

# Mutual Influence of Partners' Grit among Partners of Different Socioeconomic Status

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## ABSTRACT

Grit of individuals have been a flourishing concept in the recent past and is highly related to success, achievement and well-being of a person. The purpose of the study was to reveal the presence of relationship among the grit levels of male and female partners living together for a considerably long period of time. The influence of socioeconomic status of the family upon this relationship was also investigated in the study. A sample of 200 pairs of partners who were the parents of 200 college students within Thrissur district of Kerala was considered in the study. Both the partners were asked to respond to the short grit-S scale (2009) and the Kuppuswamy socioeconomic scale (2018 version), and the collected data was analysed statistically using Pearson correlation test. The study revealed that the grit of the partners mutually exerted its influence upon the grit of the other and it suggested that this relationship is stronger when both the parents belonged to a middle socioeconomic family status.

**Keywords:** Grit, Partner, Socioeconomic status.

## INTRODUCTION

A person is always dependent on someone or the other in different stages of their lifetime. In the childhood and adolescent periods of life, the major ones who influence the life of an individual is their parents. The attachment that exists between individuals is a very important and inevitable part of the well-being and growth of a person. The term 'attachment' literally means affection, fondness, or sympathy for

someone or something that a person possesses. No ordinary individual is detached from everyone in their life. Convergence is another concept which suggests that when people come close with one another for a long time, their acts, thoughts and even appearance is found to be similar or becomes alike as the relationship strengthens. In psychology, Attachment theory is a model that attempts to describe the dynamics of long-term and short-term interpersonal relationships between humans. According to Ainsworth, "attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space" (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). This theory originated with the works of John Bowlby (1958) upon children, and later in 1980s attachment extended to the adult romantic relationships by Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver. The four different attachment classifications identified in childhood are secure attachment, anxious-ambivalent attachment, anxious-avoidant attachment and disorganized attachment; and those in adulthood are securely attached, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant and fearful avoidant which are somewhat similar to those classifications of attachment in childhood (Ainsworth et al, 1978). In the post-adolescent life of an individual, they slightly get detached from the parental control or bonding, and gets into a new relationship by selecting a partner for his/her life. The Indian culture develops a single partner relationship in the life of elder

people through marriages. Even though there is an increase in the amount of love marriages, the dominance of arranged marriage is still prominent in the Indian culture. Thus, the role and influence of partners in the post-adolescent period of a person can be easily realised like the influence of parents in their childhood.

The major aim of an individual in his/her life is to become successful and to achieve their goals. The positive effect of parental influence in the achievement and success of their children has been already learned and is proven. This influence is also found to be a major factor for the improper behaviours and other personality problems that a child displays (Abar, 2014; Luk, 2015; Hibbard, 2014). The attachment towards parents in the childhood and adolescent period of an individual is found to be the reason for this influence. A major psychological non-cognitive factor that determines the success and achievement of an individual is termed as Grit and many researchers have shown an increasing interest on this factor in the recent past, due to its significant and conditioned effect. According to Angela Duckworth, grit is defined as 'perseverance and passion for long-term goals' (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthew, & Kelly, 2007). A gritty person is less likely to change a set goal, whatever obstacles he/she faces on the path of its achievement. This is what Duckworth explains through the term 'perseverance' in her definition for grit. Perseverance is the persistence of effort to do something and keep doing until the goal is reached, even if it is so hard to complete. Duckworth explained that gritty people find their path to reach their goal, like a marathon, for which they work untiringly with utmost effort and determination. A less gritty person will be easily stricken by disappointment, boredom, lack of interest, and slips off from their path to cut losses. None of these factors affects grittier ones in any manner and thus continue to remain on track (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). This feeling of intense

enthusiasm and compelling desire for something is meant by the term 'passion' in the definition of grit by Duckworth. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2019) shows the word meaning of grit as the firmness of mind or spirit and unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger. Stamina, willpower and determination are the major strengths of the gritty people, which helps them to outperform over the less gritty ones. Duckworth (2016) also explained that the four common factors that exist within gritty individuals are purpose, hope, interest and practice. People do what they like to do and enjoy working hard in it due to the genuine curiosity of experience, and this is termed as interest. The second component of grit is purpose, which means that gritty people will realise the need and call to develop in their area of interest. Next comes practice which refers to the process of setting a clearly defined stretch goal, giving full concentration and effort, seeking immediate and informative feedback, and repeating with reflection and refinement to make the task effortless and automatic. Finally, hope is the component of grit which is related to the determination and power of a person to get up again from failures and face every challenging situation that is about to knock them down.

The influence of parenting style on the social, emotional, cultural and behavioural growth of an individual has been studied by many researchers. Research upon the influence of the four different parenting styles; authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and negligent parenting style; upon the grit of adolescents have resulted in a positive outcome (Dunn, 2018) clarifying the doubts of parental influence on the grit of adolescents. In the post-adolescent period of life, as the influence of parent's changes, and the entry of a partner happens into the life of an individual, parental influence can be replaced by that of their partner.

#### **SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Grit is an important non-cognitive psychological factor that has flourished

through different studies in the recent past and has been revealed to determine the achievement, success and well-being of an individual. Grit is thus a novel area for research with many unknown aspects related to its influences on different human factors and the influence of different factors upon it. The Indian culture has undoubtedly shown a prevailing dominance of arranged marriages for many decades of the past, even though there is a slight weakness in its dominance in the present day. A major factor that is analysed by the families before fixing an alliance in case of an arranged marriage is the socioeconomic status of both the families. The intention behind this consideration is to make sure that their children are successful in all means after their marriage. This study revealed that the grit of a partner influences the grit of the other when they begin an attached life after their marriage and hence a gritty partner can make a person grittier in his/her life or else the opposite. Improvement in the grit of an individual increases the chances for the person to taste the sweetness of achievement, success and well-being through the growth of passion and perseverance to reach their goal. Rather than any other materialistic achievement through a partner, it is always worthy to achieve something that leads us to explore the strengths within us and become successful in every aspect in their own life with their hard work. The results of the study also convey that the mutual influence of partners' grit is stronger in cases of partners of the middle-class SES families.

The present study was limited only to 200 partners living within the Thrissur district of Kerala and thus the results cannot be concluded and accepted globally. This study can thus provide a scope for further investigations on the mutual influence of grit of partners, in different parts of the world. It cannot be neglected that this study was conducted within the limitations of a degree student of Kerala and that the use of the English instead of the local language in the questionnaire would have influenced the

results. It can also be further studied to know how long it takes for a change to be visible in the grit of a person due to their partner.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Vaughn, (2016) conducted a study based on Grit of the students and their performance in the classroom. The sample consisted of 500 students. The required data were collected using a short grit scale and by analysing the academic performance, the researchers have found that grit and academic performance have a strong relationship among themselves.

Vainio, (2016) attempted to study the direct or indirect relationship between the grit and well-being of an individual. A sample of 196 students in the first study and 396 non students in the second study was considered here and the tools used were the short grit scale, sense of coherence, authenticity scale, psychological well-being scale, scale of satisfaction and harmony in life. The results of the study revealed that grit was positively related to the well-being of the students.

Towler, (2013) researched on attachment style and wellbeing in working women. 209 working women were considered as the sample for the study. Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory and different wellbeing scales were used for the analysis in the study and it proved that there exists a relationship between wellbeing and attachment style in the working women.

Eirin (2004) conducted a research on Early father's and mother's involvement in their child's later educational outcomes. The sample of the study consisted of 7,259 cohort members. A group of tools were used in the study to measure the structural factors of the family, child factors and father's and mother's involvement. The results showed that father's involvement significantly predicted the educational attainment of their kids.

Fan, (2001) conducted a meta-analysis on parental involvement and

students' academic achievement to synthesise the quantitative literature upon their relationship. The findings revealed a small, moderate and practically meaningful relationship among the studied variables. The study revealed that parental aspiration/expectation for children's educational achievement has the strongest relationship, and parental home supervision has the weakest relationship, with students' academic achievement.

Mascie-Taylor, (1989) conducted a study on the similarities of IQ and personality and convergence among the spouses. Two British samples from Oxford and Cambridge were considered for the study. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale and Eysenck's Personality Inventory are the two scales used in this study and it concluded that there exists a strong convergence in couple when considering their IQ and personality.

## **OBJECTIVES**

To determine if there exist any relationship between partners' grit

To know the difference in the influence of grit among partners based on different socioeconomic family status.

## **HYPOTHESES**

H1: There is a significant relationship among Male and Female partners grit

H2: There is a significant relationship among partners' grit and partners' socioeconomic status.

## **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Staying in the limitations of time and resources, the study was limited to the points below.

The study was restricted to Thrissur district of Kerala alone.

The study was carried out on a sample of 200 couples which included 200 male parents and 200 female parents of college students.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample**

The target population of the study was the male and female parents of college

students. Parents who lived together were considered for the study by avoiding those families whose partners were either abroad or separated. College students from 6 colleges within Thrissur district of Kerala, India, were selected randomly and their parents were considered for the study. The parents of college students were selected for the study to get partners who have been in a relationship for a longer period of time. The sample consisted of 400 partners which included 200 females and 200 males. When the data was classified on the basis of socioeconomic status of the family, the sample consisted of partners belonging to 7 upper level, 61 upper middle level, 80 lower middle level and 52 upper lower level families.

### **Tools**

The short grit scale (grit S scale) developed by Angela Duckworth (2009) with overall internal consistency ranging from .73 to .83, consistency of interest alphas ranging from .73 to .79 and perseverance of effort alphas ranging from .60 to .78 was used for the investigation. Both the partners were asked to respond to the 8-item grit scale separately, which resulted in a minimum score of 8 and a maximum score of 48 and these grit scores were analysed statistically to reach the conclusion.

Kuppuswamy socioeconomic scale (2018 version) was also used for the investigation. It is a three-item scale which is well established in the area of socioeconomic status in India. The 2018 edition was developed by Dr. Sheikh Mohd. According to this scale, socioeconomic status was categorised into five as Upper (I), Upper Middle (II), Lower Middle (III), Upper Lower (IV) and Lower (V). The collected data belonged to the four higher categories of SES and thus the lower category of SES was not considered in the study.

## **RESULTS**

The collected data was coded and analyzed by using SPSS version - 25. For the

predictability among factors, Pearson correlation coefficients were used. Histogram and scatter diagram were also analysed to determine the normality of the data.

**Table 1.1:** Table showing the correlation strength of partner's grit level.

Grit	Mother
Father	.435**

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

**Table 1.2:** Table showing the correlation strengths of partner's grit level among partners belonging to different socioeconomic statuses.

Factor	Sub Factors	Grit	Mother
Socioeconomic status	upper	Father	0.642
	upper middle	Father	.464**
	lower middle	Father	.478**
	upper low	Father	.300*

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

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

From Table 1.1, the correlation strength among father's grit (Mean= 4.23250, SD= .698172) and mother's grit (Mean=4.11188, SD= .696410) was revealed to be .435 with a very strong significance level of .000. It was visible from the result that there is a high statistically significant moderately positive correlation among the grit levels of partners ( $r(198) = .435, p = .001$ ). This strong correlation indicates that the grit of the partners mutually influences the grit of one another over time.

When the correlation among the grit of partners was calculated in partners living within different socioeconomic family statuses, it resulted in a correlation strength of .464 ( $r(59) = .464, p = .000$ ), .478 ( $r(78) = .478, p = .000$ ) and .300 ( $r(50) = .300, p = .031$ ) in cases of upper middle, lower middle and upper lower socioeconomic family statuses. This showed that a similar higher correlation among the grit level of partners existed in those families with upper middle and lower middle socioeconomic status.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to find out the relationship among the grit of partners and thereby predict the changes in the grit of a partner by knowing the grit of the other

partner. The results of correlation showed a moderately strong and highly significant relationship among the grit level of partners. This revealed that the grit of an individual was influenced by the grit of their partner to a good extent in the post-adolescent period of time. A gritty partner can thus be the reason for the growth of grit in an adult in a relationship. In the investigation of this relationship within the partners living in different socioeconomic family status, it was revealed that the partners belonging to the upper middle socioeconomic family status showed a higher correlation than those living within other levels. This can be explained by Maslow's need hierarchy theory (1943) which explained that people will have a desire for the fulfilment of higher needs only after the fulfilment of the basic ones. He ordered the needs of a person in a hierarchy model with needs like biological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation takes the positions from the basic to the higher needs. In the case of upper middle-class families, the basic biological and safety needs would be fulfilled and thus they focus onto the higher ones. The inability of the fulfilment of the basic needs would be the reason for a lower relationship among the grit of the partners in the case of lower middle, upper lower and lower SES families. This is because grit is a non-cognitive factor which exerts its influence on any factor when the basic needs of a person are fulfilled. The upper SES families showed a differing correlation as the sample size of the collected data is very low to take them into consideration.

The parents of college students in Kerala were the partners considered in the investigation, which ensured that the partners had been in the relationship for a minimum period of 18 years. Grit is a growing factor which improves and gets better in strength upon ageing and thus the factors that influence grit also undergo changes over time. According to the attachment theory, people get attached to someone or the other in different periods of

their life. Up to the adolescent period of time, a child is attached to their parents and hence the parenting style influences the character, behaviour, interests, likes and dislikes of a child (Becona, 2012; Ma 2000). The study by Dunn (2018) had revealed that parenting style influences the grit of the adolescents, which proved the role of parental influence on the grit of a person. In the post-adolescent period, attachment towards the parents slightly perishes and the attachment towards partners becomes stronger. According to the tradition and culture of India, every individual after their adolescent life steps into the next stage of a married life, where they get mentally, physically and socially attached to a partner, with the acceptance of the society. Marriage is a social system that has such a prominent role within the Indian culture, and arranged marriages have been dominating this system for many decades, even if a slight divergence from this dominance is visible in the recent past. The convergence of ideas, thoughts, emotions and behaviour between attached ones is an already established concept (Ratliff, 2013). The convergence that happens over time between the partners who moves both their lives hand in hand, would be the reason for the mutual influence on the achievement, success and determination of the other. The achievements of a person can act as a motivating force for their partner to strive through obstacles and taste the sweetness of achievement in their own life. Gritty individuals will be determined and hard-working, and this determination for their passion can be factors that could motivate their less gritty partners to change their track to reach success.

Grit of a person is related to the personality of an individual. The psychoanalytical and analytical theories put forth by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung respectively, explained that the past experiences in the life of an individual guides the development of their personality and that the childhood plays a major role in the overall development of the personality

of an individual. Many psychologists argue that human development happens in a continuous manner, based upon their innate characters and is termed as the continuity theory. It suggests that the development of personality happens mainly by the accumulation of the skill, habits, and discriminations, without anything really new appearing in the person's makeup. But on the contrary, many psychologists supported the discontinuity theory which says that human development progresses in age-related stages with the influence of different factors in different developmental periods. According to the discontinuity theory, a person must fulfil a behavioural goal in order to advance and proceed forward and the development of grit also follows a similar principle. It suggests that at times during its development, an organism reorganizes, regroupes, and reshapes the inputs so that the structure of personality changes radically. Both the continuity and discontinuity theory was supported by Gordon Allport, who came up with the trait theory of personality. The trait theory brought about the concept of proprium which refers to the self of an individual. The appropriate functional fixedness refers to those acquired interests, values, attitudes, intentions, and life-styles that are directed from the development of the proprium. The appropriate functional fixedness and the discontinuity theory can thus be considered as reasons for the external influential impact upon the growth of grit in an individual. Roger explained the concept of phenomenal field which includes the entire world of experiences, which is identified as reality and is responded to, as a whole. In the post-adolescent period, the phenomenal field is dominated by the factors related to the partner of an individual and thus it can be expected that the self of the person and their actions are influenced by their partner to a very great extent. (Mascie-Taylor, 1989).

The method of data collection used in the study had its own delimits as it depended students as a mediator to reach to

their parents. This would have decreased the seriousness of partners in responding to the questionnaire and hence have been a serious issue for the decrease in the correlation strength and the regression value of the grit level of partners. But still, it has been proven through this investigation that the grit of partners changes over time and is interdependent to the grit of one another. Having a gritty partner in one's life can thus be expected to influence a person to be gritty in their own life and through the development of their own passion and perseverance; they could attain achievement, success and well-being which could finally lead to self-actualisation.

## CONCLUSION

The study was mainly aimed at finding the existence of any relationship between the grit level of partners living together for a considerably long period of time and it was concluded from the considered sample that there exists a moderate positive correlation between the grit level of partners. The study also revealed that this relationship was stronger between the partners who belonged to middle socioeconomic status families.

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