

Introduction

- We examined the effect of mindset and naturalness bias on author preference.
- People tend to show a naturalness bias, preferring the work of people who came by their talent naturally rather than through effort (Tsay & Banaji, 2011).
- Additionally, people tend to have either a fixed mindset - seeing abilities as stable and unlikely to change - or a growth mindset - seeing abilities as able to be altered through effort (Dweck, 2006).
- We manipulated participants mindset and examined the effect of having a growth or fixed mindset on the prevalence of the naturalness bias.

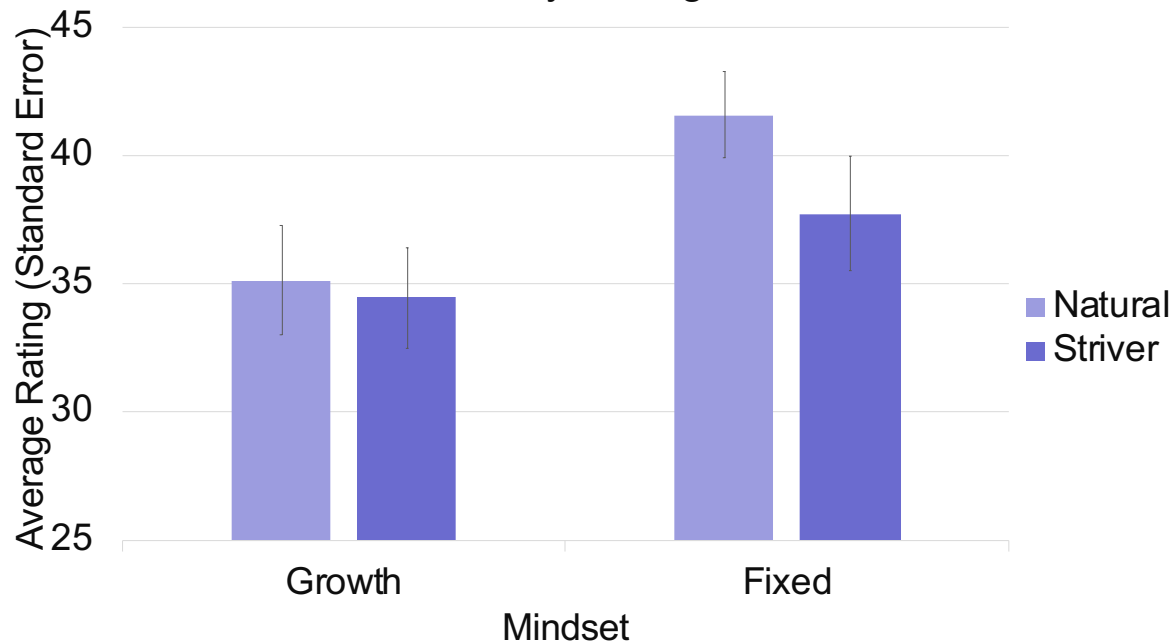
Method

- Forty college students participated.
- Participants were randomly assigned to either the fixed mindset – reading an essay about differences in the brain structure of Albert Einstein - or the growth mindset - reading an essay about the hard work that Malala Yousafzai went through to improve as a student - condition.
- Participants then read 2 essays by authors described as being successful either due to natural talent – natural – or as due to hard work – striver.
- Essays were rated on liking and quality.

Results

- There was no overall preference for the natural ($M = 38.38$, $SD = 9.07$) over the striver ($M = 36.10$, $SD = 9.40$; $F(1,38) = 1.77$, $p = .19$, $\eta^2 = .05$).
- There was a significant effect of mindset, with higher ratings after the fixed mindset reading ($M = 39.68$, $SD = 8.75$) than after the growth mindset reading ($M = 34.80$, $SD = 9.13$; $F(1,38) = 4.61$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .11$).
- There was no significant interaction between the mindset manipulation and the naturalness manipulation ($F(1,38) = 0.85$, $p = .36$, $\eta^2 = .02$).

Essay Ratings



Discussion

- Participants gave higher ratings after reading the fixed mindset essay (about Einstein) than after the growth mindset essay (about Malala).
- In line with the naturalness bias, the fixed mindset manipulation might have primed ideas of naturalness that were applied to the essays no matter how the author was described.
- Alternatively, in line with the halo effect, the fixed mindset manipulation about Einstein might have primed notions of intelligence that led to higher ratings for the following essays.