

LIFELONG LEARNING MINDSET AND CAREER SUCCESS: EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

A lifelong learning mindset includes curiosity, strategic thinking, and resilience. This research found that co-op students who had a greater lifelong learning mindset had higher performance ratings from their supervisors. Graduates who had a greater lifelong learning mindset had better career success, including greater performance, more promotions and higher job satisfaction.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

This research is about career success and lifelong learning. Career success is defined in terms of pay, promotions, how satisfied someone is with their job, achievements, and positive experiences in the workplace.

Lifelong learning is the idea that you participate in learning throughout your life. Individuals who practice lifelong learning can have characteristics such as curiosity (drive to learn new things), strategic thinking (thinking about the “big picture” with clear goals and plans), and resilience (overcoming challenges). This research looks at the relationship between a lifelong learning mindset and career success.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers did two studies to look at the relationship between a lifelong learning mindset and career success. Participants in both studies were from the field of accounting and finance.

In the first study, participants were co-operative education students from a Canadian university. Co-operative education is a type of work-integrated learning¹ program where students alternate academic and paid work terms. Sixty-two participants completed a questionnaire about their lifelong learning mindset and career success. Researchers also used data from the participant’s work term evaluation (completed by the participant’s supervisor).

In the second study, participants were 148 graduates of the same accounting and finance program from study 1. Like study 1, participants completed a questionnaire about their lifelong learning mindset and career success. Participants reported how many times they were promoted since graduating, along with other signs of career success like job satisfaction, work engagement, and their confidence in their ability to complete a task.

¹ **Work-integrated learning (WIL):**

an education model that combines academic studies with a workplace or practice setting. Work-integrated learning includes a partnership of an academic institution, a host organization, and a student.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

In both studies, the researchers found that a greater lifelong learning mindset was associated with greater career success. This includes a greater number of promotions, greater job satisfaction, greater work engagement, and more job-related confidence in their ability to complete a task (self-efficacy).

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

Educators and employers can use this research to help develop students and employees as lifelong learners. Educators can also use this research to offer lifelong learning opportunities throughout adulthood. Work-integrated learning¹ plays an important role in developing lifelong learners. Students' participation in the workplace can help them learn to see the "big picture" beyond their academics and provide an opportunity to build resilience.

KEYWORDS

Lifelong learning mindset, career success, work-integrated learning

CITATION

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The Work-Learn Institute at the University of Waterloo is the only institute in the world dedicated to research on co-operative education and other forms of work-integrated learning.