

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the distinct cognitive frameworks characterizing entrepreneurial and public service mindsets in Ghana and their implications for national development. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, quantitative survey data were collected from 200 participants (100 entrepreneurs and 100 public servants) across Ghana's Greater Accra and Ashanti regions, supplemented by 30 in-depth qualitative interviews. The findings reveal significant differences in risk orientation, innovation adaptation, temporal perspectives, and collaborative approaches between the two groups. Entrepreneurs demonstrated higher risk tolerance, greater innovation urgency, and fluid networking strategies, while public servants prioritized procedural compliance, long-term planning, and formal collaboration channels. Despite these contrasts, the study identifies critical complementarities between these mindsets, highlighting opportunities for cross-sector learning and integration. The research concludes that leveraging the strengths of both orientations through targeted policy interventions, educational reforms, and organizational practices could enhance public-private collaboration and accelerate progress toward Ghana's development goals. These findings contribute to broader discussions on institutional innovation, workforce development, and sustainable growth in emerging economies.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial Mindset, Public Service Mindset, Ghana, Cross-Sector Collaboration, National Development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ghana stands at a critical juncture in its developmental trajectory, characterized by a dynamic interplay between an emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem and an established public service sector. This intersection represents not merely an economic dichotomy but a profound divergence in worldviews, values, and approaches to national progress. The study of entrepreneurial and public service mindsets in Ghana provides crucial insights into the cognitive frameworks that drive individual career choices, organizational behaviors, and ultimately, national development outcomes. These mindsets—shaped by cultural heritage, colonial legacy, contemporary economic pressures, and global influences—create distinct paradigms through which Ghanaians engage with work, society, and their roles in nation-building.

The entrepreneurial mindset in Ghana has gained significant prominence in recent decades, particularly following structural adjustment programs and subsequent government initiatives promoting private enterprise as a solution to unemployment and economic stagnation. This mindset encompasses more than mere business creation; it represents a constellation of characteristics including innovation, risk tolerance, opportunity recognition, adaptability, and a future-oriented perspective. Ghanaian entrepreneurs often operate within an environment characterized by limited access to capital, evolving regulatory frameworks, and infrastructural challenges, yet they demonstrate remarkable resilience and creativity in navigating these constraints. The proliferation of technology hubs, social enterprises, and small and medium-sized enterprises across urban and increasingly rural areas reflects the growing embrace of entrepreneurial values among Ghana's youth and working population.

Conversely, the public service mindset remains deeply embedded in Ghana's socio-cultural fabric, reflecting both pre-colonial traditions of communal service and the bureaucratic structures established during colonial administration. This mindset prioritizes stability, procedural adherence, hierarchical authority, and collective welfare over individual gain. For many Ghanaians, particularly from older generations and certain regional contexts, public service represents not just employment but a prestigious vocation that offers social status, job security, and the opportunity to contribute to nation-building through formal institutions. The public service mindset is characterized by methodical decision-making, risk aversion, and a strong orientation toward rules and processes, which can sometimes manifest as bureaucratic inertia but also provides stability and continuity in governance.

The tension and potential synergy between these mindsets have profound implications for Ghana's development. As the country pursues ambitious goals outlined in Vision 2040 and aligns with global Sustainable Development Goals, the need to harness both entrepreneurial innovation and public service stability becomes increasingly urgent. The entrepreneurial mindset drives economic

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

diversification, job creation, and adaptive responses to global challenges, while the public service mindset ensures institutional continuity, regulatory oversight, and equitable distribution of public goods. Understanding how these mindsets coexist, conflict, and potentially complement each other is essential for designing effective policies, educational programs, and organizational structures that leverage the strengths of both approaches.

Several contextual factors unique to Ghana shape the manifestation and evolution of these mindsets. The country's educational system, which traditionally emphasized preparation for white-collar employment and public service, is gradually incorporating entrepreneurial education, though not without resistance and implementation challenges. Family expectations and cultural values continue to influence career choices, with many families still preferring the perceived security of public sector employment over the uncertainties of entrepreneurship. Regional disparities also play a role, with entrepreneurial activity concentrated in urban centers like Accra and Kumasi, while public service remains a dominant employer across all regions. Additionally, Ghana's political climate and governance structures significantly impact both mindsets, affecting everything from regulatory environments to public trust in institutions.

The historical evolution of these mindsets reveals complex interrelationships. Ghana's immediate post-independence era emphasized state-led development and expanded public sector employment, embedding the public service mindset deeply into the national psyche. The economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s and subsequent structural adjustment programs necessitated a shift toward private enterprise, gradually legitimizing and valorizing entrepreneurial pursuits. Recent decades have seen further evolution, with technology enabling new forms of entrepreneurship and governance reforms seeking to make public service more efficient and responsive. Throughout these transformations, the coexistence of these mindsets has created both tensions and opportunities for hybrid approaches that combine entrepreneurial innovation with public service values.

This study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of these competing yet complementary mindsets within the Ghanaian context. By examining their cognitive foundations, behavioral manifestations, and socio-cultural determinants, the research aims to move beyond simplistic dichotomies and identify pathways for productive engagement between these two crucial sectors. The findings have significance for multiple stakeholders, including policymakers designing national development strategies, educational institutions shaping future leaders, private sector organizations seeking to collaborate with government, and public institutions aiming to incorporate innovative approaches while maintaining their core mission of public service.

As Ghana continues its journey toward middle-income status and beyond, the integration of entrepreneurial dynamism and public service stability may represent one of the most important factors determining the country's developmental success. This study contributes to this integration by providing empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks that illuminate the mindsets shaping Ghana's present and future. Through detailed examination of how Ghanaians in different sectors perceive their roles, make decisions, and conceptualize success, this research aims to foster greater understanding and collaboration between two domains that are essential for sustainable national development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The coexistence of entrepreneurial and public service mindsets in Ghana represents a critical yet understudied dynamic that directly impacts the nation's developmental progress. While both sectors contribute significantly to economic and social advancement, their fundamentally distinct values, motivations, and operational frameworks often lead to misalignment, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for synergistic collaboration. This disconnect manifests in several pressing issues that hinder Ghana's ability to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth.

Firstly, there exists a palpable cultural and ideological divide between entrepreneurs and public servants in Ghana. Entrepreneurs often perceive the public sector as bureaucratic, slow-moving, and resistant to innovation, while public servants may view entrepreneurs as profit-driven, risk-taking individuals who prioritize personal gain over collective welfare. This mutual misunderstanding fosters distrust and limits productive engagement between the two sectors. For instance, entrepreneurs frequently cite cumbersome regulatory processes, lack of transparency, and inconsistent policy implementation as major impediments to business growth. Conversely, public servants express frustration with entrepreneurs' perceived circumvention of rules and limited adherence to formal procedures. This divergence in mindsets—rooted in different risk tolerances, time orientations, and definitions of value—creates a structural barrier to public-private partnerships and policy coherence.

Secondly, Ghana's educational and professional socialization systems tend to reinforce rather than bridge this divide. Educational institutions often prioritize preparation for formal employment, particularly in the public sector, while providing limited exposure to entrepreneurial thinking and innovation management. Meanwhile, professional training within the public service emphasizes rule compliance and hierarchical decision-making, potentially stifling the creativity and adaptability needed to address complex developmental challenges. The result is a workforce that often operates in silos, with few mechanisms for cross-sectoral learning or mobility. This lack of integration is particularly problematic given that many of Ghana's most pressing challenges—from youth unemployment to digital transformation—require collaborative approaches that draw on both entrepreneurial innovation and public sector scale and legitimacy.

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

Thirdly, policy frameworks and institutional structures often fail to account for the complementary strengths of these two mindsets. Entrepreneurship policies typically focus on access to finance and business registration without addressing deeper cognitive and cultural barriers to enterprise development. Similarly, public sector reform efforts frequently emphasize technical efficiency measures without cultivating the innovation capacities and public value creation mindsets needed for transformative change. This partial approach limits the effectiveness of interventions and perpetuates suboptimal outcomes. For example, despite numerous initiatives to promote entrepreneurship, Ghana continues to face high failure rates among small and medium enterprises, partly due to misalignment with public sector priorities and capabilities. Likewise, public service delivery challenges persist despite various reform programs, often because they fail to incorporate entrepreneurial approaches to problem-solving and resource mobilization. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of Ghana's socio-economic landscape—characterized by digitalization, demographic changes, and evolving global partnerships—creates new imperatives for mindset integration. Traditional boundaries between public and private sectors are blurring, with social enterprises, impact investing, and hybrid organizational models gaining prominence. Yet, existing research and policy frameworks remain largely sector-specific, failing to capture the nuances of these emerging arrangements. This gap is particularly significant given Ghana's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which require innovative governance approaches and multi-stakeholder partnerships that leverage the strengths of both entrepreneurial and public service paradigms.

The lack of comprehensive comparative research on these mindsets represents a significant knowledge gap. While studies have examined entrepreneurship development and public sector reform separately, few have adopted an integrated analytical framework that explores the cognitive, behavioral, and institutional dimensions of both domains simultaneously. This limited understanding constrains the ability of policymakers, educators, and organizational leaders to design interventions that foster productive interaction between these critical sectors. Without such understanding, Ghana risks perpetuating suboptimal development pathways that fail to fully harness either entrepreneurial innovation or public service stability.

This study therefore addresses these gaps by investigating the following core problem: How do entrepreneurial and public service mindsets manifest, interact, and shape developmental outcomes in Ghana, and what strategies can enhance their complementary potential while mitigating their tensions? By examining the cognitive frameworks, value systems, and behavioral patterns that characterize these mindsets, the research aims to provide insights for fostering greater alignment and collaboration between Ghana's entrepreneurial and public service sectors. The findings will inform the design of policies, programs, and practices that leverage the unique strengths of both mindsets to advance national development goals.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To identify and analyze the core characteristics, values, and cognitive patterns that define the entrepreneurial mindset and the public service mindset among Ghanaian professionals.
2. To examine the key socio-cultural, institutional, and personal factors that influence the development and adoption of either an entrepreneurial or public service mindset in Ghana.
3. To assess the impact of these distinct mindsets on decision-making processes, problem-solving approaches, and professional behaviors within their respective sectors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The examination of entrepreneurial and public service mindsets necessitates a robust theoretical foundation that can illuminate the cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions underlying these distinct orientations. Two theoretical frameworks provide particularly relevant lenses for this analysis: Schein's Career Anchors Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Together, these theories offer complementary insights into the stability of career identities and the cognitive processes that shape sector-specific mindsets and actions.

Schein's Career Anchors Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the deep-seated values and motivations that guide individuals' career choices and persist across their professional lives. Developed through longitudinal studies of MIT alumni, Schein identified eight career anchors—internal constellations of talent, motive, and value that shape career identity and decision-making. For the purposes of this study, several anchors are particularly relevant. The entrepreneurial creativity anchor characterizes individuals driven to create new ventures, products, or services, valuing autonomy, innovation, and the opportunity to build something from nothing. These individuals typically exhibit high tolerance for ambiguity and risk, traits central to the entrepreneurial mindset. In contrast, the security/stability anchor describes individuals who prioritize job security, stable employment, and predictable career paths—attributes often associated with public service careers. Similarly, the service/dedication to a cause anchor aligns with public service motivations, emphasizing work that contributes to a larger purpose or benefits society.

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

The theory suggests that career anchors develop early in one's career and remain relatively stable, providing an explanatory mechanism for why individuals might gravitate toward and persist in either entrepreneurial or public service paths. In the Ghanaian context, this theory helps illuminate how deeply ingrained values—whether toward innovation and risk or stability and service—shape not only career choice but also ongoing professional identity and behavior. The theory further suggests that misalignment between one's career anchor and work environment leads to dissatisfaction and poor performance, highlighting the importance of understanding these foundational motivations for both individual fulfillment and organizational effectiveness.

Complementing this perspective, the Theory of Planned Behavior offers a social-psychological framework for understanding how mindsets translate into specific behaviors and decisions. The theory posits that behavior is directly determined by behavioral intention, which in turn is influenced by three factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes refer to the degree to which an individual has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question. For entrepreneurs, this might include positive attitudes toward risk-taking and opportunity recognition, while public servants might hold more positive attitudes toward procedural adherence and collective decision-making. Subjective norms encompass the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior, including the expectations of family, peers, and society more broadly.

In Ghana, where extended family networks and community expectations exert significant influence, subjective norms likely play a powerful role in reinforcing sector-specific mindsets and behaviors. Perceived behavioral control refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, reflecting past experience and anticipated obstacles. For entrepreneurs, this might include perceptions of their ability to secure funding and navigate regulatory environments, while for public servants, it might involve perceptions of their ability to work effectively within bureaucratic constraints and hierarchical structures. The theory further acknowledges that perceived behavioral control can directly influence behavior beyond intention, particularly when individuals have actual control over behavioral performance.

The integration of these two theories provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the formation, persistence, and behavioral consequences of entrepreneurial and public service mindsets. Schein's theory helps explain why individuals develop relatively stable preferences for certain types of work environments and career paths, while the Theory of Planned Behavior illuminates the cognitive processes through which these general orientations translate into specific decisions and actions in particular contexts. Together, they offer both a dispositional and situational perspective on mindset and behavior, acknowledging the role of both internal values and external factors in shaping professional conduct. For Ghanaian entrepreneurs, this might mean that an entrepreneurial creativity anchor combines with positive attitudes toward innovation, supportive subjective norms from entrepreneurial networks, and high perceived control over business outcomes to produce the proactive opportunity-seeking behavior characteristic of the entrepreneurial mindset. For public servants, a security/stability or service anchor might combine with positive attitudes toward procedure, subjective norms that value public sector employment, and perceived control within bureaucratic systems to produce the rule-based, stability-oriented behavior associated with the public service mindset. The theories also suggest potential points of conflict and synergy between these mindsets. For example, differences in fundamental career anchors might create communication challenges and mutual misunderstanding, while complementary attitudes and perceived behavioral controls might facilitate productive collaboration on specific projects or initiatives. By applying these theoretical frameworks to the Ghanaian context, this study seeks to develop a nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial and public service mindsets are formed, maintained, and expressed in behavior, with important implications for policy, education, and organizational development aimed at fostering greater collaboration and synergy between these critical sectors.

Empirical Review

Empirical research on mindset differences between entrepreneurs and public servants reveals consistent patterns across diverse contexts while highlighting distinctive manifestations within Ghana's socio-economic landscape. International studies consistently demonstrate that entrepreneurs exhibit higher risk tolerance, greater innovation orientation, and stronger preference for autonomy compared to their public sector counterparts. A cross-national survey by Lifán et al. (2016) involving 1,200 professionals across six countries found entrepreneurs scored significantly higher on measures of opportunity recognition and tolerance for ambiguity, while public servants demonstrated stronger preferences for structured environments and job security. These findings align with research by Pedersen et al. (2019) examining Scandinavian welfare states, where public servants showed greater emphasis on procedural fairness and collective outcomes, while entrepreneurs prioritized market responsiveness and individual initiative. Importantly, these studies note that national context significantly moderates these differences, with developing economies showing more pronounced mindset gaps due to institutional weaknesses and resource constraints.

Within African contexts, research indicates similar patterns while highlighting unique contextual factors. A comparative study by Adusei et al. (2021) examining Ghanaian and Kenyan professionals found that entrepreneurs demonstrated significantly higher innovation self-efficacy and change orientation, while public servants showed stronger rule compliance and risk aversion tendencies. However, the study also noted important variations within sectors: public servants working in newer regulatory agencies exhibited mindset characteristics closer to entrepreneurs than their counterparts in traditional ministries, suggesting organizational context

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

mediates broader sectoral influences. Research by Mensah and Nyarkoh (2022) specifically focusing on Ghana found that entrepreneurs in Accra's technology hub demonstrated particularly strong growth mindsets and adaptive capabilities, while public servants in traditional ministries maintained more fixed mindsets regarding organizational change. These differences were attributed to variations in incentive structures, with entrepreneurial environments rewarding innovation and public sector environments rewarding compliance.

The relationship between mindsets and performance outcomes has received considerable empirical attention. Studies consistently find that entrepreneurial mindsets predict venture creation and business growth, particularly in developing economy contexts. Research by Amankwah-Amoah et al. (2021) tracking 350 Ghanaian entrepreneurs over three years found that those scoring higher on mindset measures of resilience and opportunity recognition were significantly more likely to sustain their businesses through economic shocks. Similarly, public service research indicates that mindset characteristics influence organizational effectiveness. A study by Ayee and Asare (2020) examining Ghana's civil service found that departments where staff exhibited stronger public service motivation and change orientation demonstrated better implementation of digital government initiatives, suggesting that even within bureaucratic structures, certain mindset characteristics predict innovation adoption.

Recent research has begun examining the interaction between these mindsets in hybrid organizational contexts. Studies of social enterprises in Kenya and South Africa by Muchiri et al. (2022) found that successful organizations managed to integrate entrepreneurial and public service mindsets through deliberate leadership practices and organizational design. These organizations maintained entrepreneurial flexibility while embedding public service values of accountability and collective benefit, suggesting the potential for mindset integration rather than mere coexistence. In Ghana, preliminary research by Osei-Hwedie and Arthur (2023) on public-private partnerships found that projects succeeded when participants developed what they termed "collaborative mindset literacy"—the ability to understand and appreciate the complementary strengths of different professional orientations.

Important gaps remain in the empirical literature. Most studies focus on either entrepreneurs or public servants separately, with limited comparative work examining both groups within the same research design. Methodologically, heavy reliance on self-report measures creates potential for social desirability bias, particularly in contexts where public service employment carries strong status implications. Longitudinal studies tracking mindset development over time are particularly scarce, limiting understanding of how these orientations form and evolve through professional socialization. The Ghana-specific research, while growing, remains largely concentrated in urban centers and formal sectors, neglecting rural entrepreneurs and local government officials who might exhibit different mindset patterns.

Furthermore, existing research seldom examines how digital transformation is reshaping traditional mindset distinctions. As mobile technology and platform economies create new hybrid work arrangements, the boundaries between entrepreneurial and public service mindsets may be evolving in ways not captured by existing frameworks. Research during Ghana's COVID-19 response by Quartey et al. (2022) suggested that crisis conditions forced rapid mindset adaptations in both sectors, with public servants demonstrating unexpected entrepreneurial behaviors and entrepreneurs engaging in unusual collective action, indicating that contextual factors can trigger mindset flexibility despite generally stable patterns.

This study addresses these gaps by employing a comparative mixed-methods design that examines both entrepreneurs and public servants within unified analytical framework. By incorporating both self-report measures and behavioral indicators, it seeks to overcome limitations of previous methodological approaches. The focus on Ghana's specific institutional context allows for examination of how national policies and cultural factors shape the expression and development of sector-specific mindsets, while the attention to digitalization and hybrid work arrangements ensures relevance to contemporary economic transformations. The research aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform strategies for fostering productive collaboration between these crucial sectors.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a comparative research design utilizing a mixed-methods approach to examine the entrepreneurial and public service mindsets among Ghanaian professionals. The design enabled both quantitative measurement of mindset characteristics and qualitative exploration of their manifestations in practice, providing comprehensive insights into the research questions. The study was conducted over a six-month period from January to June 2025, focusing on professionals in the Greater Accra and Ashanti regions due to their concentration of both entrepreneurial activities and public service institutions.

The study population consisted of two distinct groups: entrepreneurs and public servants. Entrepreneurs were defined as individuals who had founded or co-founded at least one business that had been operational for a minimum of two years, employing at least one other person besides themselves. Public servants were defined as civil servants working in ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) for at least two years, excluding political appointees and temporary staff. A multi-stage sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation across relevant demographics and professional characteristics. First, stratified random sampling was used to select participants from business registration databases and public service directories, ensuring variation in age, gender, educational background, and organizational size. The quantitative component targeted 200 participants (100 entrepreneurs and 100

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

public servants) to allow for robust statistical analysis. For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 30 participants (15 from each group) who could provide rich, detailed insights based on their professional experiences and leadership roles.

Data collection utilized two primary instruments: a structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview protocol. The questionnaire was developed based on established scales from previous mindset research, adapted to the Ghanaian context. It measured six core mindset dimensions: risk tolerance (using the Risk Propensity Scale adapted from Nicholson et al., 2005), innovation orientation (adapted from Hurt et al., 1977), rule compliance (based on the Bureaucratic Orientation Scale from Clifton et al., 2020), public service motivation (using Perry's PSM scale, 1996), adaptive capability (from Martin et al., 2019), and collaborative mindset (developed for this study). Responses were captured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The questionnaire also collected demographic and professional background information. The interview protocol included open-ended questions exploring participants' career journeys, decision-making processes, responses to challenges, and perceptions of the other sector. Pilot testing with 20 participants (10 from each group) ensured instrument clarity and cultural appropriateness, resulting in minor modifications to question phrasing.

Quantitative data collection occurred through both online and in-person administration. Trained research assistants arranged meetings with participants at their workplaces or other convenient locations, explaining the study purpose and ensuring informed consent before questionnaire completion. The average completion time was 25 minutes. Qualitative data collection involved semi-structured interviews conducted by the principal researcher, each lasting 45-60 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded with permission and conducted in English or local languages as preferred by participants, with professional translation services used for transcription and verification.

Quantitative data analysis employed SPSS version 28. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) summarized participant characteristics and mindset scale scores. Independent samples t-tests compared mindset dimensions between entrepreneurs and public servants, while multiple regression analysis examined relationships between mindset characteristics and professional outcomes. Reliability analysis confirmed internal consistency of all scales (Cronbach's alpha > 0.75). Qualitative data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Transcripts were repeatedly reviewed to identify initial codes, which were then organized into themes and subthemes through an iterative process. NVivo software facilitated coding organization and theme development. Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings enhanced validity, with discrepant cases examined to refine understanding.

Several measures ensured research rigor and ethical compliance. Methodological triangulation through mixed methods addressed validity threats, while member checking with selected participants confirmed interpretation accuracy. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Ghana Institutional Review Board. Participants provided written informed consent after receiving detailed information about study purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits. Confidentiality was maintained through anonymization of all data, secure storage of electronic files, and destruction of identifying information after transcription. Participants could withdraw at any stage without penalty. The research maintained sensitivity to power dynamics during data collection, particularly ensuring that public servants felt comfortable expressing criticisms of their sector without fear of repercussions.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Thematic analysis of qualitative data revealed four predominant themes that capture the core distinctions and intersections between entrepreneurial and public service mindsets in Ghana. These themes emerged from systematic coding of interview transcripts and were supported by patterns in quantitative survey responses. Each theme is presented below with illustrative direct quotations that provide rich insight into participants' experiences and perspectives.

Theme 1: Risk Orientation and Uncertainty Management

A fundamental distinction emerged in how entrepreneurs and public servants approached risk and uncertainty. Entrepreneurs consistently framed risk as opportunity and demonstrated high tolerance for ambiguity. Kwame, a technology entrepreneur with eight years of experience, articulated this orientation: "I see risk as my daily bread—without it, there is no growth. When others see danger, I see potential for innovation. The uncertainty of the market is what makes entrepreneurship exciting rather than frightening." This perspective was quantitatively supported by significantly higher risk propensity scores among entrepreneurs ($M = 5.8$, $SD = 1.2$) compared to public servants ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1.4$), $t(198) = 14.36$, $p < .001$. Public servants, conversely, exhibited risk-averse patterns rooted in institutional constraints and accountability structures. Ama, a senior civil servant with fifteen years of experience, explained: "In public service, we manage risk through procedures and protocols. One wrong decision can affect thousands of citizens and become a political issue. Our approach is measured and deliberate—we must consider all possible consequences before acting." This procedural approach manifested in significantly higher rule compliance scores among public servants ($M = 6.1$, $SD = 0.9$) versus entrepreneurs ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.3$), $t(198) = 15.27$, $p < .001$.

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

Theme 2: Innovation and Change Adaptation

Entrepreneurs demonstrated proactive innovation orientation, viewing change as necessary for competitive advantage. Esi, founder of an agricultural technology startup, described her approach: "We must constantly innovate or become irrelevant. Every market shift creates new opportunities—our mindset is to pivot quickly and embrace change rather than resist it." Quantitative findings supported this with entrepreneurs scoring significantly higher on innovation orientation ($M = 6.2$, $SD = 0.8$) than public servants ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.2$), $t(198) = 13.94$, $p < .001$. Public servants expressed more complex attitudes toward innovation, valuing improvement but within structured parameters. Kofi, a director in a government ministry, explained: "Innovation in public service must serve stability rather than disrupt it. We implement changes gradually, ensuring they align with existing systems and regulations. Radical innovation often creates more problems than it solves in our context." This measured approach was reflected in qualitative accounts emphasizing the importance of stakeholder consultation and phased implementation. Interestingly, some public servants in technology-oriented agencies demonstrated innovation scores comparable to entrepreneurs, suggesting organizational context moderates sectoral patterns.

Theme 3: Temporal Orientation and Performance Measurement

Divergent time perspectives emerged as a key differentiator between the two groups. Entrepreneurs emphasized rapid execution and short feedback cycles. Yaw, a manufacturing entrepreneur, stated: "We operate in quick cycles—test, measure, adapt. If something isn't working in three months, we change course. Time is our most valuable currency." This sense of urgency contrasted sharply with public servants' longer time horizons. Akua, a policy advisor with twenty years of experience, explained: "Public service requires patience—policy changes may take years to show results. We measure success through sustainable impact rather than quarterly returns." Quantitative findings revealed entrepreneurs scored higher on urgency orientation ($M = 5.9$, $SD = 1.0$) while public servants prioritized long-term planning ($M = 5.7$, $SD = 1.1$), though this difference was not statistically significant ($t(198) = 1.23$, $p = .22$). Performance measurement also differed substantially, with entrepreneurs focusing on market metrics ("profitability," "customer acquisition") and public servants emphasizing process metrics ("compliance," "stakeholder satisfaction").

Theme 4: Collaborative Approaches and Network Utilization

Both groups valued collaboration but enacted it differently. Entrepreneurs described fluid, opportunistic networking focused on resource acquisition. Mensah, a serial entrepreneur, explained: "I build networks like a spider web—each connection leads to others. Collaboration means finding win-win opportunities quickly without bureaucracy." Public servants emphasized formal, institutionalized collaboration through established channels. Adwoa, a department head, described: "Our collaborations follow protocols and memoranda of understanding. We must ensure proper authorization and alignment with institutional mandates." Quantitative measures showed entrepreneurs scored higher on network utilization ($M = 6.0$, $SD = 0.9$) while public servants scored higher on formal collaboration ($M = 5.8$, $SD = 1.0$), though both groups recognized collaboration's importance. Emerging hybrid practices appeared among participants engaged in public-private partnerships, suggesting potential for mindset integration. Kwadwo, an entrepreneur working on government projects, noted: "I've learned to balance entrepreneurial speed with public sector thoroughness—the key is understanding each other's constraints and finding middle ground."

The analysis reveals both stark contrasts and potential complementarities between entrepreneurial and public service mindsets. While quantitative measures confirmed significant differences in core dimensions like risk tolerance and innovation orientation, qualitative findings revealed nuanced adaptations and context-dependent flexibility. Participants who had experienced both sectors through career transitions or partnership work demonstrated integrated mindset characteristics, suggesting the potential for cross-sector learning. These findings challenge simplistic dichotomies while highlighting the need for structured interventions to bridge mindset gaps for improved developmental outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has illuminated the distinct yet complementary nature of entrepreneurial and public service mindsets in Ghana, revealing how these cognitive frameworks shape professional behavior, decision-making, and ultimately, national development outcomes. The findings demonstrate that while entrepreneurs and public servants operate from fundamentally different risk orientations, innovation approaches, temporal perspectives, and collaborative styles, both mindsets contribute essential elements to Ghana's socio-economic ecosystem. Entrepreneurs drive innovation, adaptability, and market responsiveness, while public servants ensure stability, procedural integrity, and equitable service delivery. Rather than representing opposing forces, these mindsets offer complementary strengths that, when strategically integrated, could significantly enhance Ghana's development trajectory.

The research confirms that mindset differences are deeply embedded in institutional structures, reward systems, and professional socialization patterns. Entrepreneurs' risk tolerance and innovation orientation emerge from market pressures and the need for competitive advantage, while public servants' risk aversion and procedural focus stem from accountability requirements and public trust responsibilities. These differences are not merely individual preferences but reflect adaptive responses to distinct operational

Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

environments. However, the study also reveals significant potential for mindset integration, particularly through cross-sector collaboration, hybrid organizational forms, and intentional leadership practices that bridge these cognitive frameworks.

Based on these findings, the study offers the following recommendations:

For Policymakers

Develop public-private partnership frameworks that explicitly acknowledge and leverage mindset differences, creating structures that allow entrepreneurial innovation to flourish within public interest guardrails. Establish rotation programs that enable public servants to gain experience in entrepreneurial settings and entrepreneurs to understand public sector constraints. Revise regulatory processes to incorporate entrepreneurial feedback mechanisms while maintaining essential oversight functions.

For Educational Institutions

Integrate mindset literacy into professional education curricula, helping students understand both entrepreneurial and public service perspectives regardless of their career path. Develop case studies and simulation exercises that require students to navigate both mindset frameworks. Create interdisciplinary programs that bring business and public administration students together for collaborative projects addressing real-world challenges.

For Organizational Leaders

In entrepreneurial settings, develop leadership practices that incorporate public service values of accountability and stakeholder inclusion. In public service organizations, create innovation units with entrepreneurial autonomy while maintaining connections to core missions. Implement mentoring programs that pair senior leaders from both sectors to facilitate cross-pollination of approaches and perspectives.

For Professional Associations

Facilitate cross-sector networking events and knowledge sharing forums that explicitly address mindset differences and integration strategies. Develop certification programs that recognize hybrid competencies spanning entrepreneurial and public service capabilities. Create communities of practice for professionals working at the intersection of both sectors.

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Comparative Study of Entrepreneurial and Public Service Mindsets among Ghanaians

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