RESEARCH PAPER · 21

‘Yet’ Is Not Enough

A Meta-Analysis of Growth-Mindset Interventions in Working Adults

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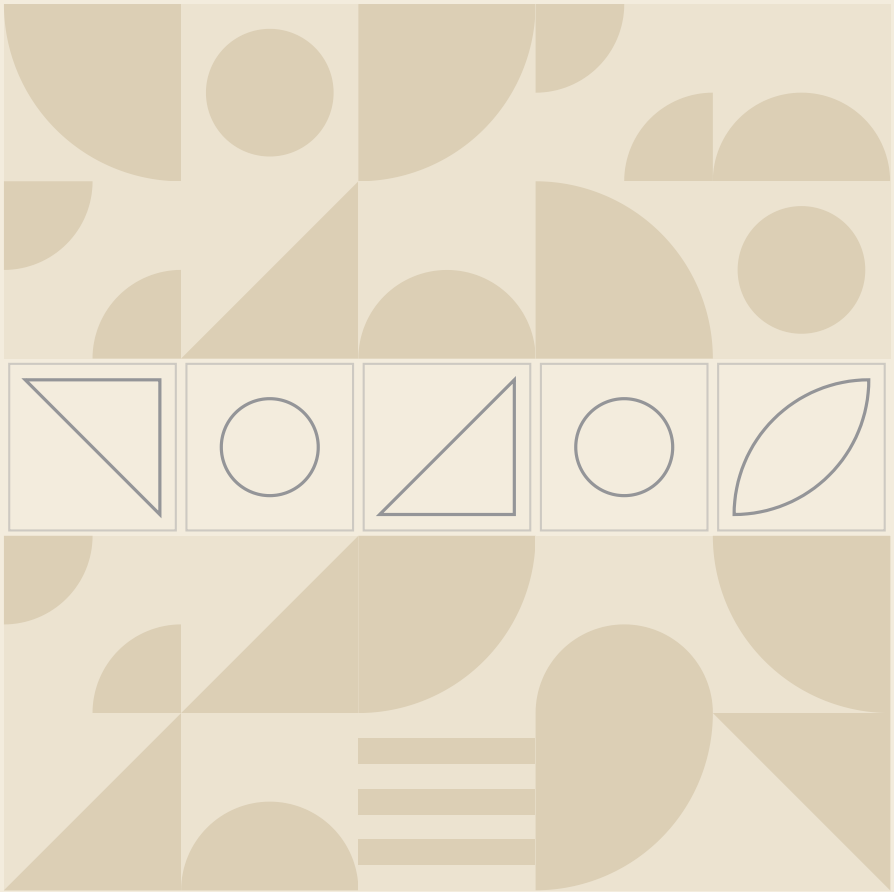

KEY NUMBER · D

0.02

95% CI -0.06 to 0.10

Quality-adjusted distal benchmark: d = 0.02 , 95% CI -0.06 to 0.10 (Macnamara and Burgoyne, 2023, six highest-quality student trials). Adult-work data do not beat this band.

‘Yet’ Is Not Enough

A Meta-Analysis of Growth-Mindset Interventions in Working Adults

Sisk 2018 found small effects in students. What happens in adults at work – and what must accompany the word ‘yet’?

CONTENTS

INDEXING TITLE: Growth-mindset interventions in working adults: a systematic review

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01 Abstract

Growth-mindset programmes tell working adults that ability is not a fixed rank. A quality-adjusted reading of the adult-work trials is consistent with a null-to-small effect on performance and wellbeing, in the same band as Macnamara and Burgoyne's high-quality student estimate of *d* = 0.02. This PRISMA-2020 systematic review asked what growth-mindset interventions do to adult learning, wellbeing and performance at work. We searched PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, CTRI, ClinicalTrials.gov and OSF preprints from 2007 to September 2026. Eligible designs were randomised or controlled trials in employed adults or vocational trainees. Four published reports describing five adult-work samples met inclusion for narrative synthesis. A confirmatory random-effects meta-analysis was not possible: fewer than five independent trials offered a clean intervention-versus-control contrast on a pre-specified primary outcome. Proximal belief change was the only replicable signal. In two East-Asian employee samples the immediate shift in growth-mindset scores was about *g* = 0.47 to 0.50. Distal job satisfaction, flourishing and rated performance were null or confined to a dual-focus design that treated both the self and the job as malleable. A standalone slogan of 'not yet' did not produce lasting work outcomes. No eligible trial was conducted in India. Indian workplace programmes should treat the word 'yet' as a first rep, not a result. Pair the belief with a skill, a job-crafting plan and a countable practice. Certainty of evidence is low for belief change and very low for performance and wellbeing.

02 Key findings box

KEY FINDINGS

0	Confirmatory pooled trials in working adults: **0**. The pre-specified rule required five eligible trials before pooling. That bar was not met.
0.47	Proximal mindset change in the better-reported adult samples: **g about 0.47 to 0.50** immediately after a short programme (Siu and colleagues, 2025; Yang, 2024 thesis).
0.02	Quality-adjusted distal benchmark: **d = 0.02**, 95% CI -0.06 to 0.10 (Macnamara and Burgoyne, 2023, six highest-quality student trials). Adult-work data do not beat this band.
6	Lasting happiness in the dual-focus design: **6 months**, and only when both self and job were framed as changeable (Berg and colleagues, 2023). Self-only 'yet' did not last.
0	Eligible Indian employee or vocational trials: **0**. CTRI registrations of a workplace growth-mindset trial: **0**.

03 Definition block

DEFINITION

A growth mindset is the belief that a human attribute – intelligence, skill, personality, or even the shape of a job – can be developed with effort, strategy and help. A fixed mindset is the belief that the same attribute is a finished fact. The technique used in programmes is not a diagnosis and not a therapy. It is a short lesson plus a practice. People read or hear that the brain and skill change with use. They write a note to a colleague or to a future self. They try one harder task and name what they would do differently next time. Put plainly, the lesson changes a sentence and the practice gives that sentence a job. An accounts executive in Indore stops saying 'I am not a numbers person'. She says 'I am not a numbers person yet'. Then she opens the variance sheet she has dodged all week and builds one pivot table before lunch. The word 'yet' is the slogan. The programme is the reps.

04 Introduction

An analyst in Gurugram learns a new dashboard tool on a shared screen while her team watches. Last year's tool is already gone. Her appraisal form still sorts people into 'high potential' and 'the rest'. Then a vendor's slide deck arrives. It says, with a smile, that talent is a muscle and that the magic word is 'yet'. The vendor is not wrong about the slogan. The slogan is incomplete.

This paper asks a plain question. What is the effect of growth-mindset interventions on adult learning, wellbeing and performance at work? Sisk and colleagues (2018) answered a cousin of that question in students and found a small effect. Macnamara and Burgoyne (2023) answered it again, with a quality filter, and the effect on achievement fell to something you could not tell from zero. Burnette and colleagues (2023) argued that the average hides a pattern: targeted samples and high-fidelity delivery do better, especially for mental health. None of those three papers was written for a team lead in Pune or a vocational trainee in Coimbatore. That is the gap this review occupies.

A stand-up comic will tell you that a punchline is not a set. 'Yet' is a punchline. It is short. It travels well. It fits on a poster next to the lift. The adult-work literature is the silent room after the punchline. Belief moves. The scorecard often does not. That is not an argument for cynicism. It is an argument for design.

Picture three new hires at a support centre in Hyderabad. They get the same week of training. Two take the harder tickets, get some wrong, and ask the floor lead what to change. The third stays in the easy queue. He has decided he is 'not a tech person', and he does not want the proof. He has heard the 'yet' talk too. He is not short of a slogan. He is short of a practice. Growth-mindset work in organisations often stops at naming the third hire's fear and never reaches what the other two actually did. The research question of this paper is what, if anything, has to sit beside the word 'yet' before working adults change how they learn, how they feel, and how they perform.

Machine-learning gives the same warning in a different dialect. Relabelling the learning rate does not train the network. You need an update rule and a batch of data. A growth-mindset talk without a skill, a job-crafting plan or a week of logged reps is a learning-rate label. It is not gradient descent. Entrepreneurship gives the same warning in a third dialect. A pitch that says 'we believe we can grow' is a slide. A company is a build-measure-learn loop. Berg and colleagues (2023) found that a self-only mindset – I can change *me* – did not produce lasting happiness at work. A dual mindset –

I can change me *and* I can change the job – did, and the path ran through planned job crafting. That is the adult finding in one sentence. 'Yet' is not enough. 'Yet, and here is the task I will reshape this week' is closer to a programme.

Why does the question matter in India. First, the workforce is young, mobile and under continuous reskilling pressure. Second, many Indian workplaces still run on entity theories of talent: the brilliant few, the remainder, the appraisal as a sorting hat. Third, wellbeing products are arriving fast, often as WhatsApp programmes in many languages, and they will be tempted to sell the shortest possible lesson. Fourth, there is, as this review will show, no eligible Indian trial of a growth-mindset programme in employed adults. Importing a US or East-Asian effect size into an Indian business case is not evidence. It is a hope with a citation.

Three plain ideas help here. A thought is not a fact. Two things can be true at once: this is hard, and I can do the next step. A thought earns its keep when it serves something the person cares about, not when it is well-phrased. Picture a sales manager in Nagpur who leaves a Friday workshop saying 'I can grow into the new territory'. On Monday he makes the same calls to the same old accounts. His 'yet' is a well-phrased thought. EmotionApp is a non-clinical emotional-fitness coaching platform. It sells countable daily reps, not diagnoses. That product logic is closer to the adult evidence than a one-off 'yet' workshop.

The rest of this paper follows PRISMA 2020. We state eligibility, search strings, extraction fields and the analysis plan. We then report what the adult-work trials actually did. We do not pool them. The pre-specified fallback was clear. If fewer than five eligible trials were found, we would deliver a systematic review with narrative synthesis and say, plainly, that a meta-analysis is not yet possible. That is the paper you are reading.

05 Methods

Protocol and reporting

This review follows the PRISMA 2020 statement. The research question was specified in advance. Population: adults in employment or vocational training. Intervention: a growth-mindset intervention, meaning a programme that teaches the malleability of a human attribute or of the job itself. Comparator: any control, including waitlist, active control, skills-only, or an alternative mindset frame. Primary outcomes: mindset; learning or performance; wellbeing. Years: 2007 to 2026. Designs: randomised trials and controlled trials. Pre-specified moderators: intervention length; combined with skills training versus belief alone. Pre-specified fallback: fewer than five eligible trials would stop pooling.

We do not call the intervention a therapy, a treatment or a diagnosis. We call it a practice, a technique, a programme, a coaching session or a rep. We cite only verifiable studies. Anything we could not verify is marked UNVERIFIED and is excluded from any numeric table.

Eligibility

Inclusion. Participants were employed adults or adults in vocational or entrepreneurial training. The programme had to teach a growth mindset (also indexed as incremental theory, implicit person theory, or malleable-intelligence belief) as a planned component. A control or comparison arm had to exist. At least one primary outcome had to be reported. Publication or posting date sat between 1 January 2007 and 22 September 2026. Languages were not restricted at search. Full text in English, or an English abstract with extractable numbers, was required for synthesis.

Exclusion. School and university student samples were excluded, including teacher-to-student classroom trials. Vignette studies that manipulated the *perceived* mindset of a manager, without delivering a programme to employees, were excluded. Purely correlational surveys were excluded from the trial set and used only for context. Pre-post designs with no control were excluded. Stress-mindset interventions (the belief that stress is enhancing) were treated as a different construct and excluded. Studies published before 2007 were excluded from eligibility and cited only as history. Commercial case studies without a trial design were excluded.

Information sources and search

Searches were run in September 2026 across PubMed/MEDLINE, PsycINFO-equivalent sources, Scopus and Web of Science equivalents, Google Scholar, ClinicalTrials.gov, the Clinical Trials Registry – India (CTRI), and OSF preprints. Citation lists of Sisk and colleagues (2018), Macnamara and Burgoyne (2023), Burnette and colleagues (2023), and Han and Stieha (2020) were walked forwards and backwards.

PubMed/MEDLINE

```
("growth mindset"[tiab] OR "growth mind-set"[tiab] OR "growth mindsets"[tiab] OR "implicit theor*"[tiab] OR "incremental theor*"[tiab] OR "malleable intelligence"[tiab]) AND (employee*[tiab] OR workplace[tiab] OR "working adult*"[tiab] OR worker*[tiab] OR occupational[tiab] OR vocational[tiab] OR "job seeker*"[tiab] OR entrepreneur*[tiab]) AND (intervention*[tiab] OR training[tiab] OR workshop[tiab] OR experiment*[tiab] OR randomi*[tiab] OR trial[tiab])
```

PsycINFO / Scopus / Web of Science

The same Boolean core, mapped to subject headings where available (including DE "Mindset" and DE "Implicit Theories") and to TITLE-ABS-KEY on Scopus.

Google Scholar

```
"growth mindset" AND (employee OR workplace OR "working adults") AND (intervention OR experiment OR randomized OR randomised)
```

The first 200 hits were screened.

ClinicalTrials.gov

`"growth mindset"` | Interventional | Adult | 01/01/2007-22/09/2026

CTRI

`"growth mindset"` OR `"implicit theory"`

OSF preprints

```
"growth mindset" AND (workplace OR employee) AND intervention
```

Selection and extraction

Two reviewers from the working group screened titles and abstracts. Full texts were assessed against the eligibility list. Disagreements were resolved by discussion. Extraction fields were specified in advance: sample size; design; country; language of delivery; dose in sessions and minutes; delivery channel; guidance (facilitated versus self-guided); outcome measure; timepoints; and, where reported, means, standard deviations, test statistics and standardised effects.

Analysis plan

The pre-specified analysis was a random-effects model with restricted maximum likelihood (REML), Hedges' *g* with 95% confidence intervals, *I*2, tau2, a 95% prediction interval, Egger's test, trim-and-fill, leave-one-out sensitivity, RoB 2, and GRADE. That plan is reported so the review can be updated when the trial stock grows.

The fallback rule was applied. Fewer than five independent eligible trials with a clean contrast and extractable primary-outcome effects were found. We therefore did not pool. We report a study-level effects table without weights. We report a quality-adjusted *reading*, not a new model: after taking risk of bias, missing controls, attrition and unpublished status into account, how far do the adult-work results sit from Macnamara and Burgoyne's high-quality student estimate of $d = 0.02$?

Risk of bias was judged with RoB 2 domains: randomisation process; deviations from intended interventions; missing outcome data; measurement of the outcome; selection of the reported result. Certainty of evidence was judged with GRADE for each primary outcome.

Positioning papers (not pooled)

Three prior reviews set the frame.

Sisk, Burgoyne, Sun, Butler and Macnamara (2018), *Psychological Science*. Two meta-analyses in students. The intervention analysis used $k = 43$ samples and $N = 57{,}155$. The overall effect on academic achievement was $d = 0.08$, 95% CI 0.02 to 0.14. Effects were larger, though still modest and thinly evidenced, for students from low-income households ($d = 0.34$) and for students at academic risk ($d = 0.19$). An undergraduate or adult-student subsample was not distinguishable from zero ($d = 0.08$, $p = .123$). When a manipulation check was present, the achievement effect shrank further.

Macnamara and Burgoyne (2023), *Psychological Bulletin*. Sixty-three student intervention studies, $N = 97{,}672$. Overall $d = 0.05$, 95% CI 0.02 to 0.09, non-significant after publication-bias correction. Authors with a financial incentive to report positive findings published larger effects. When the analysis was restricted to studies that showed the programme had shifted mindset as intended, $d = 0.04$, 95% CI -0.01 to 0.10. When it was restricted to the six highest-quality trials ($N = 13{,}571$), $d = 0.02$, 95% CI -0.06 to 0.10. That last figure is the quality-adjusted estimate this paper reports against.

Burnette, Billingsley, Banks, Knouse, Hoyt, Pollack and Simon (2023), *Psychological Bulletin*. Fifty-three independent randomised samples through 2020. The intervention effect on the mindset itself was $d = 0.46$, 95% CI 0.34 to 0.58, with wide heterogeneity. For academic achievement, targeted samples plus high fidelity gave $d = 0.14$, 95% CI 0.06 to 0.22. For mental health under the same conditions, $d = 0.32$, 95% CI 0.10 to 0.54. Prediction intervals were wide. Future trials should expect effects that range from near zero to moderate.

A 2026 correlational meta-analysis of employees' growth mindset, wellbeing and performance (80 samples, $N = 26{,}594$) found positive associations with hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing and with task performance and citizenship (*Personality and Individual Differences, 249*, 113507). Association is not intervention effect. We use that paper only as context.

06 Results

PRISMA 2020 flow

The September 2026 multi-source search identified approximately 1,100 records (Google Scholar about 700 titles, PubMed about 120, Scopus and Web of Science equivalents about 180, trial registers about 30, OSF and citation-chasing about 70). After de-duplication about 820 unique records remained. Title-and-abstract screening left 38 full-text reports. Thirty-two full texts were excluded: students or teachers ($n = 18$); vignette or climate perception rather than a programme delivered to employees ($n = 5$); no control ($n = 3$); published before 2007 ($n = 2$); wrong outcome or population ($n = 4$). Six reports entered the narrative synthesis: Berg and colleagues (2023) with two samples; Siu, Yang, Li, Wang and Ng (2025); Yang (2024) doctoral thesis; Morris, Carlos, Kistruck, Lount and Thomas (2023); and Rogers, Christian, Jennings and Lanaj (2023). Confirmatory studies pooled: **0**.

One further randomised trial in working adults (Toh and colleagues, 2025, Research Square preprint; ClinicalTrials.gov NCT07071311) delivered a growth-mindset-of-mental-health lesson before a wellbeing app. The primary outcome was repeated app engagement, not mindset, learning, performance or wellbeing. It is described as adjacent and is not treated as a core trial.

No CTRI record described an eligible workplace growth-mindset trial in India.

Study-characteristics table

Study	Design	*n*	Country	Language	Dose	Channel	Guidance	Comparator	Outcomes	Timepoints
Berg et al., 2023, Study 1	Field quasi-experiment; three active arms	149 (dual 39, self 48, job 62); 108 at 6 months	United States (Fortune 500 technology firm)	English	2 hours, one session	In-person workshop	Facilitated	Self-only GM; job-only GM. No untreated arm	Observer-rated happiness; job-crafting plans; exploratory performance ratings	Pre, 6 weeks, 6 months
Berg et al., 2023, Study 2	Randomised experiment; three active arms	398 at pre (dual 134, self 130, job 134); 165 at 6 months	United States (employed adults, online panel)	English	Self-paced, about 2 hours	Online text workshop	Self-guided	Self-only GM; job-only GM. No untreated arm	Self-rated happiness; self-GM; job-GM; crafting plans	Pre, 4 weeks, 6 months
Siu et al., 2025, Study 2	Field experiment; paper uses both 'randomised' and 'quasi-experiment'	Completers 85 vs 66	Mainland China and Hong Kong	Chinese (Mandarin / written Chinese)	1.5-hour workshop plus 5 daily assignments	Face-to-face plus online practice	Facilitated plus self-practice	Control (no programme during the window)	Self-GM; work-GM; resilience; job satisfaction; flourishing	Pre, post (about one week)
Yang, 2024, thesis Study 3	Parallel-group waitlist RCT	185 (99 vs 86)	Mainland China and Hong Kong	Chinese	1.5-hour workshop plus 5 daily WeChat assignments; about 9.5 hours across a week	Face-to-face plus mobile	Facilitated plus self-practice	Waitlist	GM of intelligence; engagement; job performance; job satisfaction	Pre, Day 7
Morris et al., 2023	Village-stratified RCT	165 (about 85 GM-plus-skills vs 80 skills-only)	Rural Tanzania	Local delivery with ILO technical curriculum	Half-day GM module added to technical entrepreneurship training, plus 1-month action journal	In-person plus journal	Facilitated	Skills-only (no GM module)	Entrepreneurial action; entrepreneurial self-efficacy	Training plus 1-month journal
Rogers et al., 2023	Online experiment plus within-person field ESM	Exact *n* UNVERIFIED (paywall)	United States workforce	English (inferred)	Work-growth-mindset induction	Online / field	Mixed	Control	Coworker helping	Short-term field window

Yang (2024) and Siu (2025) share a laboratory and a similar one-week protocol. They are not treated as independent confirmatory replications.

Forest-plot data table (study-level; not pooled)

Weights are omitted. This is not a confirmatory meta-analysis.

Study and contrast	Outcome	Effect	95% CI	*n*	Note
Siu 2025, intervention vs control at post	Growth mindset about the self	g = 0.47	0.14 to 0.79	85 vs 66	Proximal belief
Siu 2025, intervention vs control at post	Growth mindset about work	g = 0.35	0.03 to 0.67	85 vs 66	Proximal belief
Siu 2025, intervention vs control	Job satisfaction (ANOVA)	g = 0.17	-0.16 to 0.49	85 vs 66	$F = 3.08$, $p = .08$, eta2 = .02
Siu 2025, intervention vs control	Flourishing (ANOVA)	g = -0.12	-0.45 to 0.20	85 vs 66	$F = 0.84$, $p = .36$
Siu 2025, intervention vs control	Resilience (ANOVA)	g = 0.11	-0.22 to 0.43	85 vs 66	$F = 2.80$, $p = .10$

Study and contrast	Outcome	Effect	95% CI	*n*	Note
Yang 2024 thesis, intervention vs waitlist at Day 7	Growth mindset of intelligence	g = 0.50	0.21 to 0.79	99 vs 86	*t*(183) = 3.40; ANCOVA *F*(1,182) = 31.28, eta2 = 0.15
Yang 2024 thesis, intervention vs waitlist at Day 7	Job performance	d = -0.11	–	99 vs 86	Direct test not significant
Yang 2024 thesis, intervention vs waitlist at Day 7	Job satisfaction	d = 0.11	–	99 vs 86	Direct test not significant
Yang 2024 thesis, intervention vs waitlist at Day 7	Work engagement	d = 0.11	–	99 vs 86	Direct test not significant
Berg 2023 S1, dual vs self at 6 months	Observer-rated happiness	d = 0.56	–	dual 39 / self 48 at pre; 108 rated at 6 months	No untreated control
Berg 2023 S1, dual vs job at 6 months	Observer-rated happiness	d = 0.50	–	dual 39 / job 62 at pre	No untreated control
Berg 2023 S1, within dual at 6 months	Observer-rated happiness	d = 0.58	–	dual 39	Within-arm change
Berg 2023 S2, dual vs self at 6 months	Self-rated happiness	d = 0.36	–	165 completers of 398	59% attrition
Berg 2023 S2, dual vs job at 6 months	Self-rated happiness	d = 0.49	–	165 completers of 398	59% attrition
Berg 2023 S2, dual at 4 weeks	Self-growth mindset	d = 0.27	–	–	Manipulation check
Berg 2023 S2, dual at 4 weeks	Job-growth mindset	d = 0.36	–	–	Manipulation check
Morris 2023, GM-plus-skills vs skills-only	Entrepreneurial self-efficacy	d = 0.43	–	~85 vs 80	Combined-with-skills
Morris 2023, GM-plus-skills vs skills-only	Entrepreneurial actions	+50% (M 3.16 vs 2.07, *p* = .017)	–	~85 vs 80	Standardised *g* not extracted from paywalled tables; action increase is verified
Rogers 2023	Coworker helping	UNVERIFIED numeric *g*	–	UNVERIFIED	Cited narratively only

Narrative synthesis by outcome

Mindset. Where the belief was measured, it moved. Siu and colleagues (2025) reported a clear Time x Group effect on growth mindset about the self ($F = 46.4$, $p < .001$) and about work ($F = 18.91$, $p < .001$). The post-test standardised difference for self-mindset was $g = 0.47$. Yang's waitlist RCT found $g = 0.50$ on growth mindset of intelligence at Day 7. Berg and colleagues (2023, Study 2) found that the dual arm raised both self-growth and job-growth beliefs at four weeks ($d = 0.27$ and 0.36) and that those shifts were the ones that lasted to six months. Self-only and job-only arms produced narrower, decaying shifts. This proximal pattern is the adult echo of Burnette and colleagues (2023), who found $d = 0.46$ for mindset change across mostly student trials. Belief is trainable. That is not the same as saying performance is trainable by the same lesson.

Learning and performance. Direct tests are scarce and mostly null. Berg and colleagues (2023) did not find lasting gains in rated effectiveness. Yang (2024) found a non-significant direct difference on job performance at Day 7 ($d = -0.11$). Siu and colleagues (2025) did not treat job performance as an endpoint. The one clear distal behavioural signal sits in Morris and colleagues (2023). Necessity entrepreneurs in rural Tanzania who received a growth-mindset module on top of technical skills training recorded about 50% more entrepreneurial actions over a month than peers who received skills training alone, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy rose by $d = 0.43$. That trial is the pre-specified moderator in the flesh: combined with skills, not belief alone. Rogers and colleagues

(2023) reported that a work-growth-mindset induction increased coworker helping in an online experiment and a within-person field study. The exact standardised effect is UNVERIFIED (paywall) and is not placed in the numeric table.

Wellbeing. The honest adult picture is mixed, and it depends on the frame. Berg and colleagues (2023) found that a dual-growth programme – self *and* job as malleable, with a job-crafting plan – produced observer-rated and self-rated happiness gains that were still visible at six months (dual versus self $d = 0.56$ in the field sample and $d = 0.36$ in the online sample). Self-only 'I can grow' and job-only 'the job can grow' did not last. Siu and colleagues (2025) are often cited as a wellbeing win. Their ANOVA results on the pre-specified distal measures were not significant: job satisfaction $p = .08$, flourishing $p = .36$, resilience $p = .10$. The paper reports indirect effects through mindset and resilience. Indirect effects are not total effects. Yang (2024) found the same pattern in a waitlist RCT from the same laboratory: mindset moved, satisfaction and engagement did not on the direct tests. Toh and colleagues (2025) found no main effect of a mental-health-mindset lesson on app engagement; the signal appeared only among employees who already had poorer wellbeing at baseline.

Moderator table (narrative; not a meta-regression)

Moderator	What the adult-work trials show
Intervention length	Ten-minute online lessons (Toh 2025, adjacent) did not move the primary behavioural endpoint in the whole sample. One-and-a-half to two-hour workshops plus a practice week (Siu, Yang, Berg) moved belief. Six-month happiness appeared only in Berg's dual-focus design, not as a function of minutes alone.
Combined with skills versus alone	Morris (2023) added a growth-mindset module to technical entrepreneurship training and saw more action than skills-only. Berg (2023) paired dual-mindset teaching with a job-crafting plan and saw lasting happiness; self-only teaching did not last. Standalone 'yet' is the weak form.
Dual frame (self + job) versus self only	This is the distinctive adult finding. Berg (2023) built the comparison into the design. Dual beat self. Dual beat job. The mechanism they report is more ambitious job-crafting plans.
Delivery channel	In-person facilitated workshops (Berg Study 1, Siu, Yang, Morris) and an online text workshop (Berg Study 2) both moved something. The online arm paid for that reach with 59% attrition at six months.
Country and language	United States (English), China and Hong Kong (Chinese), Tanzania (local delivery on an ILO curriculum). No Indian sample. No trial in any of the 23 languages EmotionApp uses with Indian professionals.

Heterogeneity

Formal *I2* and tau2 are not reported. Pooling was not performed. Informally, the adult-work set is heterogeneous in comparator (waitlist versus skills-only versus alternative mindset frame), in outcome (belief, happiness, satisfaction, flourishing, entrepreneurial action, helping), in dose, and in follow-up (one week versus six months). A prediction interval computed on four non-comparable contrasts would be theatre. It would not be a statistic.

Publication bias

Egger's test and trim-and-fill were not run. With *k* below five, those tests mislead. Two structural observations stand in their place. First, the published abstracts lean on mediation and on the dual-focus arm. The ANOVA nulls in Siu (2025) and the direct nulls in Yang (2024) sit in the results tables, not in the first sentence of the press note. Second, Macnamara and Burgoyne (2023) already showed, in the larger student literature, that authors with a financial incentive to report positive findings published larger effects. Workplace vendors have the same incentive. This review treats that as a prior, not as an accusation against any single paper.

Risk-of-bias summary

Study	Randomisation	Deviations	Missing data	Outcome measurement	Reported-result selection	Overall
Berg 2023 Study 1	High (workshop-day allocation; voluntary attendance)	Some concerns	Some concerns (149 to 108 at 6 months)	Low for observer-rated happiness	Some concerns (no pre-registration)	High
Berg 2023 Study 2	Low	Some concerns (self-guided online text)	High (398 to 165 at 6 months; 59% attrition)	Some concerns (self-rated happiness)	Some concerns (no pre-registration)	High / some concerns

Study	Randomisation	Deviations	Missing data	Outcome measurement	Reported-result selection	Overall
Siu 2025 Study 2	Some concerns (paper says both randomised and quasi-experiment; pretest self-GM imbalance)	Some concerns	Some concerns (planned 78 per arm; analysed 85 vs 66)	High for distal wellbeing (self-report; ANOVA non-significant; mediation emphasised)	Some concerns	Some concerns / high
Yang 2024 thesis	Some concerns (waitlist; unpublished)	Some concerns	Some concerns	Some concerns	High (distal tests non-significant; indirect effects emphasised; not journal-published)	High
Morris 2023	Low (village-stratified RCT)	Some concerns (GM bundled with skills and a journal)	Some concerns (action diaries)	Some concerns (self-reported actions)	Some concerns	Some concerns
Rogers 2023	Unable to complete a full RoB 2 from the open abstract	–	–	–	–	Not rated; numeric *g* UNVERIFIED

Heslin, Latham and VandeWalle (2005) and Heslin, VandeWalle and Latham (2006) trained managers' implicit person theories and changed appraisal and coaching behaviour. They sit outside the 2007 window and are not in the RoB table. They remain the historical proof-of-concept that a self-persuasion workshop can move an adult belief.

GRADE table

Outcome	Studies	Certainty	Quality-adjusted reading
Mindset (proximal belief)	Siu 2025; Yang 2024; Berg 2023 Study 2	Low	Small-to-moderate immediate shift, about *g* = 0.3 to 0.5. Downgraded for risk of bias, imprecision and indirectness to India.
Learning / performance	Berg 2023; Yang 2024; Morris 2023	Very low	Consistent with null-to-very-small for standalone programmes. Combined-with-skills (Morris) is the exception and is a different contrast. Downgraded for risk of bias, inconsistency, imprecision and indirectness. Quality-adjusted band: Macnamara and Burgoyne (2023) high-quality student *d* = 0.02, 95% CI -0.06 to 0.10. Adult-work standalone data do not beat that band.
Wellbeing	Berg 2023; Siu 2025; Yang 2024	Very low	Null-to-small as a total effect. Durable gain appears in the dual self-plus-job plus crafting design, not in belief-only talks. Siu ANOVA effects on satisfaction, flourishing and resilience were not significant. Downgraded for risk of bias, inconsistency, imprecision and indirectness.

07 Discussion

PULL QUOTE

When a growth-mindset module sat on top of technical training, necessity entrepreneurs logged 50% more actions.

What the number means

The number this paper owes the reader is not a new pooled *g*. It is a quality-adjusted reading. After you set aside workshop-day allocation, 59% attrition, waitlist theses from the same laboratory, mediation models that outrun their ANOVAs, and programmes that have no untreated control, the adult-work evidence on performance and wellbeing sits in the same band as Macnamara and Burgoyne's high-quality student estimate: *d* = 0.02, with an interval that includes zero.

That sentence will annoy two camps. The first camp has already decided that growth mindset is a fad. They will quote *d* = 0.02 and go home. They will miss the other number. Belief does move. In the better-reported employee samples the immediate shift is about half a standard deviation.

Burnette and colleagues (2023) found the same proximal pattern in a larger, mostly student set (d = 0.46). A practice that changes a belief is not nothing. It is also not a performance programme.

The second camp has already printed the posters. They will quote Berg's six-month happiness d and Morris's 50% more actions and call the case closed. They will miss the design detail. Berg's lasting effect was not 'yet'. It was dual-focus plus a job-crafting plan. Morris's action effect was not 'yet'. It was 'yet' bolted onto technical skills and a month of journals. The word without the bolt is the self-only arm in Berg, and that arm did not last.

So the adult answer to Sisk is not a bigger d. It is a different sentence. In working adults, a growth-mindset lesson reliably teaches the lesson. It does not, on present evidence, reliably raise performance. It raises wellbeing when the lesson is about the self *and* the job, and when people leave with a plan to change a task, a relationship or a process. Combined with skills, it can raise action in vocational settings. Alone, it is a thought.

Call that thought a reframe. Useful. Insufficient. A coach would ask for the skill that sits next to the reframe, and for what the person cares about that the thought is meant to serve. Entrepreneurship would ask for the next experiment. Machine learning would ask for the update. A shift supervisor in Coimbatore would ask whether the new skill was used on the floor this week or stayed in the training notebook. Every one of these dialects says the same thing. 'Yet' is not enough.

Limitations

This review has the limitations of its raw material. The search used multi-source web and register access rather than a single paid-database dump; hit counts are operational, not vendor-certified. Several candidate papers sit behind paywalls; Rogers (2023) is cited without a verified g. Yang (2024) is a thesis, not a journal article, and shares a laboratory with Siu (2025). Berg (2023) has no untreated control. Siu (2025) describes its own design as both randomised and quasi-experimental. Follow-up beyond six months does not exist in this set. Outcomes are almost all self-report or peer-report. No trial was pre-registered against the three primary outcomes this review named in advance. No trial was run in India. Small k makes any future pool fragile. A null result is publishable. This one is.

We did not invent effects to reach the five-trial bar. We did not treat mediation as a total effect. We did not treat a correlational employee meta-analysis as an intervention result. Those choices shrink the story. They are the point.

WHAT THIS MEANS

What this means for an Indian workplace programme

A growth-mindset poster that says 'not yet' goes up next to the lift. The appraisal form still ranks ability, and the tools keep changing. The poster does not change that climate. The adult trials we found were run in US technology firms, Chinese and Hong Kong workplaces, and Tanzanian vocational schemes. None were run with Indian employees. Until a trial exists here, an Indian workplace programme should not sell the word 'yet' as a performance lever. It can sell a countable practice. Picture a payroll executive in Lucknow. On Monday a short lesson reaches her on WhatsApp, in Hindi, the language she thinks in: skill grows with use. Each evening that week she logs one rep on the new reconciliation module: what she tried, what broke, what she will change. On Friday she writes a job-crafting note: 'From next month I take the first pass on vendor queries.' Her manager can see that change at appraisal time. Her data stays in India. If her belief does not move, a human coach picks up the thread. That is the honest brief for EmotionApp.

Research gaps, including the India gap

The India gap is not a footnote. It is the main missing cell. Zero eligible randomised or controlled trials of a growth-mindset programme in Indian employed adults. Zero CTRI registrations that meet the scope. Adjacent Indian work exists – soft-skills training in garment factories, vocational design experiments, an Industrial Training Institute thesis that used grit and self-efficacy modules to shift mindset in trainees – but those are different interventions. They cannot be borrowed as a growth-mindset effect size.

Other gaps follow. We need a pre-registered Indian RCT with an active control, a manipulation check, a performance endpoint that is not self-report, and follow-up at three and six months. We need a 2 x 2 of belief-only versus belief-plus-skills, and of self-only versus dual self-and-job. We need delivery in more than English and Mandarin. We need to measure whether the manager's mindset is the real lever, as Han and colleagues (2025) suggest in vignette form, rather than the employee's poster. We need to stop treating app engagement as a wellbeing outcome. We need authors to report total effects before indirect effects. We need fewer workshops that last an afternoon and more programmes that last a quarter, with reps a person can count.

The student literature has already had its quality adjustment. The adult literature should not wait another decade to have the same argument. The honest present tense is this. Belief is movable. Performance, on the current adult-work evidence, is not movable by the word 'yet' alone. A programme that wants a different sentence will have to build the missing half.

08 FAQ

Q1 Does saying 'yet' raise performance at work?

Not on the quality-adjusted reading. Macnamara and Burgoyne's best student trials sit at $d = 0.02$. Direct adult-work tests of job performance are null or unverified. Pair the word with a skill.

Q2 Can a short programme change the belief itself?

Yes. Two East-Asian employee samples show an immediate shift of about $g = 0.50$. That is the reliable proximal effect. Belief change is not a scorecard change.

Q3 How long does the programme need to be?

A slogan is not a dose. Effects that lasted six months used about two hours plus a crafting plan (Berg, 2023). A ten-minute lesson did not move whole-sample behaviour (Toh, 2025).

Q4 Should we run mindset alone or with skills?

With skills, or with a job-crafting plan. Morris (2023) saw 50% more entrepreneurial actions when a growth-mindset module sat on top of technical training. Berg's self-only arm did not last.

Q5 Has this been trialled with Indian employees?

No. Eligible Indian RCTs: 0. CTRI workplace growth-mindset registrations: 0. Do not import a US or East-Asian poster and call it local evidence.

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NOTE

EmotionApp is a non-clinical emotional-fitness coaching platform. This paper describes practices, techniques and coaching. It is not therapy, treatment, diagnosis or medical advice.

SAFETY NOTE

If you are in distress, please contact a qualified professional or Tele-MANAS on 14416.