

## **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND ITS RELATION WITH GRIT AMONG DOCTORAL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

**Keywords:**

**Happiness;**

**Pleasure;**

**Engagement;**

**Meaning;**

**Grit; Doctoral Students;**

**College Students.**

It is commonly observed that people who are consistent towards their goals and want to achieve them are commonly happy and satisfied with their lives because they are academically successful, paving the path for a lucrative future. These individuals tend to be happier and satisfied with their life as a whole. The present study was planned to assess the role of Pursuit of Happiness and its relation with Grit among Doctoral and College Students. It was hypothesized that, Orientations to Happiness viz. engagement and meaning would be positively correlated with Grit, but Orientations to Happiness viz. pleasure would be negatively correlated with Grit. For this purpose, 45 doctoral students and 55 college students were administered Orientations to Happiness Scale (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005), and Short Grit Scale (Grit-S) (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Inter correlation analysis were computed. In addition to this, t-ratio was also calculated to understand the differences between Doctoral and College Students on Orientations to Happiness and Grit. Results revealed that Orientations to Happiness viz. engagement and meaning were positively correlated with Grit, but Orientations to Happiness viz. pleasure were negatively correlated with Grit. Significant differences were also found among Doctoral Students and College Students on Orientations to Happiness and Grit.

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## **1. Introduction**

According to Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly [1], Grit has two dimensions: consistency of interest which refers to a person's ability to maintain a similar interest level over a relatively long period; and perseverance of effort which refers to a person's ability to exert durable effort to overcome setbacks. Grit has been found to positively predict general sense of well-being [2] and meaning of life [3].

The distinction between eudaimonic and hedonic theories of happiness is the most common debate in well being. Seligman and Peterson, Park and Seligman [4,5] have examined the pursuit to pleasure and meaning as different paths to happiness and adding a third path the pursuit of engagement.

Criterion to rate success and strong career of a person with an individual's academics is very common. It is often ignored that traits like hard working, consistency, stable personality also counts in the success of a person. There are many examples where students became very successful and well known professionally even though they were not very sound academically, people like Steve Jobs, Albert Einstein and a lot more[6].

Dissatisfaction or fatigue makes other people drop their goals and plans in the middle where as people with Grit follow their goals and also achieve them [1].

Duckworth and Quinn observed that subjects recording higher level of well being (happiness) were more likely to have Grit and achieved higher grades by keeping other variables constant such as IQ and age [7].

**The above review emphasizes the need to study the relationship between Orientations to Happiness and Grit among doctoral students and college students.**

## **ORIENTATIONS TO HAPPINESS**

Greek philosophers who proposed two distinct types of happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic happiness refers to the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake, maximising pleasure

through the satisfaction of one's desires and minimising one's pain [8] . Hedonic theory states that quality of life is the quantity of good moments minus the quantity of bad moments [4]. Orientations to Happiness (OTH) is a theory of three different ways to happiness: Pleasant life or pleasure, meaning or meaningful life and engagement or the engaged life which was developed by Peterson, Park, and Seligman[5].

First, the “pleasant life” refers to hedonia, where pleasure and happiness follow immediate rewards or pleasures, such as buying new clothes, going to the movies, or eating chocolate. Experiencing frequent pleasure has been found to increase positive affect and life satisfaction [9], and experiencing frequent positive emotion appears to be important. However, it has been suggested that experiencing immediate pleasure does not tend to be long lasting and that once the pleasurable stimulus fades or one habituates to it, the pleasure can dissipate[10,8].

Second, the “meaningful life” is based on eudaimonia, where pursuing activities that contribute to and connect to something larger than oneself provides a sense of purpose and meaning. One can find meaning, for example, through volunteering, spirituality, or helping others [5]. People who experience a meaningful life report that they feel their actions are significant, make a difference, and have purpose. These feelings lead to goals that guide and promote well-being and also to social connections with others [11].

The third orientation is the “good life”, or the life of engagement, describes how engaged a person is in their activities.

### **GRIT**

According to Dostoevsky and Flora [12] Grit refers to the determination to accomplish an ambitious, long-term goal, despite the inevitable obstacles. Diener stated that lasting happiness could result from, working for one's goals, from close social relationships, renewable physical pleasures, and flow activities[13].

Weise found that achieving one's goals lead to improved well-being and life satisfaction. Recent research by Strayhorn suggested that being Gritty has benefits of being persistent and being successful in completing higher academic education [14].

Suzuki Tamesue, Asahi and Ishikawa found that Grit was a strong predictor of work and academic performance and demonstrated that participants with an orientation toward engagement and meaning felt more engaged in their work compared to those with an orientation toward pleasure [15].

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **ORIENTATIONS TO HAPPINESS AND GRIT**

Duckworth et al. found that “Grittier” individuals had attained higher levels of education than less Gritty individuals of the same age. Further, Grit tended to be higher in older individuals than younger individuals, suggesting that Grit may increase over the life span. It was also found that participants who scored higher on Grit made fewer career changes than less Gritty peers of the same age [1].

Schueller and Seligman found that more educated, professional, and successful adults are more likely to endorse engagement and meaning, and less likely to endorse pleasure, as their preferred paths to happiness [16].

Von Cullin et al. demonstrated that Grit was positively correlated with Engagement and Meaning that Gritty people were most likely to endorse higher engagement and that pursuing engagement was more strongly associated with perseverance of effort than consistency of interests over time. They also suggested that gritty people do not find pleasure as important as engagement and meaning, and they explain that the inverse relationship is due to the short-term satisfaction of pleasurable experiences that stand in contrast with the long-term endeavours of the gritty individual [2].

## **2. Research Method**

### **Objectives of the study**

➤ The aim of the present investigation was to study the relationship of Orientations to Happiness and Grit.

- To study differences among Doctoral Students and College students on Orientations to Happiness and Grit.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

- It was expected that Orientations to Happiness viz. engagement and meaning would be positively correlated with Grit, but Orientations to Happiness viz. pleasure would be negatively correlated with Grit.
- It was expected that there would be a significant difference between Doctoral Students and College Students on Orientation to Happiness and Grit.

### **Population and sample**

The sample comprised of 100 students Doctoral students (N=45) and college students (N=55). The age range of doctoral students was between 24 to 30 years and that of college students was between 18 to 21 years. Subjects were chosen randomly from the various colleges of Chandigarh and Panjab University, Chandigarh. The sample comprised of middle income group.

### **Procedure**

The administration of the test took a maximum of 20 minutes on an average. Willingness of the participants was taken and they were instructed to answer carefully with a view in mind that there is no right or wrong answer. They were told that the purpose of this study was to assess their personality. The performance of socio-demographic profile was also given to the doctoral and college students.

### **Tests and tools used**

Following standardized self report inventories were used to assess Orientation to Happiness and Grit.

### **Orientations to Happiness**

Orientations to Happiness was assessed using The Orientations to Happiness Scale. It is an 18-item scale designed by Peterson, Park, and Seligman[5] and it consists of three subscales. The first subscale is obtaining happiness through pleasure. The second subscale is obtaining

happiness through engagement. The third subscale is obtaining happiness through meaning.

S. No.	Variables	Doctoral Students (N=45) Mean	S.D.	College Students (N=55) Mean	S.D.	t-ratios
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Orientations to Happiness Scale is a five-point scale (1 = *not at all like me* to 5 = *very much like me*). The three subscales have previously demonstrated good psychometric properties and have been shown to each independently predict life satisfaction [17].

### Short Grit Scale

Grit was assessed using the Short Grit Scale (Grit-S) . It is a five-point scale (1 = *not at all like me* to 5 = *very much like me*). The scale has previously demonstrated good predictive validity[18].

### Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics and t-ratios for the two groups were calculated. Intercorrelation matrix using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was also obtained for Orientation to Happiness and Grit.

### Table 1 showing the mean Standard Deviations and t-values for Orientations to Happiness and Grit

**\*\*t- ratio significant at .01 level= 2.36**

**\*t-ratio significant at .05 level= 1.66**

### Table 2 showing the intercorrelation matrix for the total sample (N=100)

**\*\*Correlation value significant at .01 level= .25**

**\*Correlation value significant at .05 level= .15**

1.	Pleasure	15.55	2.56	24.60	2.90	16.03**
2.	Meaning	27.06	2.57	15.00	3.28	19.76**
3.	Engagement	27.53	2.12	14.60	3.22	22.83**
4.	Grit	4.20	0.84	2.34	0.82	10.88**

### 3. Results and Analysis

Results are presented in tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows means, standard deviations and t-ratio of different variables among doctoral students and college students. Table 2 shows inter correlations among Orientation to Happiness and its sub scales viz. Pleasure, Meaning and Engagement.

It has been observed from table-1 that as predicted, mean scores of Pleasure, Meaning, Engagement and Grit were 15.55, 27.06, 27.53 and 4.20 respectively for doctoral students. Mean scores of Pleasure, Meaning, Engagement and Grit were 24.60, 15.00, 14.60 and 2.34 respectively for college students. It has been observed that the 't' value for Pleasure (16.30), Meaning (19.76), Engagement (22.83) and Grit (10.88) was found to be significantly higher than the tabulated value. College students were significantly higher on pleasure and doctoral students were significantly higher on Meaning, Engagement and Grit.

Previous research has demonstrated that people who score highly in Grit become more successful, stick to their goals and challenges longer, make fewer career changes, attain higher levels of education and higher GPAs, and are more likely to stay married (if male) [19]. Cross found the trend that engagement and meaning were positively correlated with Grit while pleasure was negatively correlated with Grit was seen especially among older students who exhibited higher Grit scores than younger students [20].

Table 2 shows that, as predicted Grit showed positive relationship with Meaning ( $r = .87$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and Engagement ( $r = .86$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and negative relationship with pleasure ( $r = -.50$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Singh and Jha explored the relationship between the concepts of Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Positive and Negative Affect and Grit. The study was carried out on 254 undergraduate students of technology. Authors stated that positive psychology is turning its attention to interventions that cultivate the good life, perhaps interventions that target meaning will prove most fruitful

clearly was indicative of the results obtained in the study by Singh and Jha[21] . Results revealed that the concepts of Grit, Positive Affect, Happiness and Life Satisfaction were significantly positively correlated.

Von Cullin and colleagues found that individuals who endorsed pleasure were less Gritty, and that pleasure was negatively correlated with Grit [2].

In a Japanese study it was found that engagement and meaning were positively correlated and pleasure was negatively correlated with Grit [15]. Additionally, they found that Grit was a strong predictor of work and academic performance and that participants with an orientation to pleasure were less likely to be engaged at work compared to participants with an orientation to engagement and meaning.

Datu, Valdez and King found that Filipino high school students who scored high on Grit had positive educational outcomes, flourished, were more engaged in class, and were more likely to say that there was meaning in their life [22]. Khan and Khan [23] observed that Grittier people are happy because they are courageous in their lives. These people are not scared to make errors and mistakes in their lives. They believe that by making mistakes a person always learn and doesn't repeat them in future and brings contentment in their lives. Authors concluded from their research that the professionals who were just not professional but also worked hard in life, and were consistent in their goals, also scored high on Grit scale and were also found to be happy in their lives.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study was concerned with understanding how Orientations to Happiness are related to Grit impact students. On the basis of above findings, it was concluded that there is a dire need to build Grit among students. In academic institutions teachers can help students to build Grit by making students find meaning in their efforts instead of just rewards. It will also motivate students, since success can increase the chances of being happy and satisfied from life.

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