

## Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness

Akshay M Bose<sup>1\*</sup>, Shuhaima Katti<sup>2</sup>, Angel Jeril<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Maternal care is a crucial influential factor in the cognitive, non-cognitive and personality development of a child. Recently, female parents are increasingly assuming professional roles which might decrease maternal presence and care which might or might not have an effect on the development of a child's non-cognitive abilities. Due to the same reason, mothers face conflicts within their families and with their own conscience on undertaking a job. Reviewing the literature, though we could find many studies pertaining to effect of maternal employment on infants, there were only a very few studies done on adolescence and never before was a study conducted on the difference of grit, a non-cognitive trait, w.r.t maternal employment on adolescents. This study aims to primarily measure the difference in grit among adolescents aged between 15-17 of full time working and non-working mothers, to assess the effects of maternal employment on an adolescent's grit. A sample of 161 eligible participants collected through purposive random sampling were assessed. Close ended questionnaire design was used to carry out investigation. Grit was measured using Short grit scale (Angela lee Duckworth and Patrick D. Quinn, 2007). To analyze the data statistically, Independent sample t test was employed. Results indicated no significant difference in grit, among the adolescents of working and non-working mothers; implying to the fact that female parent's employment status has no influence on the grittiness of the adolescent child.

**Keywords:** *Grit, Maternal employment, Non-cognitive Ability, Adolescence*

Motherhood for a woman, is one of the most pleasurable part of her life and like most pleasures, this too comes with a price. As most women of this era lean towards the idea of earning their own bread, they actively aspire to become working professionals. But however, the society and their own conscience considers their child's development as an important aspect of their responsibilities. The price here, hence comes in the form of a moral dilemma, stress, confusion and guilt. Freud (1905), had laid emphasis on the implications of rearing conditions of a person's childhood on a his or her adulthood, which is responsible in shaping our personality. He thought that parenting is of primary importance to a child's development and efficient family situations as the most important feature required for efficient growth of mental faculties of the child.

<sup>1</sup>Undergraduate Students, Little Flower Institute of Social Sciences and Health (LISSAH), Calicut, India

<sup>2</sup>Undergraduate Students, Little Flower Institute of Social Sciences and Health (LISSAH), Calicut, India

<sup>3</sup>Assistant professor, Little Flower Institute of Social Sciences and Health (LISSAH), Calicut, India

\*Responding Author

Received: February 17, 2021; Revision Received: March 25, 2021; Accepted: March 31, 2021

## Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness

According to Attachment theory, human attachment is explained as a system of evolutionary behaviors beginning at birth and persisting through adulthood, motivated by or toward fear, affection, exploration, and caregiving (Bowlby, 1958). According to Bowlby, the attachment between parent and infant is complex and this attachment deepens as the child ages. He also believed that maternal attachment is necessary for child's social and emotional development. The nature of attachment between them has implications on the child's adulthood. (Bowlby, 1958).

Female parents assuming professional roles, has become more than common these days either due to financial constraints or as a cause of search for identity. (Boorooah & Kotoki, 2017, Fischer and Hout 2006, Goldin 2006). However, the social prejudice has not yet kept in pace with this changing trend; It is still believed that maternal employment has an effect on children as it has the potential to substantially affect the environments in which children are raised. (Fallows, 1983; Smith, 1981). Mothers, hence are supposedly facing issues in decision making regarding profession as they face issues within their families and with their own conscience due to their concerns about child's academic performance. This creates a stressful situation in mothers contributing to negative changes in their emotional wellbeing which adversely affects the cognitive and emotional wellbeing of children. (Belsky, 2007).

Researches have produced mixed results on the effects of maternal employment on the children's behavioral, cognitive, and social development. (Baydar and Brooks, Gunn 1991 Blau and Grossberg 1992, Hangal & Aminabhavi, 2007). Maternal employment might improve children's outcomes through increasing the family income (Baum 2004, Baum 2003, Harvey 1999). On the other hand, maternal employment may negatively affect children's home environment or place them in unfavorable child care environments (Ruhm 2008, Waldfogel, Han, and Brooks-Gunn, 2002). There is less research done into the effects of maternal employment on adolescents and hence it is unclear whether the effect caused by maternal employment in the early childhood gets carried to the child's adulthood. (Killewald and Harvey, 2016, Ruhm, 2008).

Grit is a non-cognitive ability that enables a person to persist consistently, enduring obstacles and passionately be goal oriented, up until the person reaches his or her desired goal and throughout the researches, grit has proven to be a valid predictor of general well-being and academic outcomes (e.g., 2016; Duckworth et al., 2007; Eskreis-Winkler, Shulman, Beal, & Duckworth, 2014, Datu, Valdez, & King). Also, the effect of maternal employment on the development of grit, among adolescence has never been studied before. Non-cognitive skills are as important as cognitive skills for success in life and personal development as it is positively correlated with the intelligence of a person (Brunello and Schlotter, 2011). Throughout researches of non-cognitive abilities, gender differences can be observed, hence, efforts were also made to see the effect of gender difference in grit with respect to maternal employment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the methodology refers to how the research was done and its logical sequence. It includes the designs, sample, data collection and analysis techniques in the study. The main focus of this study was to investigate the grit among adolescence of working and non-working mothers. Therefore, the research approach was quantitative.

## Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness

### *Sample*

The sample for this study consists of 161 adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17. Out of which 79 participants had a working mother who consistently had a full-time job during the child's entire life span and 82 participants had a non-working mother, who had no particular job throughout the child's life. Purposive random sampling method is used here. The samples for the study were collected from the different part of Kerala. The sample belonged to difference socioeconomic and religious groups.

### *Aim*

- To find the difference of grit among adolescents w.r.t maternal employment status.
- To find the difference of grit among adolescents based on gender.

### *Hypotheses*

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significance difference in grit based on gender
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in grit based on maternal employment status.

### *Research design*

- Kinear and Tylor 1996; Churchill and Locobucci 2005 define research design: "it's the blue print that is followed to complete the study and it ensures that". It's a set of method and procedures that help in collecting and analysing measures of the variable specified in the research.
- The sample was collected using purposive random sampling technique.
- Data was collected using Google forms.
- Data were collected using scales having well established properties such as reliability and validity. The responses were scored according to the manuals. The data were analysed employing appropriate methods using SPSS and the findings were reported.

### *Instruments*

All the instruments used in this study were originally printed in English. The data were collected through survey method by using standardized questionnaires.

The tools used in this study are,

1. **Socio-demographic data:** Data sheet is used to collect the demographic details to identify particular such as name, age, sex, working status of mothers along with employment duration and whether it is part time or fulltime.
2. **The Short Grit Scale- Grit-S (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2009):** Grit-S is a reliable, 8 item Likert type self- reported questionnaire. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1= "not at all like me" to 5= "very much like me" (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) former studies report acceptable to good reliability for the Grit-S, with Cronbach Alpha reliability method was reported to be in between 0.73 and 0.83. The total score is calculated by finding the sum of the all items.

### *Procedure*

After obtaining permissions from the concerned authorities a brief introduction about the purpose of the study along with all the questionnaires were administered using google forms providing necessary instructions for answering the questions. The participants were reassured about their anonymity and confidentiality of the information they were providing. The respondents were not required to reveal their names anywhere in the questionnaires or in personal data sheet. They were assured that the data collected was for research purpose. These guidelines were given after the tools were given in the following order such as

## Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness

personal data sheet and the short grit scale. The participants were asked to take time and give their responses sincerely. The tools used were self-administering in nature, where the instructions were provided with the tool itself. Based on the data collected, the participant was screened based on the employment duration of the mother and employment type. Only the participants with a full time employed mother for their entire life time or with non-working mother for their entire life time were included for further statistical analysis. If the mothers were either part time employed or not consistently employed throughout the child's life, those data were exempted from analysis.

### Data Analysis

SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data collected. Descriptive statistics were conducted for demographic variables like age category, gender, and maternal employment status. Independent sample t-test was used.

## RESULT

Development of cognitive traits such as grit are as essentially important in determining a person's success, both academic and otherwise. Which are also good predictors of overall satisfaction with life and happiness.

This study explored the difference between grit of adolescents whose mothers are working and non-working.

**Table 1 Comparison between Grit of adolescents whose mothers are working and non-working.**

Sl no	Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	T value
1	Grit	Adolescents of Working mothers	79	24.28	4.294	0.483	0.098
		Adolescents of Non-working mothers	82	24.34	3.859	0.426	

Table 1 shows the comparison between grit of adolescents whose mothers are working and non-working done by independent sample t-test. Adolescents of working mothers (mean= 24.28, SD= 4.294) doesn't have significant difference from adolescents of non-working mothers (mean= 24.34, SD=3.859).

There is no significant difference in the values between adolescents of working mothers (mean= 24.28, SD= 4.294) and adolescents of non-working mothers (mean= 24.34, SD=3.859).

The 't' value for the difference in grit between adolescents of working mothers and non-working mothers is 0.098.

**Table 2 Comparison between Grit of adolescents based on their gender.**

Sl no	Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	T value
1	Grit	Male	79	24.48	3.445	0.388	0.521
		Female	82	24.15	4.600	0.508	

## Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness

Table 2 shows the comparison between grit among male and female adolescents done by independent sample t-test. Male adolescents (mean= 24.48, SD= 3.445) doesn't have significant difference from female adolescents (mean= 24.15, SD=4.600).

There is no significant difference in the values between male adolescents (mean= 24.48, SD= 3.445) and female adolescents (mean= 24.15, SD=4.600).

The 't' value for the difference in grit between male adolescents and female adolescents is 0.521.

The results show that there is no significant difference in grit of male adolescents and female adolescents.

## DISCUSSION

Non-cognitive skills like grit have so much importance in a person's life. Thomas Edison wrote that "genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration". This perseverance to passionately perspire to reach to one's goal is what grittiness is all about. Based on previous researches, it is evident that non-cognitive abilities are especially useful for youngsters (Gutman, L. M., & Schoon, I. 2013). Higher grit scores have been evidently found among individuals with stronger academic grades (Gabrieli, Ansel, & Krachman, 2015), most likely due to the increase in attention, focus and planning. Non cognitive academic behaviours such as regularity of attendance, completing homework and participation in co-curricular activities, are all linked to higher levels of achievement, reinforcing the view that non-cognitive skills are highly influential on academic outcomes (Farrington et al., 2012).

In the practical world, non-cognitive abilities such as 'character or 'soft' skills are being considered equal to cognitive skills such as mathematical abilities. A mother's care and a strong protective and supportive family grid is essential for the emotional cognitive and non-cognitive development of a child. Mother being away or getting not enough maternal care could influence the development of non-cognitive development of the child as well. This creates a moral conscience conflict in the mother and this emotional struggle she undergoes affects the child's development in many ways too. So, this study particularly addresses a question never attempted to answer before in the domain of researches on maternal employment's effects of child; the significance for maternal presence and care for the development of a non-cognitive trait; Grit.

From the results it is evident that when compared to the participants whose mothers have never worked in their life time, there is no significant difference in grit, for the participants whose mothers have worked a full-time job during their entire childhood and adulthood up until now. The body of researches on maternal influence of child development and child's achievement is full of mixed results. However, this study confirms that a full-time working mother need not feel guilty of taking chances of lowering a child's grit due to her decision of being a working mother. Also, this study asserts that, there is no point in wishing to give birth to a child of a particular sex for grit, as grit seems to be not affected by a person's sex. Even though full-time working mothers cannot attend their child's needs as the non-working mothers do, it can be balanced by affective attention and caring. Non-cognitive traits are developed before and throughout children's school years. So other people like peers and teachers round can contribute to attaining such skills. Development of these skills is also dependent on family and societal characteristics and on school and teacher factors. In the Indian context, the influence of grand-parents is evident and that also constitute to the

## Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness

development of non-cognitive skills. The comfort the child get can bring a great difference even though the biological mother is not around (Hurlow, H., 1950s)

The study like every other, has its limitations; here the effect of part time working mothers on adolescent's grit were not assessed due to lack of credible data. Also, the nature of employment of the mothers were not assessed. However, the study gives a solid statement on the effects of maternal employment considering full time employed mothers and non-working mothers on a child's grittiness in his or her adolescence. In the future studies to be conducted, the nature of profession of mothers and their adjustments to the job and child rearing scenarios, effect of father's presence, care and employment status, etc., could be taken as possible determinants of an adolescent's grit for assessment.

### CONCLUSION

Non-cognitive abilities are as important as cognitive abilities. Grit is a strong predictor of academic success and life satisfaction; a child's grittiness is not particularly influenced by constant maternal care and presence, and so working mothers need not worry and also grittiness of an individual is not influenced by the his or her sex.

### REFERENCES

- Afroz, N. (2016). Effect of maternal employment on adolescents' development. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*, 7(1), 65
- Aizer, A. (2004). Home alone: Supervision after school and child behavior. *Journal of public economics*, 88(9-10), 1835-1848.
- Alhadabi, A., & Karpinski, A. C. (2020). Grit, self-efficacy, achievement orientation goals, and academic performance in University students. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 519-535.
- Baydar, N., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (1991). Effects of maternal employment and child-care arrangements on preschoolers' cognitive and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from the Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. *Developmental psychology*, 27(6), 932.
- Belsky, J., & Eggebeen, D. (1991). Early and extensive maternal employment and young children's socioemotional development: Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1083-1098.
- Belsky, J. (2007). The NICHD Early Child Care Research Network: The ecology of childhood overweight: A 12-year longitudinal analysis. *International Journal of Obesity*, 31, 1469- 1478.)
- Boorooah, I. P., & Kotoky, K. (2017). Self-efficacy of college students of working and non-working mothers. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22(2), 15-19.
- Fallows, D. (1983). 'What day care can't do', *Newsweek*, 10 Jan.
- Smith, E. J. (1981). 'The working mother: A critique of the research'. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 19, 191-211.
- Gutman, L. M., & Schoon, I. (2013). The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people. *Education Endowment Foundation*, 59(22.2), 2019.
- Hangal, S., & Aminabhavi, V. A. (2007). Self-concept, emotional maturity and achievement motivation of the adolescent children of employed mothers and home makers. *Journal of the Indian academy of Applied Psychology*, 33(1), 103-10.
- Killewald, A., & Harvey, H. (2016, April). The Effect of Maternal Employment Experiences on Adolescent Outcomes. In 2016 Annual Meeting. PAA.
- Ruhm, C. J. (2008). Maternal employment and adolescent development. *Labour Economics*, 15(5), 958-983.

## Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness

- Benedek, T, & Liebman S. Psychological aspects of pregnancy and parent-child relationships. Oxford, England: Lippincott; 1958. pp. 1–16.
- Bibring GL. Some considerations of the psychological processes in pregnancy. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*. 1959; 14:113–121.
- Bibring GL, Dwyer TF, Huntington DS, Valenstein AF. A study of the psychological processes in pregnancy and of the earliest mother-child relationship. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*. 1961; 16:9–72.
- Deutch H. *The psychology of women*. New York: Grune & Stratton; 1945.

### ***Acknowledgement***

The author whole heartedly appreciates each and every one who has participated and helped in the successful facilitation of the study.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Bose A. M., Katti S. & Jeril A. (2021). Effect of Maternal Employment on Adolescent's Grittiness. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(1), 1709-1715. DIP:18.01.181/20210901, DOI:10.25215/0901.181