

The Role of Grit and Hope in Predicting Meaning in Life Among Adults

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Abstract

Humans navigate life's challenges with a blend of hope, grit, and a search for meaning. Hope fuels our vision of a better future, while grit provides the perseverance to overcome obstacles. Finding meaning anchors us, giving purpose to our efforts. This exploration examines how these intertwined elements contribute to human resilience and well-being. Ultimately, understanding these concepts sheds light on the human capacity to thrive amidst adversity, so the present study seeks to explore **Aim:** The study examines the influence of grit and hope on adults' perception of a meaningful life. **Objective:** To examine how grit and hope impact adults' perceptions of meaning in life. **Sample:** The study involved 100 respondents of age 20 to 40 years, whose responses were measured using validated scales for grit, hope, and meaning in life. **Tool:** Grit, Hope, and Meaning in Life, standardised scales were used for data collection. **Conclusion:** The study examined the relationships between Grit, Hope, and Meaning in Life but found no significant correlations among them. Regression analysis indicated that Grit and Hope together did not significantly predict Meaning in Life. These findings suggest that Grit and Hope may not be primary contributors to one's sense of meaning.

Keywords: Grit, Hope, Meaning in life, correlation, regression analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

The study has increasingly focused on the examination of grit, hope, and meaning in life due to their significant influence on well-being and life satisfaction. Grit is characterized by sustained perseverance and a passionate commitment toward long-term goals, which is considered essential for achieving success despite challenges and setbacks. Psychologist Angela Duckworth developed the concept of grit as an independent trait, emphasizing dedication and persistence over natural talent or intelligence. Grit involves maintaining focus and motivation over long periods, helping individuals overcome obstacles that might otherwise lead to failure. This characteristic has been linked to various aspects of personal growth, academic achievement, and professional success.

Hope, on the other hand, refers to the belief that individuals possess both the agency and the pathways necessary to achieve their goals. It is the mental state that keeps people motivated, particularly when faced with adversity. Hope provides individuals with the optimism to believe that their objectives remain attainable, thus fostering resilience and encouraging a positive outlook. Psychologically, hope enhances well-being by reinforcing one's belief in their own capabilities and by promoting problem-solving strategies to tackle challenges. When hope is strong, it can buffer individuals against stress, increasing their capacity to manage difficulties with a proactive and positive approach.

Meaning in life, a critical component of psychological well-being, reflects the sense that one's existence has purpose, coherence, and significance. It is often considered the foundation of mental health, as people who perceive their lives as meaningful tend to exhibit better emotional stability, higher satisfaction, and stronger resilience in the face of challenges. The study has shown that individuals with a strong sense of life tend to experience better overall mental health, cope more effectively with stress, and report greater life satisfaction. Meaningful living has been associated with an enhanced ability to endure hardship and adversity, making it a key area of study in the field of psychology.

The relationship between grit, hope, and meaning in life has garnered increasing attention, as these psychological characteristics seem to play interconnected roles in promoting well-being. Grit and hope, both forms of resilience, help individuals pursue significant life goals while navigating the complexities of everyday life. However, while studies have separately examined each factor's influence on life satisfaction, there is a gap in The study exploring how grit and hope interact in shaping the perception of meaning in life.

This study aims to bridge that gap by investigating how the interplay between grit and hope influences adults' perceptions of meaning in life. Understanding the mechanisms through which these psychological traits contribute to life fulfillment could provide deeper insights into promoting mental health and overall well-being. By exploring these dynamic relationships, the study seeks to highlight the role of grit and hope in fostering a meaningful existence, offering valuable perspectives for enhancing psychological resilience and satisfaction in life.

II. Review of Literature

Datu, J. A. D., et al. (2019) studied how grit relates to lower depression levels through meaning in life among Filipino high school students. The study found that grit helped reduce depressive symptoms by enhancing the students' sense of meaning in life. This study underscored the importance of perseverance in helping young individuals cope with adversity and emotional distress, reinforcing the idea that fostering grit in students can lead to improved mental health outcomes.

Ekinci, N., & Koç, H. (2023) examined the relationship between grit, general self-efficacy, and life satisfaction, with hope acting as a mediator. The study showed that grit, coupled with strong self-efficacy beliefs, contributed to higher life satisfaction, with hope serving as a mediating factor. This suggests that individuals who possess perseverance and confidence in their abilities are more likely to experience life satisfaction, especially when they maintain a hopeful outlook on their goals and challenges. The study emphasized the role of hope in translating grit and self-efficacy into meaningful and positive outcomes in life.

Karaman, M. A., Vela, J. C., & Garcia, C. (2020) highlights the critical role of hope and resilience in shaping life satisfaction among Latinx college students. The findings suggest that hope acts as a mediator between resilience, meaning in life, and life satisfaction, reinforcing its importance in psychological well-being. However, meaning in life did not mediate between resilience and life satisfaction, suggesting a more complex relationship. The study emphasizes the need for interventions that enhance hope and resilience to improve overall life satisfaction in diverse student populations.

Kleiman, E. M., et al. (2013) explored how gratitude and grit reduce the risk of suicidal ideation by enhancing meaning in life. The study found that both gratitude and grit had indirect effects on reducing suicidal thoughts through the enhancement of meaning in life. The study suggested that cultivating a sense of gratitude and perseverance can serve as protective factors against depression and suicidal ideation by fostering a deeper sense of purpose and meaning. This study highlighted the importance of psychological traits in promoting mental health and well-being.

Muhammad, H., Ahmad, S., & Khan, M. I. (2020) explored the role of students' grit in enhancing hope, meaning in life, and subjective happiness among university undergraduates in Pakistan. The study found that grit had a significant predictive effect on both hope and meaning in life, ultimately contributing to higher subjective happiness. This study highlighted the importance of fostering grit in students as a pathway to enhancing their emotional and psychological well-being, demonstrating the interconnectedness between perseverance and positive mental states such as hope and happiness.

Yang, L., & Wu, D. (2021) investigated the relationship between grit and meaning in life among Chinese nurses, with a focus on the mediating roles of social support and hope. The study highlighted that social support and hope significantly mediated the effect of grit on meaning in life, suggesting that while grit is important, external factors such as social support also play a crucial role in enhancing an individual's sense of purpose and life satisfaction. This finding points to the need for a holistic approach when fostering meaning in life, considering both internal traits like grit and external sources of support.

Senters (2020) examined the role of Grit, Hope, and Academic Self-Efficacy in predicting persistence rates among first-generation college students. The study found that Hope and Grit significantly contributed to students' ability to persist despite challenges, highlighting the importance of resilience and motivation in academic success. These findings align with the present study by reinforcing the connection between Hope and Meaning in Life, suggesting that fostering perseverance and optimism can enhance individuals' sense of purpose and long-term well-being.

Susan Kurian, S. (2023) investigated the role of adult attachment in shaping meaning in life and grit in her doctoral dissertation. The study focused on how secure attachment patterns influence individuals' ability to find meaning in life and persevere in the face of challenges. Kurian's findings indicated that individuals with secure attachments tend to experience higher levels of grit and a stronger sense of meaning in life, suggesting that early emotional experiences and relationships play a crucial role in the development of resilience and purpose.

These studies collectively emphasize the importance of grit as a psychological trait that not only helps individuals navigate challenges but also enhances hope, meaning in life, and emotional well-being. The study highlights that grit, combined with factors like social support, self-efficacy, and gratitude, plays a critical role in promoting life satisfaction, reducing depression, and fostering a sense of purpose and fulfillment. This body of literature suggests that interventions aimed at strengthening grit could lead to improved mental health and

resilience across diverse populations.

Need and Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it aims to enhance our understanding of how psychological traits, such as grit and hope, influence the perception of meaning in life. While the study has established the connection between life meaning, well-being, and mental health, the specific roles of grit and hope in personal fulfillment remain unclear. By exploring the relationship between these traits and life meaning, this study fills a gap in current knowledge and addresses inconsistencies in previous study. The findings could inform therapeutic practices, offering strategies to enhance grit and hope, thus supporting mental health and life satisfaction.

Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between grit and meaning in life.
2. To examine the association between hope and meaning in life.
3. To determine the combined predictive power of grit and hope on meaning in life.

Hypotheses

1. Grit will positively significantly correlate with meaning in life.
2. Hope will positively significantly correlate with meaning in life.
3. Grit and hope together significantly will predict meaning in life.

Sample Method

The study used 100 participants, consisting of adults between the ages of 20 to 40 years. These participants represented a diverse range of socio-economic levels and are from multiple cultural backgrounds from Telangana, India. The selection of participants was based on a convenience sampling method to ensure a representative sample.

Study Variables:

Dependent Variable - Meaning in Life Independent Variables - Grit and Hope

Measures Used: The study utilized three assessment tools: the Grit Scale (Duckworth), the Hope Scale (Snyder), and the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ, Steger). The Grit Scale comprises 12 items designed to assess perseverance and consistency of effort for long-term goals, while the Hope Scale includes 12 items that measure levels of agency and pathway energy. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) consists of 10 items, which evaluate an individual's sense of search and presence of meaning in life. The reliability of all three instruments was established through the test-retest method, with a reliability coefficient of 0.86 for each tool.

Procedure:

The study first identified adult participants aged 20–40 years using purposive sampling. Potential participants were approached from various community settings, workplaces, and educational institutions. A list of individuals meeting the inclusion criteria was compiled. Next, consent was obtained from participants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. The purpose and significance of the study were explained before data collection. Participants were provided with the Hope, Grit Scale, and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ). The questionnaires were administered individually and in small groups, either in-person or through an online survey platform. Participants were given sufficient time to respond. After data collection, responses were reviewed for completeness before statistical analysis.

Ethical Permission:

The ethical committee at Osmania University granted permission to conduct the study (No. 44/Psy/Head/OU). Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, ensuring confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation of all respondents.

Statistical Analysis:

Statistical Analysis: The obtained data were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson correlation, multiple regression.

III. RESULTS

Table -1

Correlation Matrix for Adults : Relationships Between Grit, Hope, and Meaning in Life

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Perseverance of effort	100	15.690	2.791	---							
2 Consistency of interest	100	11.700	3.047	.160	---						
3 Grit	100	27.390	4.449	.737**	.785**	---					
4 Agency	100	22.800	3.210	.195	.143	.220*	---				
5 Pathway	100	23.190	4.458	-.012	-.084	-.065	.371**	---			
6 Hope	100	45.990	6.387	.089	.013	.065	.762**	.884**	---		
7 Presence	100	18.090	6.448	-.172	-.062	-.151	-.159	.026	-.062	---	
8 Search	100	23.800	7.749	-.130	.077	-.029	-.015	.022	.008	.232*	---
9 Meaning in Life	100	41.890	11.173	-.190	.017	-.107	-.102	.030	-.030	.738**	.828**

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

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

Table 1 presents the correlations between grit, hope, and meaning in life, including their respective subscales. Grit (total score) had a weak negative correlation with meaning in life ($r = -0.11, p > .05$), indicating no significant relationship. Its subscales, perseverance of effort and consistency of interest, also showed weak or negative correlations with meaning in life's subscales: presence ($r = -0.17, p > .05$; $r = -0.06, p > .05$) and search ($r = -0.13, p > .05$; $r = 0.08, p > .05$). Hope (total score) also had a weak negative correlation with meaning in life ($r = -0.03, p > .05$), suggesting no significant association. Its subscales, agency and pathway, showed minimal relationships with presence ($r = -0.16, p > .05$; $r = 0.03, p > .05$) and search ($r = -0.02, p > .05$; $r = 0.02, p > .05$).

In contrast, presence of meaning and search for meaning had a strong positive correlation with overall meaning in life ($r = 0.738, p < .01$; $r = 0.828, p < .01$), indicating that individuals who search for meaning are more likely to perceive their lives as meaningful. However, the weak or negative correlations between grit, hope, and meaning in life suggest that these constructs do not strongly relate to each other.

Table-2
(Predicting Meaning in Life from Grit and Hope Scale)

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.110 ^a	.012	-.008	11.21893	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hope scale, Grit

Note: The relationship between Grit, Hope, and Meaning in Life. $R^2 = .012$, Standard error of the estimate = 11.22. Predictors: Hope scale, Grit.

Table-2 shows that the model summary indicates that Grit and Hope as predictors explain only 1.2% of the variance in Meaning in Life ($R^2 = .012$), with an adjusted R^2 of -0.008, suggesting that the model does not significantly improve prediction beyond chance. The R value (.110) shows a weak correlation between the predictors (Grit and Hope) and Meaning in Life. While prior findings suggest that Grit and Hope play a crucial role in psychological well-being, the low R^2 in this model implies that additional factors contribute more substantially to Meaning in Life. These results call for further exploration of resilience, purpose, and external influences in shaping meaning.

Table-3
(Testing the Overall Model Fit for Meaning in Life Prediction)

Model	ANOVA ^a				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	148.947	2	74.473	.592	.555 ^b
	Residual	12208.843	97	125.864	
	Total	12357.790	99		

a. Dependent Variable: Meaning in Life

b. Predictors: (Constant), Hope scale, Grit

Note: $F(2,97) = 0.592$, $p = .555$, indicating that Grit and Hope did not significantly predict Meaning in Life.

Table-3 shows the ANOVA table assesses the overall significance of the regression model predicting Meaning in Life based on Grit and Hope. The F-value of 0.592 represents the ratio of explained variance to unexplained variance in the model. The p-value (Sig.) is 0.555, which is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that, in this specific analysis, Grit and Hope together do not significantly predict Meaning in Life at conventional significance levels. Despite the non-significant result, this does not necessarily contradict the idea that grit and hope are important psychological constructs influencing meaning in life. The lack of significance may be due to factors such as sample size limitations, measurement error, or the presence of other unmeasured variables affecting meaning in life. Future studies should explore these factors to gain deeper insights.

IV. DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis proposed that grit would significantly correlate with meaning in life. However, correlation analysis revealed a weak and non-significant relationship between grit and meaning in life ($r = -0.11$, $p > .05$). The subcomponents of grit, perseverance of effort and consistency of interest, also showed weak or negative correlations with presence and search for meaning. These findings suggest that grit alone may not strongly contribute to an individual's sense of meaning, contrary to previous studies emphasizing perseverance as a key factor in life fulfillment. The second hypothesis suggested that hope would significantly correlate with meaning in life. However, results indicated a weak and non-significant correlation ($r = -0.03$, $p > .05$). The subcomponents of hope, agency and pathway, also did not show meaningful relationships with meaning in life. These findings suggest that while hope is essential for motivation and goal-setting, it may not directly contribute

to an individual's perceived meaning in life.

The third hypothesis proposed that grit and hope together would significantly predict meaning in life. However, regression analysis showed that grit and hope together explained only 1.2% of the variance in meaning in life ($R^2 = .012$), with an adjusted R^2 of -0.008 , indicating that the model does not significantly predict meaning in life. Further, ANOVA results (Table 3) confirmed the non-significance of the model ($F = 0.592$, $p = .555$). These findings suggest that other psychological, social, or existential factors may play a more substantial role in shaping meaning in life. Despite the non-significant results, this does not diminish the importance of grit and hope as psychological resources. Rather, the weak associations may indicate that meaning in life is influenced by a broader range of factors, such as personal values, relationships, and existential exploration. Future research should examine additional predictors, including resilience, life purpose, and external life circumstances, to better understand the complexities of meaning in life.

V. Conclusion

The present study examined the relationships between Grit, Hope, and Meaning in Life. Contrary to expectations, the results indicated that neither Grit nor Hope significantly correlated with Meaning in Life. Additionally, the regression analysis revealed that Grit and Hope together did not significantly predict Meaning in Life suggesting that these factors contribute minimally to individuals' sense of meaning. These findings highlight the need to explore other psychological variables that may better explain Meaning in Life. Constructs such as Purpose, Presence of Meaning, or Social Connectedness may be stronger predictors. Future research should consider alternative models and longitudinal designs to better understand the role of perseverance, interest, and agency in shaping a meaningful life.

Limitations

1. The study relied on self-report measures, which may introduce response bias.
2. The sample size was relatively small ($n=100$), limiting the generalizability of findings.
3. The cross-sectional design prevents conclusions about causality between variables.
4. The study only examined direct relationships and did not explore potential mediators or moderators.

Implications

1. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing meaning in life should focus beyond Grit and Hope.
2. Practitioners may consider incorporating Purpose or Social Connectedness in meaning-centered therapies.
3. Researchers should examine alternative predictors that may have stronger links to Meaning in Life.
4. Future studies could investigate whether different aspects of Grit (e.g., perseverance vs. passion) has distinct effects on meaning.

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