

The Impact of Grit In Terms of Career Breaks: Significance of Educational Qualification Among Women Teachers Attended To Visit Secondly School At Tambaram, Chennai

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Abstract

Indian women have been excelling in various professional sectors of the nation, however a large section still takes a break to take care of their children as full-time mothers and face challenges when they are back to work life. “Grit” — defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals — is a widely recognized non-cognitive, positive personal trait which predicts achievement and resilience. The present study investigates the grit of Indian women returning to work after a career break and whether their grit scores differ based on educational qualification. Methods: 210 women teachers from the Tambaram municipal area of Chennai, India were surveyed using Duckworth and Quinn's (2009) Short-Grit scale of eight items (Grit-S). There was a highly significant difference in grit scores across the three educational-qualification groups (undergraduate — UG; postgraduate — PG; above-postgraduate) according to a one-way ANOVA, $F(2, 50) = 46.84$, $p = .0001$. Post hoc independent-samples t-tests indicated that above-postgraduate women scored significantly higher in grit compared to both PG-qualified women ($t = 9.21$, $p = .014$) and women with UG qualifications ($t = 9.31$, $p = .01$) but grit scores did not differ significantly between PG qualified and UG qualified women ($t = 0.997$, $p = .327$). These findings indicate that greater attainment, especially at my higher educational levels, is linked with increased grit among women returning from career interruptions and imply that education could be an important focus of policies aimed at fostering workforce re-entry.

Keywords: educational qualification; grit; working women; career resumption; career break; personality trait; women's empowerment; India.

Introduction

Educational attainment is an extremely stable structural variable for women long-term labour-market outcomes in India because of not only the kind of work a woman will get after a career break, but this study argues that it also dictates the psychological resources she can mobilise to procure it. India has seen a stunning fall in female labour force participation, dropping from 36.7% back in 2005 on the World Bank (2018), while numbers out of the Genpact Centre for Women's Leadership at Ashoka University show that 73% of new mothers drop out of paid work, half by age 30 and over two-thirds never return to paid employment again (Ashoka University, n.d.). However behind these aggregate statistics hides a fair amount of variation: women with varying educational levels must overcome distinct re-entry paths, differing employer expectations, and likely also some variation in their psychological readiness to persist through the hurdles of returning to work.

Social, structural, and cultural barriers —employer bias against career gaps; the dearth of flexible-work options; abiding expectations surrounding domestic responsibility— are well-documented. (Kapoor 2018) Less clear is the role a woman's education plays in her ability to overcome these obstacles. Higher education itself requires years of focused, effortful work toward a larger goal, and so is an obvious correlate of the psychological trait known as grit— indeed, one that this study tests directly.

Grit and Its Association with Educational Attainment

Duckworth et al. (2007) as a disposition to pursue long-term goals with perseverance and passion despite setbacks, failures, or plateaus in progress; In contrast with intellect, grit is not an inborn characteristic — and also not the same as talent; Duckworth et al. (2015) demonstrate that grit actually translates into achievement and is due to continual overtime deliberate practice as opposed to a highly energetic period of motivation.

Grit has also been connected to persistent behaviors that reflect the challenge of resuming an education or career: novice teachers with higher grit levels are more likely both to stay in the classroom and to receive higher effectiveness ratings from their supervisors (Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014); military candidates with greater

grit tendencies complete hard, multi-stage selection courses at higher rates; and students who have more grit are likely to push through high-school completion (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). That is the same kind of longer, tougher, multi-stage work that finishing a postgraduate or higher degree literally is (you are there! So this pattern, grit good at predicting our completion of it.)

On the negative side, not many studies have researched grit and educational qualification in conjunction with each other specifically on women who restart careers after a break from work. Duckworth's other research has looked at retention in the military (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014) and related factors of occupational and relational retention (Peña et al., 2019), but it begs the question of whether women who attain more qualifications before or during a career break exhibit greater subsequent grit. Since in India women face some unique barriers when they seek to re-enter the workforce (Kapoor, 2018), the present study explores that relationship directly among a sample of women teachers residing at Tambaram, Chennai.

Problem Statement and Objectives

While much has been written about the multiple barriers to career advancement that Indian women face, and grit as a predictor of achievement and retention more broadly, there has not been direct research on whether educational qualification predicts grit among women resuming their careers after a gap. The present article attempts to fill the abovementioned void through evaluating the grit of women teachers returning to work after a break and examining if there are variations in grit scores between educational-qualification groups.

Objective

Note: Grit trait scores of those women who returned to professional lives after a break was compared with respect to their educational qualification.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant difference in the scores of grit personality traits of working women with respect to educational qualification.

Independent variable: Grit score, using the Short Grit Scale (Grit-S) in career-break female non-academic workforce. The dependent variable was resuming employment after taking a break from working, and was divided into higher educational qualifications (undergraduate, postgraduate, and above postgraduate).

Materials & Method

Research Design

Design: Quantitative, cross-sectional survey Between Educational-qualification Groups: A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted between grit scores across educational-qualification groups, followed by independent-samples t-tests for pairwise comparisons between qualification levels.

Population and Sample

The population of interest was Indian women returning to work after a break. The study was limited to women in the teaching profession due to time and resource limitations. A convenience sample was drawn from amongst women teachers comprising of 210 participants sourced from 7 educational institutions a mix of (6 schools and 2 colleges) which were selected randomly in the Tambaram municipal area, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Participants were eligible if they sought a return to work at least one year after taking a break from their career. Participants were categorized according to their highest level of education completed — undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG) or above postgraduate.

Instruments

Two instruments were administered. Initially, a screening questionnaire was used to capture the demographics (highest educational qualification and whether they were on a career break or not) of participants. Grit was assessed with the 8-item Short Grit Scale (Grit-S) that consists of two four-item subscales, Consistency of Interest (e.g., a reverse-scored item indicating that the participant sometimes changes goals in midstream) and Perseverance of Effort (e.g., an item stating that the participant finishes what she starts; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Each item was rated using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not like me at all) to 5 (very much like me), with reverse-

scoring on the Consistency of Interest items. Responses to all eight items were averaged, resulting in a summative score potential range of 1 (no grit) to 5 (extremely gritty).

UPPS would correlate with [Grit-S] but cover all possible facets of impulsivity, largely defined by mood/affect-dependant mechanisms: analysts³⁸ have previously indicated that it is a faceted model.³⁸ The Grit-S was originally designed for use in positive experiences-focussed applications⁴³ and has shown good psychometric properties in prior validation work⁴⁶: test-retest reliability = $r = .68$ ($p < .001$), and the internal consistency (as a $*.75$); $N = 211$).⁸² and. ⁸⁴; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009 in two independent samples.

Data Collection and Analysis

Grit scores were calculated and described with descriptive statistics. FOURTH AUTHORED AREA- Research Methods A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if there were any overall differences in grit scores between the three educational-qualification categories. Independent-samples t- tests were then conducted, where the omnibus test was significant, to compare each pair of groups (above-PG vs. PG; PG vs. UG; UG vs. above-PG).

Results

The results of one-way ANOVA testing the score of grit between three educational-qualification groups (UG, PG, and above PG) were significant; $F(2, 50) = 46.84$, $p = .0001$ (Table 1), resulting in the null hypothesis being refuted. This suggests that there was significant difference in the mean grit between educational-qualification groups.

Table 1. One-Way ANOVA: Grit Score by Educational Qualification

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	6.57	2	3.29	46.84	.0001
Within groups	3.51	50	0.07	—	—
Total	10.08	52	0.19	—	—

To determine which groups differed, three independent-samples t-tests were performed (see Table 2). Women with above post graduate qualification ($M = 4.75$, $SE = 0.023$, $SD = 0.116$) outscored women with postgraduate qualifications ($M = 4.00$, $SE = 0.096$, $SD = 0.386$) on grit $t=9.21$ $p=.001$. Postgraduate women scored just as high in grit ($M = 4.00$, $SE = 0.096$, $SD = 0.386$) than undergraduate women ($M = 4.13$, $SE = 0.084$, $SD = 0.293$) and the difference between men and women was insignificant by gender status $t=.327$. Finally, within-women comparisons revealed that those with a postgraduate qualification ($M = 4.76$, $SE = 0.023$, $SD=0.115$) scored significantly higher than undergraduate women ($M = 4.13$, $SE = 0.084$, $SD=0.293$), $t=9.31$, $p=.001$.

Table 2. Pairwise t-Tests of Grit Score by Educational Qualification

Comparison	Group	Mean	SE	SD	t	p
Above PG vs. PG	Above PG	4.750	0.023	0.116	9.214	.001
	PG	4.000	0.096	0.386		
PG vs. UG	PG	4.000	0.096	0.386	0.997	.327
	UG	4.133	0.084	0.293		
UG vs. Above PG	UG	4.133	0.084	0.293	9.314	.001
	Above PG	4.756	0.023	0.115		

Discussion

In general, the participating women teachers who returned to work were moderate-to-high gritty, necessitating the interpretation that grit (passion and perseverance) that remains intact strengthens long-term career resumption.

This is consistent with previous findings that grit predicts performance and persistence in challenging professions — for example, even within teaching (Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014).

The large F statistic found showed statistical significance between the two levels of ANOVA ($F(2, 50) = 46.84, p = .$ Grit scores vary by educational-qualification group0001, When evaluating the pattern of pairwise comparisons, this discrepancy is explicable; women with above-postgraduate qualifications scored significantly higher in grit than those with postgraduate or undergraduate qualifications, but there were no significant differences between postgraduate and undergraduate qualified women. Thereby hinting at a non-linear association between education and grit across qualification levels which, given the societal barriers faced by women in undertaking higher studies irrespective of attainment in regions like Argentina is probably strongest only relative to those completing very high qualifications (like professional doctorates), or selection whereby more inherently grittier women are drawn into pursuing postgraduate level classifications. Due to the cross-sectional and correlational nature of this study design, causal direction cannot be determined from these data alone.

Conclusion and Implications

This study investigated grit among 210 Indian women teachers working in the Tambaram area of Chennai who had returned to work after a break from career and hypothesized the educational qualification does impact on their grit score. ResultsParticipants reported moderate-to-high grit and there were significant differences in grit scores across educational-qualification groups where PG or UG-qualified women had markedly lower grit than women with above-postgraduate qualifications. These findings suggested that the higher beyond postgraduate level would boost the grit level among women when returning to work after a career break.

Implementation of such interventions, like continuing-education support, mentoring and goal-setting programs may be adapted by educational background to better aid women in re-entering the workforce post a break.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has several limitations. While the sample size is sufficient to conduct the analyses used, it is small and from a single type of workplace limiting generalisability. Second, grit was measured with self-report which is vulnerable to response bias. Third, even with anonymity, teachers might have inflated their grit scores due to social desirability bias: passion and commitment are rewarded by the professions. Fourth, the exclusive focus on professionals, which was required by limited time and resources, restricts the generalization of findings to women in other occupations. Fifth, the cross-sectional design is not suited to specifying whether higher educational attainment causes greater grit, or conversely, whether grittier women attract more encouragement toward pursuing advanced qualifications—that is ultimately both are incidental phenomena driven by a common underlying factor. Future studies should extend from larger samples across various geographic regions and occupational groups over time. As suggested by the findings, integrating an already established quantitative measure of Grit (Grit-S), with qualitative methods (e.g., interviews) would provide even deeper insight into how both education and grit play their role in a resumption career. Longitudinal designs would clarify causal direction and the incorporation of objective and subjective measures situated within a larger assessment framework will enhance future work.

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