for small, medium, and significant effects of the model's exogenous constructs. According to the model, the f^2 of Growth Mindset on organizational Absorptive Capacity is considered medium (0.275), while the f^2 of Fixed Mindset on organizational Absorptive Capacity is considered low (0.026).

Finally, the model fit was assessed using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), a metric that compares observed and predicted correlations for evaluation. A value less than 0.08 is acceptable (Henseler et al., 2015). In this study, the model exhibited an SRMR value of 0.065, providing evidence to assert the adequacy and suitability of the model.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the relationship between individual Mindset and organizational Absorptive Capacity. To achieve this, and based on the literature, two hypotheses were formulated: (i) Individual Growth Mindset has a positive influence on organizational Absorptive Capacity, and (ii) Individual Fixed Mindset has a negative influence on organizational Absorptive Capacity.

The study's first hypothesis was confirmed, with a path coefficient of 0.458, t Statistics of 8.597, and $p < 0.05$, demonstrating a positive relationship between them. Even though the relationship was not empirically tested in previous studies, the hypothesis was corroborated since an individual with a growth Mindset is expected to use new information well and not pose

barriers to learning. It is considered that their orientation is toward learning goals, being flexible to change, and performing well under transformational leadership that encourages change, within a culture focused on innovation (Dweck, 1999; 2012; 2017; Bedford, 2017; Roux & Härtel, 2018). These characteristics positively influence organizational Absorptive Capacity, as these individuals can acquire information and assimilate it into their work environment, as well as explore this information, being able to extract from it a resource to be transformed into a competitive advantage (Zahra & George, 2002; Flatten et al., 2015; Flatten et al., 2011). The Mindset emerges as a precursor to organizational Absorptive Capacity because incentives from leaders and organizational culture, or the high educational level of the employee (Seo et al., 2015; Flatten et al., 2015; Fabrizio, 2009; van Doorn et al., 2016), are of no avail if they do not have a direction towards learning and development - Growth Mindset - and may even act as an inhibitor of engagement, proactivity, and trigger stressors in the individual (Caniels et al., 2017; Schroder et al., 2016; Schroder et al., 2017).

On the other hand, Hypothesis 2 was also confirmed, indicating that a Fixed Mindset hurts an organization's Absorptive Capacity, both potential and realized, with a path coefficient of -0.141, *t* Statistics of 2.442, and $p < 0.05$. Consistent with the argument made earlier, an individual with a focus on maintaining the status quo and goals centred around their performance, when placed in a culture geared towards innovation and continuous learning, will encounter difficulties as they do not prioritize seeking knowledge and improvement (Caniels et al., 2017; Roux & Hartel, 2018; Dweck, 2017; Scott & Ghinea, 2013; Bower & Konwerski, 2017).

Such an individual will likely feel pressured and hesitant in the face of the need to innovate and be flexible to the changes demanded in this organizational environment. Therefore, it is expected that a person with a Fixed Mindset will need help to acquire new information and assimilate it adequately to effectively explore and transform it into a valuable resource for the organization. After all, opportunities that imply questioning their current abilities threaten their status quo, which must be avoided (Zingoni & Byron, 2017; Dweck, 2012; 2017).

Finally, a coefficient of determination of 23.70% was found. The Mindset's ability to predict absorptive capacity is weak, which may change given the plethora of previous studies proposing a variety of determinants for the construct not studied in this research. In future research, adopting other variables, such as past absorption performance, leadership style, investment in R&D, individuals' prior experience, and level of education, could potentially enhance the explanatory power of the model.

■ FINAL REMARKS

Knowledge is a valuable asset in an organization, serving as a source for innovations, successful strategies, and competitive advantage when competently acquired, transformed, explored, and utilized. Studies demonstrate the importance of organizational incentives, employees' prior experiences, and knowledge to achieve this. However, an unexplored question is whether attitudes toward development (Growth Mindset) or maintaining the status quo

(Fixed Mindset) influence the organization's capacity to absorb, assimilate, and utilize knowledge to its advantage (organizational Absorptive Capacity).

Ultimately, this is the main conclusion of this study: the Growth Mindset, characterized by a focus on continuous learning goals and self-improvement, is positively related to the organizational capacity to acquire, assimilate, explore, and transform information – organizational Absorptive Capacity. These stages of absorptive capacity are emphasized, as an organization that merely acquires information without utilizing it cannot effectively transform that knowledge into a competitive advantage.

In contrast, someone with a Fixed Mindset lacks this orientation towards learning; instead, they are focused on their performance. Translating this statement into the business environment, this individual values doing their task well more than learning new things or challenging themselves, even avoiding anything that tests their skills. Even if new information is acquired, it is not transformed into a competitive advantage because this information is perceived more as a threat than an opportunity. These characteristics are not conducive to an organization that promotes high absorptive capacity and the pursuit of competitive advantage through knowledge.

A limitation of the study is the sample size, which is limited to the scope of Minas Gerais, potentially introducing cultural divergences. The cross-sectional nature of the research also allows room for future studies to invest in experimental and longitudinal designs. It is also suggested that other determinants of absorptive capacity alongside Mindset be explored to enhance the model's explanatory power, given that Mindset accounts for 23.7% of the variance. Moderator variables such as gender, age, and educational level were not examined in this study and could be considered in future research. Similarly, it is acknowledged that individuals within private and public organizations differ on numerous issues, and a thorough analysis comparing these two environments may yield variations in results – a factor not addressed by the sample in this study.

As a suggestion for future research, this study advises a deeper investigation into other variables that may influence absorptive capacity alongside Mindset, either directly or indirectly through mediation. For example, it was found that transformational leadership positively relates to both Growth Mindset and absorptive capacity. Thus, studies incorporating this variable into the model are welcomed. Furthermore, research focusing on a specific type of organizational culture, such as the study by Ferreira et al. (2023) that explored Growth Mindset and Entrepreneurial Potential in start-up environments – organizations immersed in an innovation culture – could yield exciting results. Additionally, examining different organizational cultures, such as private versus public organizations, may yield valuable insights as public management pursues different outcomes than private organizations (Catelli & Santos, 2004). Lastly, it is believed that alternative approaches and epistemologies, beyond surveys or experimental research – shared in this type of study – may bring forth new variables and intervening factors for understanding the phenomenon of Mindset within management studies.

As a managerial contribution, it is commendable for managers to value employees who commit to continuous learning and development, especially within an innovation culture (Dobni, 2008). Not only in the recruitment and selection process, where managers can prioritize the search for individuals with a Growth Mindset as part of cultural fit, but they can also

utilize training programs to enhance Growth Mindset attitudes among individuals within the organization, as demonstrated by Blackwell et al. (2007).

The article contributes to studies applying Mindset in strategy and management studies as a theoretical contribution. The origin and predominance of studies on Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset are found in health, psychology, and pedagogy studies. Research on Mindset in management is still evolving, focusing on consumer behaviour. However, strategic studies have a premise to explore Mindset, such as leadership styles, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial potential, among others. It also contributes to the literature on absorptive capacity by suggesting cognitive antecedents, beyond contextual ones, that enhance the ability to absorb, assimilate, and utilize knowledge, aiming for sustainable competitive advantage.

This research, therefore, highlights its managerial contribution by demonstrating that beyond organizations encouraging research and development, stimulating the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge to gain a competitive advantage, and seeking individuals with high levels of qualification, it is commendable for organizations to seek individuals who are committed to continuous learning and development. Consequently, it refutes those solely focused on their current skills and performance, needing more flexibility in the face of changes and the dynamics of the corporate world. In addition to recruitment, managers can implement training programs aimed at developing a Growth Mindset in their employees, as Mindset is an attitude that can be encouraged and, as such, is contextual and malleable.



APENDIXES

Apêndice 1

Table 8

Validated questionnaire

Absorptive Capacity

Questões	Carga fatorial
1) A busca por informações relevantes relacionadas ao nosso mercado de atuação é uma prática diária constante em nossa organização.	,668
2) Nossos gestores encorajam nossos funcionários a utilizarem fontes de informação específicas do nosso mercado de atuação.	,754
3) Nossos gestores esperam que nossos funcionários se coloquem em contato com informações não relacionadas ao nosso mercado.	,528
4) Em nossa organização, há um fluxo de informação rápido e eficiente. Ex: Se um departamento obtém uma informação importante, ele prontamente a comunica para todos os outros departamentos. Ex: Se um departamento obtém uma informação importante, ele prontamente a comunica para todos os outros departamentos.	,737
5) Nossa gerência exige a realização periódica de reuniões gerais entre departamentos para a troca de informações relacionadas a novos desenvolvimentos, problemas e resultados alcançados.	,723
6) Nossos funcionários sabem como estruturar e utilizar um conhecimento adquirido fora da organização nas suas funções internas.	,725
7) Nossos funcionários estão acostumados a coletarem novos conhecimentos, prepará-los para objetivos futuros e deixá-los acessíveis.	,733
8) Nossos funcionários são capazes de aplicar novos conhecimentos em seus trabalhos cotidianos	,705
9) Nossa organização frequentemente reexamina tecnologias utilizadas e as adapta de acordo com novos conhecimentos adquiridos.	,737
10) Nossa organização tem a habilidade de continuar produzindo de forma mais efetiva a partir da adoção de novas tecnologias.	,756

Growth Mindset

Questões	Carga fatorial
1) Eu estou disposto a escolher tarefas desafiadoras em meu trabalho, com as quais eu possa aprender bastante.	,771
2) Eu frequentemente procuro por oportunidades para desenvolver novas habilidades e conhecimentos.	,735
3) Eu gosto de tarefas difíceis e desafiadoras, nas quais eu possa aprender novas habilidades.	,827
4) Para mim, desenvolver habilidades no trabalho é importante, o bastante para que eu assuma riscos para desenvolvê-las.	,782
5) Eu prefiro situações no trabalho que exijam alto nível de habilidade e talento.	,747

Fixed Mindset

Questões	Carga fatorial
1) Eu me preocupo em mostrar que posso desempenhar minhas tarefas melhor que meus colegas.	,789
2) Eu tento entender o que posso fazer para provar minhas habilidades para as outras pessoas em meu trabalho.	,724
3) Eu gosto quando outras pessoas no meu trabalho saibam o quanto eu desempenho bem meu trabalho.	,740
4) Eu prefiro tarefas em que possa provar minhas habilidades para outras pessoas em meu trabalho.	,804

Note. Validated by Flatten et al. (2011) and Vandewalle (1997).



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