

Grit and Attachment in Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Grit is the perseverance and passion that an individual has to achieve their goals. Attachment is the connection that human beings have between each other. The current study aimed to understand the relationship between Grit and Attachment among young adults. The researcher used purposive sampling method and a co-relational research design. The total sample size of the study was 80 young adults between the age groups of 18-22 and 23-27. The results of the study indicated that there was no significant correlation between Grit and Attachment. It also showed that there was a difference between the levels of Grit between the age groups.

Keywords: *Grit, Attachment, Perseverance, Young Adults, Achievement*

G*rit* Every individual has an ambition in life that they want to achieve. They tend to try and achieve their goal without breaking down in the face of obstacles. This component is called Grit. Angela Duckworth defines Grit as ‘perseverance and passion for long term goals.’ Angela L Duckworth et al., (2007). Many researchers study perseverance as an outcome of something like goal orientation or self-control resources while ignoring the fact that perseverance can also be a predictor of individual difference. Psychologists started focusing on perseverance as a predictor in the 20th century. Grit is mainly a positive psychology concept that does not talk about the kind of talent or luck an individual has, but rather talks about the hard work and the need for achievement that people have in order to pursue their goals. Grit is very different from conscientiousness and rather entails the capacity a person may have in order to complete their goals or what they started even if it takes years to complete. Duckworth & Quinn, (2009).

Towards the late 1800s, Sir Francis Galton took individuals who were extremely successful in their line of work, from painters, artists and musicians to judges and scientists. In his study, he saw that although their knack for their work and ability did play a role in them being successful, it could not alone account for it. Other factors such as willingness to work, perseverance and enthusiasm towards their job also affected their achievement. Waring et al., (2019)

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The personality of an individual that is developed during childhood can also play an important role in developing grit in an individual. Research has shown that grit is significantly correlated with both past and present attachment. Levy & Steele, (2011).

Young Adults are faced with a lot of challenges right from getting the right job, to intimate relationships and more social responsibilities. These days, because of the advancement in technology, these individuals are also prone to depressive symptoms and this may in turn affect their ability to deal with the challenges that are provided by the environment. Hou et al., (2020).

On the other hand, grit was also seen to reduce depression levels in young adults but did not increase the life satisfaction of individuals much. Jin & Kim, (2017). Research also showed that Grit and subjective wellbeing were correlated and that females had a higher Grit tendency than males did. Akbag & Ümmet, (2017).

Attachment

John Bowlby defined attachment as ‘the lasting psychological connectedness between human beings’. He understood the concept of attachment from an evolutionary perspective which indicated that an infant’s chance of survival in the world may be enhanced by the sense of security and attachment that is given by its parents or caregivers and that infants or even adults for that matter, seek proximity and closeness with others when they are stressed or when their life may be threatened. Bowlby, (1979).

According to Bowlby and Ainsworth, an emotional tie that connects individuals is what attachment is. After a lot of research and experiments, there were three attachment patterns that were observed. Secure attachment was the first one that most infants showed to their mothers or guardians, which means that they were reasonably distressed when the mother or guardian left the room. The second one is the insecure-ambivalent attachment wherein the infant experienced extreme distress when the mother or guardian left the room. The last one is the insecure-avoidant attachment where it was observed that the child showed no difference in behaviour when the mother or guardian left the room. Waring et al., (2019)

According to Schaffer & Emerson, (1964), when infants were observed in their own homes, three measures of attachment were recorded. First is the stranger anxiety which is a response created by the child when a stranger arrives, second is separation anxiety, which happens when the primary caregiver or the mother goes away from the child and he/she wants immediate comfort and the third is social referencing, which is the extent to which the infant tries to observe their caregiver or mother to check how they should react to a new stimulus in the environment.

Research conducted in this area has also shown that attachment that individuals receive from their parents has a link with better cognitive development of the child and in turn better achievement. Aspelmeier & Kerns, (2003). Academic achievement is also linked to the kind of attachment the individuals receive from the environment, right from peers to their parents. Cavendish et al., (2012).

Research also showed that grit had a negative link with academic achievement and a positive link with peer attachment which means that as the attachment increases, there is a possibility for the grit to decrease and hence the academic achievement to decrease. H. Jin et al., (2019).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study conducted by Black, (2014) aimed to understand the concept of grit with academic achievement, parent socialization and previously examined academic risk factors. Results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between grit and the GPA of students and a significant moderate relationship between grit and attachment.

A research titled 'The Relationship between Attachment and Grit in Lower Income Adolescents' by Mandelbaum, (2018) indicated that grit was correlated with attachment and that individuals with less secure attachment patterns were not seen to be as gritty as the others.

H. Jin et al., (2019) conducted a research on peer attachment and academic procrastination with grit as a mediator and the results of this study showed that grit only partially mediated the association between peer attachment and academic procrastination and peer attachment was positively correlated with grit.

Another study conducted by Credé et al., (2017) showed that grit is moderately correlated with performance retention and that it is very strongly correlated with conscientiousness. It was also seen that interventions that were taken to enhance grit had weak effects on success and performance.

A study conducted by Clark et al., (2020) tried to establish a relationship between adolescent academic achievement, grit and social support. The results showed that there were positive associations of grit with social support that individuals got from peers or parents and that grit and achievement had a strong positive correlation.

Levy & Steele, (2011) conducted a research on 'Attachment and Grit – exploring possible contributions of attachment styles to the adult personality construct of Grit.' The results of the study indicated that grit and brief grit were significantly correlated with current as well as their past attachment variables.

A study conducted by Cho, (2020) studied the effects of Mindset, grit and self-directed learning ability of children according to their attachment type. The results showed that there was a significant difference between mindset, grit and self-directed learning ability according to the attachment type children had. Grit was seen to have a significant negative correlation with children who had insecure attachment types.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the problem

The research aims to study the relationship between Grit and Attachment among Young Adults.

Research design

The study is exploratory and quantitative. A between group design was administered to understand the differences between age groups and gender of participants in accordance with the Grit and Attachment.

Objectives

- To determine if there exists any relationship between Grit and Attachment.

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- To determine if there is a significant difference in levels of Grit and Attachment between males and females.
- To determine if there is a significant difference in levels of Grit and Attachment between the age groups of 18-22 and 23-27.

Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no relationship between Grit and Attachment.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in levels of Grit and Attachment between males and females.

H₃ There is a significant relationship in levels of Grit and Attachment between the age groups of 18-22 and 23-27.

Sampling procedure

The sample consists of 80 individuals belonging to the age groups of 18 to 22 and 23 to 27 years. The sample was taken from the twin cities Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Convenient sampling method was used.

Inclusion criteria

1. Participants in the age group of 18 and 27.
2. Male and female participants.

Exclusion criteria

1. Participants under the age of 18 and over the age of 27.

Tools used for the study

- **Short Grit Scale**- This scale was developed by Angela Lee Duckworth and Patrick D Quinn in 2007. It is a self report and informant report version of The Grit Scale. The scale measures the perseverance an individual has in order to achieve their long term goals. There are 8 questions in the scale. The internal consistency reliability of the scale ranged from 0.73 to 0.83.
- **Revised Adult Attachment Scale**- This scale was developed by Collins and Read in 1996 and was based on Bartholomew's Adult Attachment Scale (1990). This scale was formulated to understand how individuals generally feel about their important close relationships in their life. The internal consistencies of all three dimensions- close, depend and anxiety was seen to be 0.81, 0.78 and 0.85 respectively.

Procedure

After selecting the measures, the study was conducted by organizing and distributing the questionnaires. The questionnaires were given through Google forms. The consent was taken from each participant. The questionnaires were administered after the participants read the instructions clearly. On an average, it took about 10 minutes for the individuals to complete the questionnaires.

Ethical consideration

The full consent of the participants was taken before administering the questionnaires. The protection and privacy of participants was assured and they also had a choice to be anonymous. It was taken care that the study was not biased in any manner and that it was never submitted to any organisation previously.

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Statistical techniques

The data analysis was done using the SPSS software (Version 20). Descriptive statistics, correlation, and t-test was used.

RESULTS

The results are discussed according to the tests conducted. The first two tables show the Mean and Standard deviation of the variables. The third table shows the relationship between Grit and Attachment using Pearson correlation. The fourth table shows the mean difference between the two variables based on age using independent samples t-test. The last table shows the difference between the two variables on gender using t-test.

Table 1 Socio demographic details of the participants

Variables	N	Percentage
Age	80	
18-22	45	56.25
23-27	35	43.75
Gender		
Males	31	38.75
Females	49	61.25
Relationship Status		
Single	65	81.25
In a relationship	13	16.25
Married	2	2.5

Table 1 shows that there are 45 people in the age group of 18-22 years with a percentage of 56.25 and 35 people in the age group of 23-27 years with a percentage of 43.75. There are 31 males in the sample collected with a percentage of 38.75 and 49 females with a percentage of 61.25. Similarly, there are 65 participants who are single with a percentage of 81.25, 13 who are in a relationship with a percentage of 16.25 and 2 participants who are married with a percentage of 2.5.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of Grit and Attachment.

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Grit	80	26.21	4.7
Close attachment	80	19.06	3.5
Dependent attachment	80	19.63	3.3
Anxiety attachment	80	18.71	6.2

Table 2 shows the average levels of Grit and Attachment in the sample. The Grit level of the sample is more than average (mean value- 26.21). The mean of the three attachment dimensions are 19.06, 19.63 and 18.71 for close attachment, dependent attachment and anxiety attachment respectively. This shows that the attachment levels of the sample are below average.

Table 3 Correlation between Grit and Attachment.

Variables	N	Grit	Attachment
Grit	80	---	-0.024

Table 3 shows that there a weak negative correlation between Grit and Attachment. ($p \leq 0.05$) ($r = -0.024$).

Table 4 Independent samples t-test results of Grit and Attachment of individuals with respect to gender.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.(2 tailed)
Grit	Males	31	25.96	4.7	-0.36	
	Females	49	26.36	4.8	-0.36	0.71
Attachment	Males	31	57.93	9.5	0.36	
	Females	49	57.08	10.5	0.37	0.71

Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference in both Grit and Attachment in relationship to gender of the participants. The sig value of Grit on gender is 0.71. ($p \leq 0.05$) and the sig value of Attachment was found to be 0.71 as well. ($p \leq 0.05$).

Table 5 Independent samples t-test results of Grit and Attachment based on age of the participants.

Variables	Age	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.(2 tailed)
Grit	18-22	45	25	4.4	-2.6	0.009**
	23-27	35	27.77	4.7	-2.6	0.01**
Attachment	18-22	45	57.62	10.3	0.2	0.83
	23-27	35	57.14	10.1	0.2	0.83

***. Mean difference is significant at 0.01 level.*

Table 5 shows that there is a significant difference in Grit based on the age of the participants. The sig value of Grit in the 18-22 age group was 0.009 and the sig value in the 23-27 age group was 0.01. ($p \leq 0.01$). This means that participants in both the age groups have the perseverance and grit to achieve their goals.

On the other hand, there was no significant difference 0.83 ($p \leq 0.01$) found in Attachment of participants on age.

DISCUSSION

The results of study are discussed according to the hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that there is no relationship between Grit and Attachment. The results of the current study also prove that there is no relationship between Grit and Attachment. There are not many studies that support the result of the current study. This can be because of the population that was taken and the fact that the study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. A research conducted by Mosanya, (2020) showed that grit levels during the pandemic caused more distress and more loneliness in students which could have an indirect influence on attachment. A study conducted by Akdoğan, (2017) supported this assumption and showed that the severity of loneliness was increased by insecure attachment which may have had a negative impact on Grit.

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Other factors that could affect the relationship between Grit and Attachment could be academic procrastination H. Jin et al., (2019) or even relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction. Waring et al., (2019).

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in levels of Grit and Attachment between males and females. The current study indicates that there is no difference between grit and attachment on gender. A study conducted by Levy & Steele, (2011) supported the results of the present study. The possible reasons for this result may again be because of the population who were selected for the research and also the fact that the way the individual was brought up could be a good indicator of how gritty they are and their attachment levels.

The third hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship in levels of Grit and Attachment between the age groups of 18-22. The current study partially supports the hypothesis. There was a significant difference observed in the levels of grit among the two age groups but no significant difference in attachment levels. A study conducted by Sigmundsson, (2021) partially supported the results of the current study. It was seen that for the younger age groups, as passion of the individuals increased, the grit or perseverance to achieve goals also increased.

Limitations

The main drawback of the current study is the small sample size. 80 males and females between the age groups of 18 to 27 were taken for the research. This is because the sample was restricted to Hyderabad and Secunderabad only. Another limitation is that the variables in the current study were not studied in detail previously, being new in the field, making it difficult to get appropriate literature.

Future suggestions

For future researchers intending to conduct a study on the current topic, the results of this study provide support to formulate hypotheses in the field of Grit and Attachment. A few suggestions would include maximising the sample size as it may reduce the margin of error and might provide more accurate values.

Recommendations

The current study was focussed on studying the effects of Grit and Attachment among young adults. Recommendations for future researchers would be to conduct the study among other contexts as well. One such example would be to study the cultural differences among Grit. A study conducted by Raphiphatthana et al., (2019) showed that mindfulness resulted in more grit in an individualistic culture (New Zealand) than a collectivist society (Thailand). Grit can also be studied with subjective well-being and basic needs satisfaction. The results of this study showed that grit promoted happiness through basic needs satisfaction and the needs satisfaction also increased the grit and subjective wellbeing of the individuals. Jiang et al., (2020).

CONCLUSION

The objective of the research was to understand and study the relationship between Grit and Attachment between young adults and to see how it varied according to genders and different age groups. 80 participants were chosen from different parts of Hyderabad. The results showed a significant difference in the levels of Grit on the age of participants.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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