

The Relationship Between Growth Mindset and Speaking Anxiety in English Learning

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ABSTRACT

English communication is an essential competency for office management students in vocational education. However, many students experience speaking anxiety, which may be related to their growth mindset. Growth mindset is considered important in language learning because students who believe their abilities can be developed through effort tend to take more risks in using the target language and recover more quickly from mistakes. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between growth mindset and speaking anxiety. This quantitative study used the Spearman correlation method with eleventh-grade Office Management students at SMK Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang as respondents (N = 108). The findings showed a significant negative relationship between growth mindset and speaking anxiety, with a correlation coefficient of -0.288 and a significance value of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$). The results indicate that students with a higher growth mindset tend to experience lower speaking anxiety in English. However, the correlation strength was weak, suggesting that speaking anxiety is also influenced by other factors beyond growth mindset.

Keywords: *Growth Mindset, Speaking Anxiety, Office Management, Vocational Education, English Language*

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of vocational education, also known as vocational schooling, is to prepare students for occupations that are in demand by businesses, organizations representing those businesses, and the general public through the development of their knowledge, abilities, character traits, and work habits (Rahayu, 2023). A key component of vocational education is the emphasis on practical skills rather than theoretical knowledge (Mulyono et al., 2025). Consequently, it is not enough for students to just grasp abstract ideas; they must also be able to put their knowledge into practice in authentic contexts. The fundamental objective of vocational education is to generate graduates who are skilled and qualified to fulfill the demands of the business sector, industries, and the labor force at the intermediate to upper level (DUDIKA).

One form of vocational education is vocational high school (SMK). Vocational High Schools are expected not only to produce technically competent graduates, but also those skilled in communication, especially in the business and management sectors such as Office Management. Office Management is a part of management science that discusses effective and efficient office management (Ibnu et al., 2024). Management education covers not only archiving, correspondence, basic finance, and human resource management, but also teaches proper communication skills. In the era of globalization, communication skills are crucial because today's labor market demands professionals who can interact both nationally and internationally.

Communication skills taught in office management vocational education include not only interpersonal communication, but also public communication. In practice, interpersonal communication is used more frequently in office work, as it involves activities such as face-to-face conversations, phone calls, correspondence, and guest services. Theories of interpersonal

communication generally focus on the forms and nature of relationships, discourse, interaction, and communicator characteristics (Ramadhani, 2023). According to Ramadhani (2023), effective communication in office administration significantly increases productivity, fosters better collaboration, builds good relationships, reduces conflict, and improves customer satisfaction.

Given the importance of communication in office management, communication skills are a key element in the vocational curriculum for office management and are practiced throughout the subject matter in this field. In the communication element, students are expected to communicate directly or by phone, using both Indonesian and English.

In the ever-evolving era of globalization, proficiency in English is no longer a luxury but a basic skill required for workplace communication. This is evidenced by the increasing number of migrant workers and broader market prospects. This becomes a challenge for vocational high school graduates who are expected and prepared to enter the competitive workforce directly. However, there are obstacles to achieving this goal, one of which is the limited ability to use English both academically and socially. This is also caused by the lack of English exposure among vocational school students both inside and outside school. This lack of exposure is one of the factors contributing to speaking anxiety among vocational school students.

The use of English as a foreign language has grown rapidly worldwide. In Indonesia, English instruction has long been implemented. According to Fitriani et al. (2022), English teachers have begun adopting various teaching techniques to provide the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, learning to speak English is not as easy as it seems because it is complex and linked to students' anxiety and speaking abilities.

Speaking anxiety is a psychological condition marked by feelings of fear, tension, and discomfort when an individual must convey a message to others (Ridwan et al., 2026). In this context, speaking anxiety refers to students' worries about their lack of oral proficiency (Fitriani et al., 2022b).

Research shows that language anxiety can hinder communication performance and lower students' confidence in speaking (Zhang et al., 2026). Students who experience high anxiety tend to avoid communication interactions and are less willing to speak in the target language (Lou & Noels, 2020).

Because of these factors, students find it difficult to use English in their daily lives. Whenever they try to speak, anxiety symptoms often appear, such as trembling, sudden mental blocks, fear of making mistakes, and even suppressing the urge to speak because they do not know what to say. Wahyuni states that anxious communicators will withdraw from social interactions, minimize communication, and only speak when absolutely necessary (Rahmawati et al., 2023).

Symptoms of speaking anxiety when communicating in English also occur at SMK Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang, especially among Grade XI Office Management students. This is evident during practical communication classes, both in English and vocational courses that require the use of basic English.

In Grade XI, the learning process prioritizes the application of practical methods that emphasize communication competence alongside other skills in the field. This is done to hone students' abilities before they enter the workforce (DUDIKA) for workplace internships (PKL) in Grade XII. During internships, students are no longer fully taught by their teachers at school but are instead provided with knowledge and real-world office experiences at their internship placements. Thus, communication skills, especially in foreign languages, need to be improved.

The "English Day" program at SMK Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang, which takes place every Tuesday, aims to help students, teachers, and staff at the school become more proficient in English. Students will become more familiar with and proficient in English through this program's goal of inculcating the habit of utilizing the language. It is believed that this habit would also help students conquer their fear of public speaking. A growth attitude would manifest itself in this way. A growth mindset, coined by Carol Dweck, is the conviction that one's talents and intelligence can be honed with consistent practice, smart planning, and

positive reinforcement from one's surroundings (Koto et al., 2024). A person with a fixed mindset thinks their abilities and intelligence are static and immutable, in contrast to this idea (Kutasi, 2023). Students who adopt a growth mindset are able to overcome their fears of failing and view setbacks as stepping stones on the path to success.

The theoretical link between growth mindset and speaking anxiety can be further explained through Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety theory, which identifies communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety as the main sources of anxiety in foreign language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Because a growth mindset encourages learners to interpret mistakes as a normal part of the learning process rather than as evidence of fixed, inadequate ability, it may directly reduce the fear of negative evaluation that underlies much of this anxiety. This theoretical connection suggests that growth mindset does not merely correlate with lower anxiety by coincidence, but may actively buffer the psychological mechanisms that produce it, particularly among learners who are still building confidence in a foreign language such as English.

Recent research shows that a growth mindset in language learning enhances student engagement and communication skills (Li & Hashim, 2025). It also contributes to increased motivation and academic achievement in language learning contexts (Kırmızı et al., 2023).

Growth mindset not only plays a role in boosting learning motivation but is also associated with students' emotional states, including communication anxiety. Research shows that students with a growth mindset tend to have lower levels of anxiety because they view mistakes as part of the learning process, not as failures (Lou & Noels, 2020; Zhang et al., 2026). Conversely, students with a fixed mindset are more likely to experience anxiety due to fear of negative judgment and failure. In the context of learning English, a growth mindset also encourages students to communicate more confidently and reduces psychological barriers to speaking (Maulindah & Mahbub, 2026). This perspective encourages students to embrace challenges, persist through difficulties, and actively explore knowledge in a more meaningful and reflective way. In the context of modern education, the concept of growth mindset forms the basis for building adaptive, development-oriented learning processes (Ashari et al., 2025). This aligns with the educational needs and challenges of 21st-century learning, which demands that students develop communication, collaboration, creativity, and adaptability skills. Recent research further emphasizes that sustaining the benefits of a growth mindset requires supportive contextual factors, such as a positive classroom climate and constructive teacher feedback (Lou, 2025).

Research has shown that growth mindset significantly enhances students' motivation and academic achievement (Ashari et al., 2025). The characteristics of students with a growth mindset—such as persistence, enthusiasm for challenges, and adaptive responses to failure—can be observed through various indicators. Several studies show that when students believe their intelligence can continue to develop, they tend to achieve better academically and respond positively to challenging situations (Koto et al., 2024). Conversely, students with a fixed mindset tend to give up easily when faced with difficulties because they believe their abilities are limited.

The foregoing justifies the claim that students enrolled in vocational programs, and notably those specializing in office administration, must possess strong verbal and written communication abilities in English. But public speaking fear is still a problem that can prevent some people from being competent in this area. The purpose of this research is to look at the connection between a growth mentality and anxiety when speaking English among SMK Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang's Office Management students in Grade XI. The null hypothesis states that the two variables are unrelated, while the alternative states that the two are significantly related (H_0 and H_a , respectively).

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. The quantitative approach was used to examine the relationship between variables through numerical data and statistical analysis. According to [Creswell \(2017\)](#), quantitative research is an approach for testing theories by measuring variables and analyzing the relationships among them. The correlational method was chosen because this study aims to determine the relationship between growth mindset and speaking anxiety in English without any treatment or manipulation of the variables.

Respondent

The respondents in this study were all 108 students of Grade XI Office Management at SMK Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang, with ages ranging from approximately 16 to 17 years old. The selection was carried out using the total sampling method due to the relatively limited population, minimizing sampling errors, and providing a comprehensive overview of the relationship between the two variables. The use of total sampling with a full population of 108 respondents was intended to capture the entire target group rather than a subset, thereby reducing the risk of sampling bias.

Instrument

Data were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire designed to measure students' perceptions and attitudes toward the two research variables: growth mindset and speaking anxiety. The growth mindset questionnaire was developed based on the indicators of growth mindset theory proposed by [Dweck \(2016\)](#), while the speaking anxiety questionnaire was developed based on the dimensions of foreign language anxiety identified by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Both questionnaires were reviewed for content relevance prior to distribution. The instruments underwent both validity and reliability testing using IBM SPSS Statistics. In the validity test, most items for both variables met the criteria (Corrected Item-Total Correlation above 0.30), but one item from each variable was below the minimum threshold and was therefore excluded from further analysis. For the growth mindset variable, the lowest value was 0.288, and for speaking anxiety, it was 0.224. After removing these items, the instruments became more valid and reliable, in accordance with DeVellis ([Muthi'ah & Islam, 2025](#)), who recommends eliminating items with low total correlation to improve instrument quality.

Procedure

Following validation, the dependability of the instruments for both variables was examined. The Cronbach's Alpha for the growth mindset variable was 0.749, while for speaking anxiety it was 0.870. If the alpha is more than 0.70, the reliability is good, say ([George & Mallery, 2016](#)). We used Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk analyses to assess for normality once we made sure the instruments were valid and consistent. The results demonstrated that neither variable's data followed a normal distribution; nevertheless, for samples less than 200, the Shapiro-Wilk test is more suggested ([Razali & Wah, 2011](#)).

Data Analysis

To guarantee the quality of the instruments, validity and reliability tests were used to examine the data acquired in this research. We used the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests to make sure everything was normal. The nonparametric Spearman Rank Correlation test was used to assess the association between variables because the data did not match the normality assumption.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained aims to show that the instruments used to measure the variables of growth mindset and speaking anxiety of Class XI Office Management students at SMK

Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang have undergone validity and reliability tests using the IBM SPSS Statistics application. In the validity test, both variables showed that most items met the criteria with a Corrected Item-Total Correlation value above 0.30; however, in each variable, there was one item that fell below the minimum threshold, so it was not included in the further analysis. The values obtained were 0.288 for the growth mindset variable and 0.224 for the speaking anxiety variable. Therefore, each item on these variables was not included in the further calculations, in accordance with DeVellis's opinion (Muthi'ah & Islam, 2025), which states that items with low correlation to the total score indicate a mismatch in measuring the same construct and thus need to be eliminated to improve the quality of the instrument. After being retested by removing the items that did not pass the test, the results were more valid and robust.

Is There a Significant Relationship Between Growth Mindset and Speaking Anxiety?

Instrument Validity Test

A validity test was carried out to ascertain if the development mindset and speaking anxiety instruments were suitable for measuring the specified constructs. The analysis was conducted using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation test in IBM SPSS Statistics. Since the majority of items in both variables had Corrected Item-Total Correlation values more than 0.30, we can say that they are valid. However, one item from each variable did not meet the minimum requirement. In the growth mindset variable, one item obtained a value of 0.288, while one item in the speaking anxiety variable obtained a value of 0.224. Therefore, both items were excluded from further analysis. This finding is in line with DeVellis in (Muthi'ah & Islam, 2025), who stated that items with low correlations to the total score indicate inconsistency in measuring the same construct and should therefore be eliminated to improve instrument quality. After removing the invalid items, the instruments were retested and produced stronger validity results.

Table 1. Validity Test Result

Variabel X (Growth Mindset)					Variabel Y (Speaking Anxiety)				
Item-Total Statistics					Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted		Scale Mean if Item Delete d	Scale Varianc e if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlatio n	Cronbach' s Alpha if Item Deleted
X1	26.95	12.942	.316	.745	Y1	22.89	23.595	.440	.874
X2	27.49	11.280	.503	.711	Y2	22.95	22.119	.618	.855
X3	27.70	12.472	.399	.731	Y3	23.30	22.528	.684	.849
X4	27.21	12.300	.377	.736	Y4	22.98	22.018	.704	.846
X5	27.31	11.224	.554	.701	Y5	23.19	21.909	.659	.850
X6	26.83	12.402	.501	.717	Y6	23.15	22.034	.575	.860
X7	27.75	11.797	.391	.736	Y7	23.11	21.109	.664	.850
X8	27.18	11.492	.537	.705	Y8	23.16	21.797	.685	.848

Instrument Reliability Test

After conducting the validity test, reliability testing was performed to determine the consistency of the instruments. Reliability was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha in IBM SPSS Statistics.

Table 2. Reliability Test Result

Variabel X (Growth Mindset)		Variabel Y (Speaking Anxiety)	
Reliability Statistics		Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.749	8	.870	8

In contrast to the speaking anxiety instrument, which had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.870, the growth mindset instrument had a value of 0.749. Good dependability is indicated by a Cronbach's Alpha score above 0.70, according to [George & Mallery \(2016\)](#). This study's use of both instruments was based on their reliability and consistency.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

After the validity and reliability tests were conducted on the instruments for each variable, and both instruments were found to be valid and consistent for further measurement, the analysis continued with descriptive statistics to examine the characteristics of the scores obtained from 108 respondents. For the *growth mindset* variable, the scores ranged from 22 to 39, with a mean of 31.20 and a standard deviation of 3.888. Meanwhile, the *speaking anxiety* scores ranged from 12 to 40, with a mean of 26.39 and a standard deviation of 5.328. The score ranges for both variables indicate variation among respondents, with *speaking anxiety* showing greater score dispersion than *growth mindset*.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results Test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Growth Mindset	108	22	39	31.20	3.888
Speaking Anxiety	108	12	40	26.39	5.328
Valid N (listwise)	108				

This description is important before analyzing the relationship between the two variables. Descriptive statistics provide context regarding the scores to be tested, while the characteristics of their distribution need to be examined further to determine the appropriate correlation analysis approach. Therefore, the analysis proceeded with a normality test as a basis for determining the correlation test used to analyze the relationship between the two variables.

Normality Test

After confirming that both instruments were valid and reliable, a normality test was conducted to determine the appropriate statistical analysis for examining the relationship between the two variables. The normality test used Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk analyses.

Table 4. Normality Test Result

Tests of Normality						
Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a				Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Growth Mindset	.127	108	.000	.962	108	.004
Speaking Anxiety	.095	108	.017	.978	108	.064

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

In the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the growth mentality variable received a significance value of 0.000; in the Shapiro-Wilk test, it was 0.004, as seen in the table above. At the same time, 0.017 and 0.064 were the significance values for the speaking anxiety variable. For samples with fewer than 200 responders, the Shapiro-Wilk test is preferred ([Razali & Wah,](#)

2011). The results were classified as non-normal since one of the variables did not conform to the normalcy assumption. One non-parametric statistical test that was used was the Spearman Rank Correlation test.

Spearman Rank Correlation Test

After conducting the Spearman Rank correlation analysis, the following results were obtained:

Table 5. Spearman Rank Correlation Test

Correlations		Total_X	Total_Y
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.288**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003
	N	108	108
Total_Y	Correlation Coefficient	-.288**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.
	N	108	108

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A negative association between development mindset and speaking anxiety was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) according to the Spearman Rank correlation test, which yielded a correlation coefficient of -0.288 and a significance value of 0.003. This finding indicates that students with higher levels of growth mindset tended to experience lower levels of speaking anxiety in learning English. In other words, students who believed that their abilities could develop through effort, practice, and continuous learning were generally less anxious when participating in English-speaking activities.

The negative correlation suggests that students with a growth mindset are more likely to view mistakes, pronunciation errors, and communication difficulties as normal parts of the learning process rather than as indicators of failure. As a result, these students tend to demonstrate greater confidence, persistence, and willingness to participate in speaking activities despite facing challenges. They are also more likely to accept feedback positively and use it as motivation to improve their speaking ability. This condition may help reduce feelings of nervousness, fear, and pressure when communicating in English.

According to Dweck (2016) theory, people who have a growth mindset view their intelligence and abilities as malleable, something that can be improved with practice and dedication. This research lends credence to that idea. Students who hold a growth mentality, as this view sees it, are less likely to see setbacks as failures and more likely to take risks when learning. When it comes to studying English, this way of thinking pushes pupils to talk more aggressively, even if they are not yet proficient or correct speakers.

Additionally, students who hold the belief that language competence is intrinsic and cannot be changed may be more prone to speaking anxiety. Because of this, individuals may shy away from public speaking events for fear of ridicule, failure, or humiliation. On the other hand, students who adopt a growth mindset tend to view speaking challenges as chances to progress, which could lead to a steady reduction in their anxiety levels.

There was a small but statistically significant link between a growth mindset and public speaking anxiety. This suggests that there are additional factors affecting students' fear when it comes to public speaking outside development mindset. There are a lot of internal and environmental elements that can influence the complicated psychological phenomena known as speaking anxiety. Internal aspects encompass qualities such as self-assurance, self-worth, drive, emotional regulation, and prior public speaking encounters. Classroom climate, instructor encouragement, student feedback, instructional strategies, and language practice chances are all examples of external variables.

This finding is consistent with the theory proposed by (Horwitz et al., 1986), who explained that foreign language anxiety is influenced by various psychological and situational

factors. Their theory emphasizes that anxiety in language learning often emerges when students feel worried about negative evaluation, communication failure, or inadequate language performance. Therefore, even students with a relatively positive mindset may still experience anxiety if they study in unsupportive learning environments. In addition, Fitriani et al. (2022) explained that speaking anxiety may arise from several psychological factors, including emotions, self-esteem, fear, motivation, and anxiety itself. Students who lack confidence in their English abilities may feel afraid of making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes when speaking in front of classmates or teachers. These feelings can reduce their participation and willingness to communicate in English.

Recent research conducted by (Lou, 2025) also emphasized the importance of classroom atmosphere and teacher support in influencing students' anxiety levels. A supportive classroom environment may help students feel safer and more comfortable expressing their ideas in English. Conversely, a classroom environment that is overly critical or unsupportive may increase students' anxiety and discourage them from participating actively in speaking activities. The findings of this study imply that teachers should not only focus on improving students' linguistic competence but also pay attention to students' psychological conditions during the learning process. Encouraging students to adopt a growth mindset may help them become more confident, resilient, and motivated in facing speaking challenges. Teachers can support this process by providing constructive feedback, appreciating students' efforts, creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, and encouraging students to view mistakes as part of learning rather than as failures.

It can be inferred from these results that among the eleventh grade Office Management students at SMK Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang, there was a notable inverse correlation between growth mentality and speaking fear. The results imply that enhancing students' growth attitude may help them overcome their fear of public speaking and become more engaged in English-language activities, even though the correlation was not very strong.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between growth mindset and public speaking anxiety among 108 eleventh-grade Office Management students at SMK Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang. The findings showed that both the growth mindset and public speaking anxiety questionnaires were valid and reliable. Because the data were not normally distributed, the Spearman Rank Correlation test was employed. The results revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between growth mindset and speaking anxiety ($r_s = -0.288$, $p = 0.003 < 0.05$), indicating that students with stronger growth mindsets tended to experience lower levels of public speaking anxiety in English learning. However, the relationship was weak, suggesting that anxiety is also influenced by other factors, including self-confidence, speaking experience, motivation, learning environment, and social support. These findings imply that English teachers can foster growth mindsets through effort-focused feedback, low-stakes speaking activities, and opportunities such as English Day to gradually build students' confidence and reduce speaking anxiety.

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