"You are the Average of the Five People You Spend Time with": A Case Study on Mindset and Social Networks in the Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract This paper investigates the relationship among students' mindsets, academic performance, English proficiency, and that of their social networks in the Sultanate of Oman. Two main questions were addressed, namely the relationship among the students' mindset, their social network's mindset and their academic performance, and the correlation between the students' proficiency in English and that of their social networks. Results revealed individual's mindset significantly influences their academic performance. The mindset within an individual's social network may also affect their academic achievement. Data also suggested that individual mindset has a more dominant role in the students' academic performance than their social network. The relationship between participants' English proficiency and their social network revealed inconclusive findings. Given Oman's Vision 2040, which places a strong emphasis on a knowledge-driven society, this study emphasizes the importance of nurturing a growth-oriented mindset within social networks to achieve national educational objectives.

Keywords: Mindset, Social networks, English proficiency, Sociocultural, Oman

1. Introduction

The saying, "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with," is often attributed to the motivational speaker, Jim Rohn (Groth, 2012). The saying has been widely circulated in the field of personal development. Although there is no empirical evidence to support this specific claim, research suggests that the individuals with whom we associate can significantly impact our behavior, attitudes, and beliefs (Wallwork, 2020).

Mindset, as a psychological construct, has become increasingly important for understanding human behavior and cognitive development. The theory of mindset was introduced by Carol Dweck in her seminal work, Mindset: The New Psychology of Success (Dweck, 2006). Dweck identified two primary mindsets: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. Previous studies have shown that individuals who have a growth mindset, which is the belief that one's

abilities and intelligence can be developed through hard work and dedication, are more likely to achieve success in academics and other areas of life. On the other hand, individuals with a fixed mindset, which is the belief that one's abilities and intelligence are fixed and cannot be changed, are less likely to achieve success. Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory addresses the concept of social capital, which emphasizes the interplay between an individual's social network and their access to various resources and opportunities. Bourdieu's theory also addresses the role of social networks in constructing individual beliefs and attitudes. This perspective has been influential in educational research in that it aids the analysis of disparities in academic achievement and the impact of social networks on educational outcomes. This study utilizes Bourdieu's social capital as a means of understanding the value derived from the networks of relationships among participants and their peers.

While research on mindset and academic performance has primarily focused on Western contexts, investigating these dynamics within the Oman context can provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that influence academic achievement in this setting. This study looks at the overall academic grades of the students and their English proficiency and compares them with the grades and proficiency of their social networks. In addition to academic performance and English proficiency, the study examines the relationship between participants' and their social networks' mindset. Investigating the relationship between mindset and social networks among university students in Oman can provide insights into the factors that shape academic achievement within its cultural context. Findings from this study can inform intervention and support systems that promote healthy social connections and the development of growth mindsets among university students, particularly in the context of the Sultanate of Oman. The study aimed to address the following objectives:

1. Explore the relationship between participants' mindsets (fixed or growth), their academic performance, and the mindsets and academic performances of their social networks.
2. Investigate the relationship between participants' English proficiency and the English proficiency of their social networks.

Studying the relationship between mindset (fixed or growth), academic performance, English proficiency, and social networks among students in Oman, holds an important significance as it resonates with the core principles of Oman Vision 2040. At the heart of Oman Vision 2040 lies a commitment to the development of human capital. The emphasis on fostering a growth mindset aligns with Oman's aspirations for a future characterized by resilience, innovation, and sustained growth (Ministry of Finance, n.d.).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Bourdieu's Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, introduced the concept of social capital as part of his broader sociological theory. According to Bourdieu, social capital refers to the benefits individuals gain from participating in social networks. These benefits are not only material but can include emotional support, information, and opportunities that are critical for personal and professional development. A key aspect of Bourdieu's theory is the relationship between social capital and other forms of capital, namely cultural and economic capital. While economic capital represents financial resources, cultural capital includes education, skills, and other cultural competencies. Bourdieu suggests that these forms of capital are interdependent. To illustrate this, a person with high cultural capital, such as education qualifications, might access better social networks, thereby increasing their social capital (Bourdieu, 1998).

Linking Bourdieu's social capital to the study of mindset (fixed or growth) is significant as it addresses a central theme in Bourdieu's theory. Bourdieu emphasizes how social relationships influence our access to resources and opportunities and illustrates how these networks influence our worldview. Bourdieu's theory provides valuable guidance in understanding the nuances of social interactions and their impact on individual and collective life (Bourdieu, 2000). The social environment, constituted by the network of relationships each individual is part of, plays a crucial role in forming beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. This perspective aligns with constructivist views, suggesting that much of an individual's worldview is constructed through social interactions.

Another central theme in Bourdieu's theory is the concept of habitus, which refers to a system that guides our thoughts and actions. Habitus is formed by an individual circumstances, social norms, and values, and how these are linked to one's social capital and directly influence the individual's psyche (Bourdieu, 2000). Bourdieu's concept of habitus suggests that the social networks we engage in have an impact on our internal thought processes and decision-making patterns.

In education, Bourdieu's theory has been used as a guide in analyzing disparities. Dumais (2002) used Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to study and understand the role of cultural factors in educational achievement. Dumais (2002) found that students who participated in certain cultural activities outside school had a significant influence on their academic performance. Allard (2005) used Bourdieu's concept of social capital and social fields to examine the lives of economically disadvantaged young women who are at risk of leaving school early. Allard's (2005) investigation illustrated how social capital is utilized in different social fields and offered a critique of educational policies and practices that affect marginalized groups. Turnbull et al. (2019) used Bourdieu's theory to understand gender disparities in STEM education. Turnbull et al. (2019) conducted a study on undergraduate physics education, combining network analysis of student enrolment data. The study found significant gender differences in the choice of university courses and academic performance. The study revealed that female students were more likely to transition into life science fields and faced challenges in physics, which is traditionally a male-dominated field. The study highlights the need for a more inclusive culture in physics education to accommodate diverse student backgrounds.

2.2. Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset

The concept of mindset has been widely studied in psychology and education, with a fixed mindset and a growth mindset being two of the most important categories. According to Carol Dweck, who first introduced these concepts, people with a fixed mindset believe that their abilities and traits are innate and cannot be changed, while those with a growth mindset believe that they can develop their abilities and traits through effort and practice (Dweck, 2006).

People with a fixed mindset tend to attribute success and failure to innate talent, leading them to avoid challenges and fear failure (Blackwell et al., 2007). Research has shown that a fixed mindset can negatively impact motivation, persistence, and, ultimately, achievement (Burnette et al., 2013). People with a fixed mindset tend to avoid challenges and feedback, as they fear any failure or criticism will reflect their inherent flaws and limitations (Mueller & Dweck, 1998). They also tend to compare themselves with others constantly, seeking validation and recognition rather than growth and learning (Blackwell et al., 2007). Research has shown that having a fixed mindset can lead to various negative outcomes, such as low academic achievement, poor performance, and reduced motivation (Dweck, 2006; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). For example, students with a fixed mindset are less likely to take challenging courses, do not seek help from teachers or peers, and are adamant in the face of difficulties (Blackwell et al., 2007). They are also more likely to cheat or give up when they encounter setbacks, as they see their failure as a reflection of their lack of ability (Mueller & Dweck, 1998).

In contrast, people with a growth mindset embrace challenges and mistakes as opportunities for growth and learning, and they are not afraid of failure or criticism (Dweck, 2006). They also tend to focus on their progress and effort rather than their innate abilities or achievements, which allows them to maintain their motivation and resilience (Blackwell et al., 2007; Paunesku et al., 2012). Research has also shown that having a growth mindset can lead to various positive outcomes, such as higher academic achievement, better performance, and increased motivation (Blackwell et al., 2007; Dweck, 2006; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). In a study conducted by Blackwell et al. (2007), students with a growth mindset showed a significant increase in academic performance compared to those with a fixed mindset. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Burnette et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between growth mindset and academic achievement.

While the fixed mindset and growth mindset are not necessarily fixed traits, they are deeply ingrained beliefs that can be difficult to change (Dweck, 2006). However, research has identified several strategies that can help individuals shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. One of the strategies is mindset intervention programs to promote a growth mindset (Paunesku et al., 2015; Yeager et al., 2019). These

interventions generally involve teaching students about the different types of intelligence and the importance of effort in achieving success. Research has shown that such interventions can lead to increased motivation, better academic performance, and reduced achievement gaps (Yeager et al., 2019).

2.3. Learning as a Social Practice

Sociocultural learning theory is a theoretical framework that explains how people learn and develop through their social interactions within cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory emphasizes the importance of social and cultural factors in shaping individuals' cognitive development and learning. One of the key features of sociocultural learning theory is the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD represents the gap between what learners can do independently and what they can do with assistance. This assistance, often termed 'scaffolding' comes primarily from more knowledgeable others, which includes teachers, mentors, and peers. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes collaborative learning. Those who surround us, therefore, play a crucial role in determining the breadth and depth of our ZPD. In the context of the Sultanate of Oman, the ZPD concept has been applied to understand how students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can learn in classrooms. Researchers examined how teachers in Oman use scaffolding techniques to support English language learners in acquiring the language (Wyatt, 2013). The study found that the teachers' scaffolding practices were crucial in enabling students to learn and develop within their ZPD.

Another aspect of sociocultural learning theory that has been applied in the Omani context is the concept of Communities of Practice (CoP). CoP refers to groups of individuals who share a common interest and engage in joint activities to develop shared knowledge and expertise (Wenger, 1998). Learning is as much about the process as the content, and it is deeply rooted in the relationships and interactions within the community. It highlights the notion that our learning is profoundly social and that our social networks influence our understanding, approach, and growth. In Oman, researchers use CoP framework to understand how teachers collaborate and learn from each other in professional development settings (Al-Sinani, 2023). In fact, CoP facilitates teachers' professional growth and enables them to improve their teaching practices. Researchers in Oman also use the CoP framework to gain insights into students' everyday literacy practices. A report by Syahrin et al. (2023) states that

> … students are able to engage in diverse literacy practices in English through peer interactions. As a result, one way for teachers to promote students' acquisition of English literacy is to recognize them as co-producers in acquiring the skills and knowledge, as well as to make effective use of collaborative learning and group work. (p. 200)

Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Wenger's (1998) concept of Communities of Practice (CoP) underline one important assumption: that is, our growth and development are not solitary endeavors but are significantly influenced by our social networks. Linking the theories of ZPD, CoP, and mindset, we can assume that if learners are surrounded by peers who provide constructive scaffolding and immerse themselves in communities that value collaborative learning, they are more likely to cultivate a growth mindset.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study are students enrolled in different study programs at Dhofar University, a higher education institution located south of the Sultanate of Oman. The study consists of 18 primary participants and 90 of their peers, some of whom are also students at Dhofar University. Each primary participant provided data about five of their closest friends. At least one of their closest friends is also a student at Dhofar University, labeled as social network one (SN1). This study explored the analysis of the participants and their social networks into five groups to allow a deeper understanding of close-knit friendships. This approach ensures diversity by including peers from within and outside the university. Additionally, it offers practical and manageable data collection and enhances the strength of statistical analysis. It also provides a more realistic and efficient framework for exploring the dynamics

of student social networks in the context of Oman. Tables 1 to 4 summarize the profile of the participants and their social networks.

Table 1
Participants and Their Social Network Demographic Background

	Participants	**Social network 1**	**Social network 2-5**
Gender			
Male	-	-	-
Female	18	18	72
Nationality			
Oman	18	18	68
Expatriate	-	-	4
Education Institution			
Dhofar University	18	18	Not relevant
Other HEI in Oman	-	-	Not relevant
Age			
27 years and above	1	2	Not relevant
24-26 years	3	3	Not relevant
21- 23 years	11	9	Not relevant
20 years and below	3	4	Not relevant
Language Identity			
Arabic only	9	11	39
Arabic and local dialect	9	7	31
Others	-	-	2

3.2. Context of the Study

Situated in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula, the Sultanate of Oman shares its borders with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the Republic of Yemen. Oman, like many countries in the Arabian Peninsula, has a rich tribal history. Tribes foster a strong sense of belonging and identity. In such a system, social learning and passing down traditions, norms, and beliefs are crucial. In Oman, tribal affiliations are often based on geography, with tribes typically identified by the regions in which they reside (Chatty, 1983). Tribes in Oman have historically been important social units that provided security and stability for their members (Chatty, 1983). In Omani society, tribes are often viewed as extended families, with members of the same tribe and individuals forming close friendships with others from their tribe. However, it is essential to note that Oman, like many countries, is evolving, and while tribal affiliations remain vital, urbanization, education, and globalization have brought about changes in mindset and cultural practices.

The context of the study provides a lens through which the relationship between the participants' mindset, social networks, academic outcome, and English proficiency can be understood within a specific cultural, social, and linguistic landscape in Oman to enable the research to apply the findings effectively.

3.3. Materials

The study used a set of questions focusing on mindset. The questions were targeted to the participants and their nominated peers who consented to participate in the research. The pairs engaged with researchers to discuss a series of questions derived from a growth mindset quiz.

To document the participants' academic performance and English proficiency, an online survey tool was utilized. This tool was also used to gather the participants' assessment of their social networks' academic performance and English proficiency. The survey's design ensured ease of access and user-friendliness to encourage honest and thoughtful responses from participants. Where possible, the

researchers cross-checked the participants' self-assessment and the assessment of their peers against academic transcripts. This cross-checking was only made possible through consent of the participants, and their peers and consultation with academic supervisors. However, it is important to note that the researchers of this study did not gain access to all transcripts. Therefore, the evaluation of academic performance and English proficiency relied on self-reported data collected through the online survey.

3.4. Procedure

3.4.1. Data Collection

The data collection for this study was conducted through the following procedures. First, students at Dhofar University were invited to participate voluntarily. They were asked to nominate one of their closest friends, also a student at the university, to participate. The rationale for asking the participants to nominate a close friend who was also a student at Dhofar University was based on the need for practical access and convenience in conducting the research. By having participants and their nominated friends both from the same university, it became easier to arrange meetings and interactions in pairs within the vicinity of Dhofar University. This approach not only facilitated the logistical arrangements but also potentially enhanced the comfort of the participants, as they were engaging in a study with someone, they were familiar with.

Second, the primary participants and their nominated peers who gave their consent to participate in the study met with the researchers in pairs. Each pair met the researchers to discuss questions from a growth mindset quiz adapted from WDHB (2021, September 22). The data was used to assess and categorize their mindsets as either fixed or growth. The rationale for having these discussions centered around achieving more nuanced insights into their mindsets. It allowed researchers to translate and interpret quiz questions into Arabic. This was particularly important to find those participants or their peers who were not fluent in English. This technique not only ensured that language barriers did not impede their understanding or responses but also captured spontaneous feedback in a conversational setting, where students might share their thoughts more freely. It appeared to be more effective than simply administering the mindset quiz, as it reduced the risk of the students giving socially desirable answers, which was a common issue in self-report questionnaires.

Third, following the discussions, participants were provided with a link to an online survey. The purpose of this survey was to elicit information about five of their friends, which included their demographic details, academic performance, and English proficiency.

3.4.2. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data collected, a multiple-step approach was used to examine the relationships between mindsets, academic performance, English proficiency, and social networks. The first step involved analyzing the results from the discussions with the participants and one of their closest friends (SN1) to assess their mindsets. The mindsets (fixed or growth) were recorded for each individual. Next, the data collected from the online survey completed by the participants were analyzed. This survey provided information about the participants and their five friends, including academic performance, English proficiency, and demographic details. The SPSS software was utilized for this analysis. Spearman's correlation was used to assess the variables – participants' mindset and academic performance; the mindset of SN1 and their academic performance; and the relationship between the participants' academic performance, English proficiency, and that of their social network. Finally, in analyzing and discussing the findings, three theoretical lenses were applied. Bourdieu's social capital, which offers insights into the value of social networks. The ZPD concept helped in understanding how social interactions could facilitate learning, and CoP provided a perspective on how shared activities and values within a group could influence learning and mindset development.

4. Results

The academic performance of the participants was categorized into three distinct groups: those who attained 80 marks and above, those who scored between 70-79, and those who received marks at 69 or below. The data indicated that 72.2% of the participants achieved marks of 80 and above, 16.7% in the

range of 70-79, and 11.1% of the participants received marks of 69 or below. The academic performance of the participants' five closest friends, termed as social network (SN), was identified as SN1 to SN5 marks. Table 2 provides a descriptive analysis of the participants' academic performance and their social network.

Table 2
Academic Performance

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Participant marks	80 marks and above	13	72.2%
	Between 70-79	3	16.7%
	69 and below	2	11.1%
SN1 marks	80 marks and above	12	66.7%
	Between 70-79	4	22.2%
	69 and below	2	11.1%
SN2 marks	80 marks and above	5	27.8%
	Between 70-79	13	72.2%
	69 and below	0	0.0%
SN3 marks	80 marks and above	11	61.1%
	Between 70-79	7	38.9%
	69 and below	0	0.0%
SN4 marks	80 marks and above	13	72.2%
	Between 70-79	0	0.0%
	69 and below	5	27.8%
SN5 marks	80 marks and above	7	38.9%
	Between 70-79	8	44.4%
	69 and below	3	16.7%

In the analysis of proficiency in English, data has been gathered concerning both the participants and their SN. The participants' proficiency levels were categorized into three distinct groups, namely those who could communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes, those who could communicate well but needed improvement in some areas, and those who struggled to communicate in English. The data revealed that 77.8% of the participants could communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes, 16.7% could communicate well but acknowledged the need for improvement in certain areas, and 5.6% of participants admitted to struggling to communicate in English. The English proficiency of the participants' five closest friends (SN) was identified as SN1 to SN5 lang. Table 3 provides a descriptive analysis of the participants' English proficiency and their peers.

Table 3
Proficiency in English

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Participant lang	I can communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes	14	77.8%
	I can communicate in English well however there are many areas to improve	3	16.7%
	I struggle to communicate in English	1	5.6%
SN1 lang	My friend can communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes	14	77.8%
	My friend can communicate in English well however there are many areas that she/he needs to improve	4	22.2%
	My friend struggles to communicate in English	0	0.0%

SN2 lang	My friend can communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes	0	0.0%
	My friend can communicate in English well however there are many areas that she/he needs to improve	18	100.0%
	My friend struggles to communicate in English	0	0.0%
SN3 lang	My friend can communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes	13	72.2%
	My friend can communicate in English well however there are many areas that she/he needs to improve	5	27.8%
	My friend struggles to communicate in English	0	0.0%
SN4 lang	My friend can communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes	13	72.2%
	My friend can communicate in English well however there are many areas that she/he needs to improve	0	0.0%
	My friend struggles to communicate in English	5	27.8%
SN5 lang	My friend can communicate in English fluently with minimal mistakes	6	33.3%
	My friend can communicate in English well however there are many areas that she/he needs to improve	9	50.0%
	My friend struggles to communicate in English	3	16.7%

In the analysis of the participants' mindset and the mindset of one of their peers (labelled as SN1), the data revealed that 88.9% of the participants exhibited a growth mindset, indicating a strong inclination toward the belief that their abilities and intelligence could be developed through effort and dedication. A smaller fraction, comprising 11.1% of participants, remained to a fixed mindset, indicating the belief that their abilities and intelligence were innate and unchangeable. A balanced distribution was observed for the mindset of the SN1. Among the SN1, 50.0% demonstrated a growth mindset, and an equal 50.0% of the SN1 maintained a fixed mindset. Table 4 provides a summary of the findings.

Table 4
Mindset

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Participant's mindset	Growth	16	88.9%
	Fixed	2	11.1%
SN1 mindset	Growth	9	50.0%
	Fixed	9	50.0%

In the analysis of the relationship between the participants' academic performance and the academic performance of their social network, a varying degree of correlation was observed. There was a strong positive correlation between the participants' marks with Peer 1's marks (ρ = .907, significant at the level .01), suggesting likely similarity in academic performance, potentially due to shared study habits as both as students at Dhofar University. On the other hand, Peer 2 and 3 showed week and non-significant correlations (ρ = .380 and ρ = .098, respectively), indicating little to no predictive relationship between their marks. Peer 4 marks had a weak positive correlation (ρ = .258), and interestingly, Peer 5 marks had a moderate negative correlation with the participants (ρ = -.480, significant at the level .05). This mixed findings reflect the complex interplay of individual abilities, and possibly the varying nature of each peer's influence on the participants' academic performance. Table 5 summarizes the relationship between the participants' academic performance and their social network.

Table 5
Academic Performance Correlations

			Participant marks	Peers marks1	Peers marks2	Peers marks3	Peers marks4	Peers marks5
Spearman's rho	Participant marks	Correlation Coefficient	1.000					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.					
		N	18					
	Peers marks1	Correlation Coefficient	.907**	1.000				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.				
		N	18	18				
	Peers marks2	Correlation Coefficient	.380	.431	1.000			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.120	.074	.			
		N	18	18	18			
	Peers marks3	Correlation Coefficient	.098	.026	-.014	1.000		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.700	.917	.956	.		
		N	18	18	18	18		
	Peers marks4	Correlation Coefficient	.258	.431	.385	.014	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.301	.074	.115	.956	.	
		N	18	18	18	18	18	
	Peers marks5	Correlation Coefficient	-.480*	-.576*	-.544*	.155	-.518*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.012	.020	.540	.028	.
		N	18	18	18	18	18	18

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The analysis of the correlation between the participants' English proficiency and their social network reveals a varying degree and in turn, this highlights the varied influences and relationships within the participant's language learning environment. An extraordinarily high positive correlation with Peer 1 ($\rho = .994$, p <.001) suggested nearly identical language proficiencies, likely indicative of shared learning experiences or mutual influence. For Peer 2, a moderate but non-significant correlation ($\rho = .188$, p = .455) implied a slight association, though this was not reliably supported by the data. A weak, non-significant negative correlation with Peer 3 ($\rho = -.330$, p = .948) indicated a marginal inverse relationship. There was a negligible correlation with Peer 4 ($\rho = .016$, p = .948), suggesting no real link in language proficiency. There was a moderate and statistically significant negative correlation with Peer 5 ($\rho = -.72$, p = .002), suggesting a tendency for the participants' proficiency to inversely mirror that of Peer 5. Table 6 summarizes the findings for the English proficiency correlations.

Table 6
English Proficiency Correlations

			Participant lang	Peers lang 1	Peers lang 2	Peers lang 3	Peers lang 4	Peers lang 5
Spearman's rho	Participant lang	Correlation Coefficient	1.000					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.					
		N	18					

Peers lang 1	Correlation Coefficient	.994**	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.				
	N	18	18				
Peers lang 2	Correlation Coefficient	.188	.189	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.455	.453	.			
	N	18	18	18			
Peers lang 3	Correlation Coefficient	-.330	-.331	.219	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.182	.179	.382	.		
	N	18	18	18	18		
Peers lang 4	Correlation Coefficient	.016	-.033	-.175	-.108	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.948	.896	.486	.671	.	
	N	18	18	18	18	18	
Peers lang 5	Correlation Coefficient	-.672**	-.676**	-.056	.196	-.392	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002	.826	.435	.107	.
	N	18	18	18	18	18	18

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

Based on the Spearman's rho correlation coefficients and their significance levels, Table 7 reveals several important findings. First, the correlation between the participants and SN1 mindsets was at 0.354, which suggested a moderate positive relationship. The significance value was at 0.150 which implied that while there appeared to be some degree of positive relationship, it was not consistent enough to be considered statistically reliable. Second, the correlation between the participants' mindset and participants' academic performance was at 0.693 which indicated a strong positive relationship. The significance value was .001, which suggested that the participants' mindset had a significant positive association with their academic performance. Third, the correlation between SN1 mindset and SN1 academic performance was at 0.489, which is a moderate positive relationship. The significance level was at 0.040, which showed that, similar to the participants, the mindset of SN1 also positively correlated with their academic performance. Finally, the correlation between SN1 mindset and the participants' academic performance was at 0.612 and showed a strong positive relationship. The significance value was at 0.007, indicating that the correlation was statistically significant. The finding suggested that the mindset of one member of the social network is also positively associated with the participants' academic performance.

Table 7
Mindset Correlations

			Participant's mindset	Participant marks	Peers' mindset	Peer marks1
Spearman's rho	Participants mindset	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.693**	.354	.655**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.150	.003
		N	18	18	18	18
	Participant marks	Correlation Coefficient	.693**	1.000	.612**	.907**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.007	<.001
		N	18	18	18	18
	Peer's mindset	Correlation Coefficient	.354	.612**	1.000	.489*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.150	.007	.	.040
		N	18	18	18	18

Peer marks1	Correlation Coefficient	.655**	.907**	.489*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	<.001	.040	.
	N	18	18	18	18

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

5. Discussion

The interplay of Bourdieu's social capital, ZPD, CoP, and mindset theories was utilized when examining the outcomes of the participants and their social network's mindset, academic performance, and English proficiency. Bourdieu' social capital was explored as means of understanding the value derived from the networks of relationships among participants and their peers. The ZPD provided insights into how peer collaboration could raise individual competency levels, while the CoP shed light on the shared learning dynamics within these social groups.

First, the data suggested that the participants' social capital within their educational context was varied and depended significantly on the relationships they maintained. The strong positive correlation between the participants' academic performance and one of their social networks (SN1) may have exemplified high social capital. The two groups might have mutually benefited from their relationship, and this relationship may also have been seen as a form of educational wealth in which the participants' academic performance was enhanced through shared social capital. The negative correlation with SN5 suggested the relationship might have been less conducive to positive academic outcomes. These varying data echoed the work of previous investigations. Fujiyama et al. (2021) studied the influence of peer networks on academic performance of a group of adolescents. The study revealed that close friendships had different impacts on academic performance. Ryabov (2009), on the other hand, studied the role of peer social capital in the academic success of immigrant and native youths. The study reported that the influence of peer social capital on the academic success of immigrant youths was more pronounced than that of native youths.

English language proficiency may also have been considered as a form of cultural capital, such as in the context of the Sultanate of Oman. It was a skill that could be translated into educational success (Syahrin & Abdalla Salih, 2020) and social mobility. A study conducted in Iran suggested that learners invested in learning English as not just for linguistic proficiency but also as a form of cultural capital, a desire to achieve higher social status, and to assess more social spaces (Tajeddin & Fereydoonfar, 2022). The strong positive correlation between the participants' English proficiency and one of their social networks (SN1) may have indicated that they had access to similar resources and networks that support language learning, which was a key component of Bourdieu's cultural capital. This was not surprising as both the participants and SN1 were students from the same university. The lack of significance observed with other groups (SN2, SN3, and SN4) suggested that other variables, outside of social network dynamics, may influence English language proficiency. The negative correlation between the participants and SN5's English proficiency required a more nuanced interpretation.

The varying dynamics of the relationships that students had with their social networks and how that may have influenced their language proficiency were reflected in previous studies. Carhill-Poza (2015) studied the social network analysis of adolescent Spanish-speaking immigrants. The study found linguistic peer support and social relationships impacted the immigrant adolescents' second language outcomes in schools. On the other hand, Kim's (2006) study with immigrant students in the US revealed that their interactions were mostly family-oriented, with limited linguistic and academic support from their peers. The study concluded that there was no significant difference in self-reported English proficiency and social interactivity among English as a second language (ESL) students. Gerhards (2014) argued that a person's social capital and educational level were crucial micro-level factors in enhancing English proficiency. Flores-Yeffal's (2019) research suggested that while certain social interactions could enhance language skills, others may have limited exposure to the language, thereby impeded their English proficiency. The concept of CoP highlighted the influence of group dynamics on individual learning. Syahrin (2021) and Syahrin et al. (2023) revealed in separate reports how students

learning in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) context were enhanced by peer interactions. These interactions, according to the reports, occurred within communities of practice in which English was used. Based on these reports, it may be inferred that the English proficiency of the ESL and EFL students was influenced by their peers. However, in this study, the relationship between the participants' English proficiency and their peers was inconsistent. The statistical data did not support the notion that the participants' English proficiency was significantly influenced by their peer interactions.

In both findings, the data revealed a consistent strong positive correlation between the participants' academic performance and English proficiency with SN1. SN1 appeared to embody a positive influence, potentially enhanced the participants' academic trajectory within the Omani context. This relationship might have been underpinned by mutual support and shared resources, contributing to their educational success. In contrast, the negative correlation with SN5 in both academic and language proficiency suggested a different dynamic. SN5 might not have shared the same degree of cultural capital or may even represent different educational values or support systems. While interpreting the data through the lens of Bourdieu's theories is insightful, they did not fully capture the complexity of social capital benefits. The participants in this study and their social networks came from a society where friendships and social networks could have been influenced by tribal affiliations and other sociocultural factors unique to Oman, as discussed in the Methodology section of this paper. Therefore, while the positive and negative correlations with SN1 and SN5, respectively, provided evidence of the potential impact of social and cultural capital on academic outcomes and language proficiency, they must be contextualized within the Omani society.

Consistent with the foundational work by Dweck (2006) and further supported by Blackwell et al. (2007), the mindset an individual has could significantly influence their academic performance. The findings of this study aligned with these seminal works, as it showed a notable correlation between the participants' mindset and their academic performance. The finding was further supported by the moderate correlation of one of their social networks (SN1) mindset and SN1 academic performance. This correlation highlighted Dweck's theory that a growth mindset could facilitate positive academic outcomes (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Dweck's mindset theory, combined with Vygotsky's ZPD, may be used to suggest that when learners found themselves in social networks that fostered a growth mindset, they may have experienced an expansive ZPD. This notion was reflected in the positive correlation between one of the social network group's mindset (represented by SN1) and the academic performance of the participants. The data suggested that when individuals were surrounded by a growth-oriented network, they developed their learning abilities and perform better academically. This finding was coherent with the work of Sheffler and Cheung's (2020), in which the authors described the importance of peers in growth mindset interventions.

This study addressed two key research questions, firstly it examined the relationship among an individual mindset, social network mindset, and the influence on academic performance. The study concluded that an individual's mindset significantly influenced their academic performance. Additionally, the mindset within one's social network could also affect their academic achievement. This indicated that individuals with a growth mindset, especially when surrounded by others with a similar growth-oriented mindset, tended to perform better academically. The study also observed varied social capital levels among participants, as it showed a strong positive correlation with one social network but inconsistency with others. The second research question delved into the relationship between participants' English proficiency and their social network, and it revealed a pronounced correlation with one group but inconclusive findings with others. The varied correlations between participants and their social network challenges the idea that "you are the average of the five people you spend most time with", especially in the Omani context. This context highlighted the complex nature of social relationships and suggested that the benefits of social capital cannot be universally applied, as they are deeply rooted in cultural and social settings.

Building on the significance of English as not just a linguistic skill but a tool for global connectivity along with the concept of a growth mindset, an avenue for future research is to investigate how digital peer networks foster a growth mindset and English language learning in a global context. Such a study

could contribute to our understanding of the interplay between technology, language learning, and mindset in a globally connected world.

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