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Anger and Happiness Among Young Adults: Examining the Mediating Role of Grit

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Abstract: The present study examines the relationship between anger and happiness and investigates the mediating role of grit among young adults in Kerala. Anger is an emotional response associated with frustration and perceived threats, whereas happiness represents a positive psychological state associated with subjective well-being. Grit, characterised by perseverance and sustained commitment towards long-term goals, may contribute to positive psychological functioning. The study employed a quantitative correlational research design involving 200 participants aged between 20 and 40 years from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala. Participants were selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using the Grit Scale developed by Ajilal P. and Raju S. (2007) and the Emotions Scale developed by Ajilal P. and Raju S. (2008). Mediation analysis was conducted to examine the potential intervening role of grit in the relationship between anger and happiness. The results revealed that anger did not significantly predict grit (b = −0.3731, p = .138), whereas grit significantly and positively predicted happiness (b = 0.1245, p = .001). The direct effect of anger on happiness was not significant (b = 0.0330, p = .738). Similarly, the indirect effect through grit was statistically insignificant (b = −0.0465, p = .178). The findings indicate that although grit is significantly associated with happiness, it does not significantly mediate the relationship between anger and happiness. The study highlights the importance of grit as a psychological characteristic associated with happiness among young adults.

Keywords: *Anger, Grit, Happiness, Mediation, Young Adults, Kerala.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Happiness is an important dimension of human psychological functioning and subjective well-being. It reflects individuals' positive evaluation of their lives and their experience of positive emotions. Happiness is influenced by several psychological, emotional, and behavioural factors, including personality characteristics, emotional regulation, resilience, and individual coping resources.

Anger is a basic human emotion that generally arises in response to frustration, perceived injustice, threats, or obstacles to personal goals. Although anger can sometimes serve an adaptive function by motivating individuals to respond to challenging situations, persistent or poorly regulated anger may interfere with interpersonal relationships and psychological well-being. Emotional experiences and the manner in which individuals regulate them are therefore important considerations in understanding happiness.

Grit is a psychological characteristic involving perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Duckworth et al. (2007) conceptualised grit as the ability to maintain effort and interest over extended periods despite difficulties, setbacks, and failures. Individuals with higher levels of grit are generally more likely to remain committed to their goals and demonstrate persistence when confronted with challenges.

Research has indicated a positive association between grit and subjective well-being. Kwon (2021) examined the relationship between grit and happiness among participants from the United States and South Korea. Similarly, Hou et al. (2022), through a meta-analysis of 83 studies involving 66,518 participants, reported a positive association between grit and subjective well-being.

The relationship between anger and happiness may also be influenced by individual psychological characteristics. Individuals experiencing anger may differ in their capacity to maintain perseverance, regulate emotional responses, and sustain goal-directed behaviour. Grit may therefore be considered a potential psychological mechanism through which anger could be associated with happiness.

In this context, the present study investigates the relationship between anger and happiness and examines whether grit mediates this relationship among young adults from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala.

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II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

➢ *Anger and Happiness*

Anger is an emotional state characterised by feelings of displeasure, frustration, and hostility in response to perceived provocation or injustice. Its relationship with happiness may depend on the intensity, frequency, expression, and regulation of anger. Persistent anger may negatively influence emotional experiences and interpersonal functioning.

The relationship between negative emotional experiences and happiness is complex. Emotional regulation and the ability to manage unpleasant emotional states may contribute to individuals' psychological well-being.

➢ *Grit and Happiness*

Grit is regarded as an important psychological characteristic associated with perseverance, commitment, and long-term goal attainment. Duckworth et al. (2007) established grit as a construct involving perseverance of effort and consistency of interests.

Kwon (2021) investigated whether individuals with higher grit experience greater happiness and provided evidence concerning the relationship between grit and subjective well-being across two cultural contexts.

Hou et al. (2022), through a meta-analysis of 83 studies, found a positive association between grit and subjective well-being. Their findings support the relevance of grit in understanding positive psychological functioning.

➢ *Grit as a Mediating Variable*

Grit may be considered a potential explanatory mechanism in the relationship between negative emotional experiences and happiness. Individuals with higher grit may demonstrate greater persistence in pursuing meaningful goals despite emotional difficulties. Such perseverance may contribute to positive psychological functioning.

However, the relationship between anger, grit, and happiness may not necessarily follow a straightforward mediation pathway. The present study empirically examines whether grit mediates the relationship between anger and happiness.

➢ *Objectives of the Study*

- To examine the relationship between anger and grit.
- To investigate the relationship between grit and happiness.
- To examine the direct relationship between anger and happiness.
- To investigate the mediating role of grit in the relationship between anger and happiness.

➢ *Hypotheses*

- H1: Anger will have a significant negative relationship with grit.
- H2: Grit will have a significant positive relationship with happiness.
- H3: Anger will have a significant relationship with happiness.
- H4: Grit will significantly mediate the relationship between anger and happiness.

III. METHODOLOGY

➢ *Research Design*

The study employed a quantitative research approach using a correlational research design. Mediation analysis was conducted to examine the possible intervening role of grit in the relationship between anger and happiness.

➢ *Participants*

The sample consisted of 200 participants from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala. The participants belonged to the age group of 20–40 years. Both districts were included to obtain responses from young adults belonging to different geographical settings within southern Kerala.

➢ *Sampling Technique*

Simple random sampling was employed to select the participants. This technique provides each individual in the defined sampling frame an equal opportunity for selection and helps minimise selection bias.

➢ *Tools Used*

- *Grit Scale (Ajilal P. & Raju S., 2007)*

The Grit Scale developed by Ajilal P. and Raju S. (2007) was used to assess grit among the participants. Grit represents perseverance and sustained commitment towards long-term goals despite difficulties and challenges. The scale has high test-retest reliability (r = .88) and empirical validity.

- *Emotions Scale (Ajilal P. & Raju S., 2008)*

The Emotions Scale developed by Ajilal P. and Raju S. (2008) was used to assess the emotional variables included in the study. The anger and happiness scores were considered in the mediation model. The scale has high spit-half reliability (r = .92) and content validity.

➢ *Procedure*

Data were collected from 200 participants aged between 20 and 40 years from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala. The participants were administered the Grit Scale and Emotions Scale. They were informed about the purpose of the research, and responses were collected for research purposes. The data were subsequently coded and analysed statistically.

➢ *Statistical Analysis*

Mediation analysis was employed to examine the mediating role of grit in the relationship between anger and happiness.

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The variables were organised as follows:

- Independent variable (X): Anger
- Mediating variable (M): Grit
- Dependent variable (Y): Happiness

The analysis examined the following pathways:

- Path a: Anger predicting grit.
- Path b: Grit predicting happiness.
- Direct effect (c′): Anger predicting happiness after controlling for grit.
- Indirect effect (a × b): The effect of anger on happiness through grit.
- Total effect (c): The overall effect of anger on happiness.

A significance level of .05 was adopted for statistical interpretation.

IV. RESULTS

➢ *Mediation Estimates*

Table 1 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Indirect effect	−0.0465	0.0345	−1.346	.178
Direct effect	0.0330	0.0988	0.334	.738
Total effect	−0.0134	0.1026	−0.131	.896

The mediation analysis revealed that the indirect effect of anger on happiness through grit was negative but statistically insignificant (Estimate = −0.0465, SE = 0.0345, Z = −1.346, p = .178). This indicates that grit did not significantly mediate the relationship between anger and happiness.

The direct effect of anger on happiness was positive but statistically insignificant (Estimate = 0.0330, SE = 0.0988, Z = 0.334, p = .738). Similarly, the total effect of anger on happiness was negative and statistically insignificant (Estimate = −0.0134, SE = 0.1026, Z = −0.131, p = .896).

These findings indicate that neither the direct nor the indirect effect of anger on happiness was statistically significant.

➢ *Path Estimates*

Table 2 Path Estimates of the Mediation Model

Path	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Anger → Grit	−0.3731	0.2516	−1.483	.138
Grit → Happiness	0.1245	0.0388	3.206	.001
Anger → Happiness	0.0330	0.0988	0.334	.738

The path analysis revealed that anger negatively predicted grit (Estimate = −0.3731), although the relationship was not statistically significant (p = .138). This suggests that higher anger scores were associated with lower grit scores in the estimated model, but the evidence was insufficient to establish a significant relationship.

The relationship between grit and happiness was positive and statistically significant (Estimate = 0.1245, p = .001). This indicates that higher grit scores were associated with higher happiness scores.

However, the direct relationship between anger and happiness was not statistically significant (Estimate = 0.0330, p = .738).

➢ *Interpretation of the Mediation Model*

- *Path Diagram*

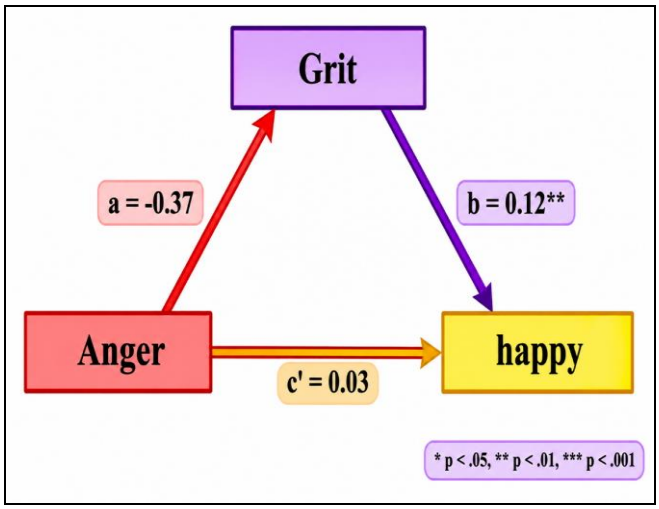


Fig 1 Path Diagram

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The findings demonstrate that grit significantly predicts happiness, whereas the pathway from anger to grit is not statistically significant. Consequently, the indirect effect of anger on happiness through grit is also statistically insignificant.

The path diagram illustrates the negative coefficient between anger and grit, the positive and significant coefficient between grit and happiness, and the positive but insignificant direct pathway between anger and happiness.

Overall, the findings do not provide statistical support for the proposed mediating role of grit.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between anger and happiness and investigated whether grit mediates this relationship among 200 young adults from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala.

One of the major findings was the absence of a statistically significant relationship between anger and grit. Although the estimated coefficient was negative, the relationship did not reach statistical significance. This suggests that anger, by itself, may not be a sufficient predictor of individuals' perseverance and commitment towards long-term goals.

The second important finding was the significant positive relationship between grit and happiness. Participants with higher levels of grit tended to report greater happiness. This finding is consistent with the conceptualisation of grit proposed by Duckworth et al. (2007), which emphasises perseverance and sustained commitment towards long-term goals.

The finding is also consistent with Kwon (2021), who investigated the relationship between grit and happiness across the United States and South Korea. Furthermore, the meta-analysis conducted by Hou et al. (2022) demonstrated a positive association between grit and subjective well-being. Thus, the present finding adds support to the importance of perseverance and sustained goal commitment in understanding happiness.

However, the direct relationship between anger and happiness was not statistically significant. This finding suggests that the relationship between negative emotional experiences and happiness may be more complex than initially hypothesised. The manner in which individuals interpret, express, and regulate emotional experiences may be important in understanding this relationship.

The most important finding concerns the mediating role of grit. The indirect effect was statistically insignificant, indicating that grit did not significantly explain the relationship between anger and happiness in the present model. Although grit was significantly associated with happiness, the relationship between anger and grit was insufficient to establish a significant indirect effect.

This finding demonstrates that a significant relationship between a mediator and an outcome variable alone does not establish mediation. The proposed mediating mechanism requires adequate statistical support for the indirect effect.

VI. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings have several implications for psychological research and practice.

First, the significant relationship between grit and happiness highlights the relevance of perseverance, commitment, and goal-directed behaviour in promoting positive psychological functioning.

Second, psychological interventions aimed at improving happiness may benefit from incorporating activities that strengthen perseverance, sustained motivation, and meaningful goal pursuit.

Third, the absence of a significant mediating effect suggests that other psychological variables may be investigated to understand the relationship between anger and happiness. Emotional regulation, resilience, forgiveness, psychological flexibility, and coping strategies may be potential variables for future investigation.

Finally, the findings encourage researchers to examine emotional experiences and positive psychological characteristics together rather than considering them as isolated constructs.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The findings should be interpreted in light of certain limitations.

- The study was restricted to 200 participants from two districts of Kerala, limiting the generalisability of the findings to other populations.
- The study examined only grit as a potential mediator. Other psychological variables may provide additional explanations for the relationship between anger and happiness.
- If the study employed a cross-sectional design, causal interpretations of the relationships should be avoided.
- Future research may examine whether different dimensions of anger and grit have different relationships with happiness.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the mediating role of grit in the relationship between anger and happiness among 200 young adults aged 20–40 years from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala. The findings revealed that anger did not significantly predict grit, whereas grit showed a significant positive relationship with happiness. Neither the direct nor the indirect effect of anger on happiness was

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statistically significant. Therefore, the proposed mediating role of grit was not supported. Nevertheless, the significant positive relationship between grit and happiness highlights the importance of perseverance and sustained commitment towards long-term goals in understanding individuals' psychological well-being.

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