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Authors

Chan, Trena
Simpson, Mary
Kushnir, Tamar
et al.

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Failure Mindset is Associated with Achievement Orientation Among Singaporean Children

Trena Chan

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore

Mary Simpson

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, United States

Tamar Kushnir

Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, United States

Yue Yu

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore

Abstract

This study examines how children's beliefs about the malleability of intelligence (intelligence mindset) and the value of failure (failure mindset) relate to their choice between an easy task and a hard task (achievement orientation) across culture. An online interview was conducted with 113 Singaporean children and 122 U.S. children aged between 4.0 and 9.9 years, during which achievement orientation was measured with a hypothetical scenario, and intelligence and failure mindsets were measured with child-friendly Likert scale items. Results showed across cultures, older children were more likely to endorse a growth mindset, a failure-is-motivating mindset, and choose a harder task. After controlling for age, the correlation between intelligence mindset and achievement orientation was not significant for either culture. Failure mindset correlated with achievement orientation for Singaporean but not U.S. children. These findings suggest that viewing failure as motivating may be especially important for Singaporean children to face challenging tasks.