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## THE EFFECT OF PEACE OF MIND AND GRIT ON CAREER SATISFACTION

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### Abstract

Human resources have a strategic role in regard to the success and survival of organizations. The employees expect support from their organizations when it comes to accomplishing their professional goals. Career satisfaction which refers to an internally defined career success outcome, focuses on an employee's degree of satisfaction with her/his career to date. Previous research suggests that it is a critical but often overlooked ingredient of the employees' productivity, happiness, well-being, and quality of life. Based on a literature review of previous research, this study hypothesized that employees' grit is positively associated with their career satisfaction and their peace of mind which has a moderating effect on this relationship. The findings of the study based on the collected 643 questionnaires revealed that grit has a positive effect on career satisfaction. Furthermore, the moderation effect of peace of mind between grit and career satisfaction was found statistically significant where the multiplication term (grit x peace of mind) has a positive effect on career satisfaction.

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## 1. Introduction

Today organizations have recognized that distinctive competencies are obtained through highly developed employee skills, distinctive organizational cultures, management processes, and systems (Greer, 2003). Effective human resource management can play a key role in the organization's competitive strategy and in the development of distinctive competencies (Beer et al., 1984). Strategic Human Resource Management which is defined as "*the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable the firm to achieve its goals*" (Wright & McMahan, 1992, p. 298), supplies a perspective on the way in which critical issues or success factors related to people can be addressed, and strategic decisions are made that have a major and long-term impact on the behavior and success of the organization (Armstrong, 2006, p. 31). Therefore, strategic human resource management is influential in determining how human resources departments make policies and shape processes (Kochan, 2007).

Life career themes are important in the lives of individuals because they provide them meaning and purpose (Savickas as cited in Gysbers et al., 2014). An important component of an employee's professional life is his/her satisfaction with his/her career (Wiens et al., 2018, p. 4). Career satisfaction is deemed important not only to employees but also to human resource practitioners. Therefore, many organizations are seeking appropriate ways to improve the career satisfaction of their employees (Oh, 2013, p. 5).

Grit is a construct that is widely studied by researchers (Credé, 2018) because it is the secret to success (Kaplan & Koval, 2015). It is evident that grit has been established as an important strength in achieving excellence in professional settings (Miller, 2017). Clark and Plano Clark (2019) suggest that grit has been shown to predict success in several achievement-related domains but had not been studied in the career context. In order to fill this gap, this paper highlights that there is a direct link between the grit of the employees and their career success, and peace of mind moderates this relationship.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction is variously defined as "the level of overall happiness experienced through one's choice of career" (Fu, 2010, p. 273), "an internally defined career success outcome" (Trivellas et al., 2015, p. 468) or "positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements that a person accumulates as a result of work experiences" (Judge et al., 1995). It represents a reflection of an individual's values and preferences for the level of pay, challenge, or security that may affect an individual's assessment of his/her career accomplishments (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988). The career satisfaction of an employee is associated with his/her feelings of satisfaction with his/her entire career (Lounsbury et al., 2008; Sauer, 2009). The findings of previous studies reveal that human capital, objective, workplace perceptions, and demographic factors affect employees' career satisfaction levels (Yap et al., 2010).

## 2.2. Grit

Grit is a trait-like factor (Brooks & Seipel, 2018, p. 22) and it is defined as “*perseverance and passion for long-term goals*” (Duckworth et al., 2007, p. 1087). Millonado Valdez and Daep Datu (2021, p. 2) conceptualize grit as the tendency to show perseverance of effort, consistency of interests, and adaptability to situations. Stoltz (2014) states that grit is an individual’s capacity to dig deep, to do whatever it takes - especially struggle, sacrifice, and even suffer - to achieve his/her most worthy goals, whereas optimal grit is when an individual consistently and reliably demonstrate his/her fullest grit to achieve his/her most worthy goals. Grit is regarded as important because it allows an individual to use his/her passion and perseverance to transform talent into skill. Without grit, talent is an unmet potential so talent may become a skill that leads to success only if it is combined with grit (Baruch-Feldman, 2017, p. 5).

Findings of previous research have revealed that gritty individuals are more engaged, motivated, and successful than those who report low levels of grit. Accordingly, popular media named grit as “*the new gold standard*” for predicting life, career, and job-related success (van Zyl, 2021, p. 7). Previous research has also revealed that grit is related to longevity in the workplace (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014) and commitment to a career (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), and individuals who report higher levels of grit were less likely to change careers (Duckworth et al., 2007, p. 1093). Based on these the researchers would like to propose the following hypothesis

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between grit and career satisfaction.*

## 2.3. Peace of Mind

One universal truth for every human being is the desire for peace (Howatt, 2018). Peace of mind is defined as finding serenity and calmness within while maintaining it outwardly under stressful conditions (Merck, 2015). While peace of mind is characterized by the affective states of internal peace and harmony, it is suggested that individuals with peace of mind would experience both internal peace and harmony as one coherent state (Lee et al., 2012).

Nothing else matters unless we have inner peace (Rowley, 2018). The struggle to maintain one's inner peace and avoid burnout has become a standard ingredient of modern working life. Many of us attend seminars on work-life balance, see therapists, meditate, or seek advice on how to handle stressful careers (Dalsgaard, 2014; Hawkes, 2017). Peaceful interactions in the workplace contribute to the well-being of employees thereby reducing the adverse impacts that the workplace can sometimes have on mental, physical, and psychological health (Frag, 2015, p. 6). Harmonious interactions are an essential component of wellness and good mental health in the workplace and are vital to getting the job done effectively and efficiently. To maintain harmony in the workplace (i.e., peace in the workplace), one must learn and practice how to remain undisturbed when confronted with disruptive behaviors and master how to respond in a manner conducive to a positive work environment (Frag, 2018). Peace of mind will not only get an employee through high-stress moments on the job, but it will undoubtedly increase his/her productivity and focus as well (Ilic, 2016).

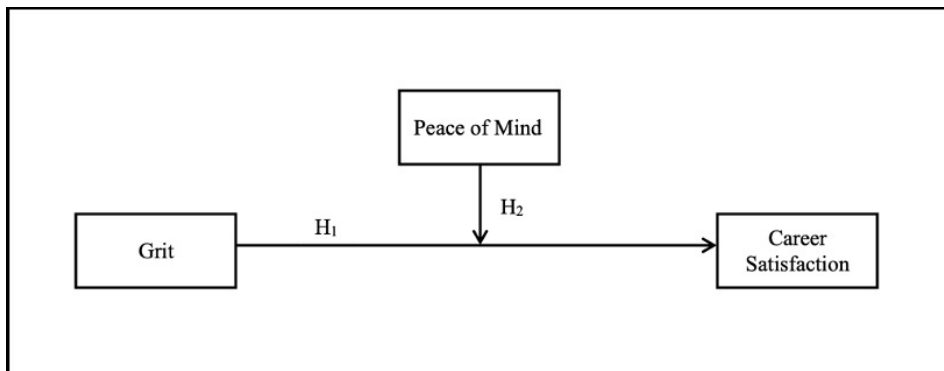
American film actor, director, and producer John Wayne once said “True grit is making a decision and standing by it, doing what must be done. No moral man can have peace of mind if he leaves undone what he knows he should have done.” Likewise, Wooden and Carty (2010, pp. 151-152) define success as “peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming”. Findings of previous research have revealed that peace of mind is a psychological resource that contributes to the achievement of an adaptive intra-psychic and interpersonal functioning which results in positive mindsets and beliefs (Luthans, 2002a; 2002b; Lee et al., 2012). Researchers also emphasize the value of positivity in one’s work-related attitudes and behaviors (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Based on these the researchers would like to propose the following hypothesis

*H<sub>2</sub>: Peace of mind moderates the relationship between grit and career satisfaction.*

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Proposed Model

The conceptual model based on the literature review, theoretical and logical grounds was developed indicating the hypothesized relationship between grit and career satisfaction, and the moderating role of peace of mind. Career satisfaction is depicted as the dependent variable, while grit is the independent variable, whereas peace of mind is shown as the moderating variable. The conceptual model is demonstrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research model

#### 3.2. Participants and Procedure

The study was conducted in Istanbul, Turkey by using a convenient sampling method on employees from a broad range of jobs and a diverse set of industries voluntarily based between December 2020 and February 2021 via Google form. The first pre-test of the questionnaires was done by 50 employees; however, there was a need for some wording changes. The second pre-test was implemented among 40 employees, and as there was no need to change the questionnaires the link to the questionnaire had been distributed to more than 1,000 employees. The final count appeared as 643 questionnaires, 57

were eliminated because they were not able to pass the control questions and eligible 586 (77.4 %) remained to be analyzed.

### **3.3. Hypotheses**

Based on a review of the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed

- i. There is a positive relationship between grit and career satisfaction.
- ii. Peace of mind moderates the relationship between grit and career satisfaction.

### **3.4. Measures**

Peace of mind is measured using the 8-item questionnaire developed by Demirci and Ekşi (2017).

Grit is measured by the questionnaire developed by Duckworth et al. (2007), revised and shortened into 8-items by Duckworth and Quin (2009), and translated into Turkish by Akın and Arıcı (2015).

Career satisfaction is measured by the 5-item career satisfaction questionnaire developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) and translated into Turkish by Ulukök and Akın (2016).

### **3.5. Results**

#### **3.5.1. Demographics**

The sample consisted of 304 (51.9 %) men and 282 (48.1 %) women with ages ranging from 18 to 68 years old ( $M = 36.67$ ,  $Std. Dev. = 11.10$ ) and an average tenure of 12.33 years ( $SD: 10.47$ ) in the current position or sector. The educational background of the participants varied from elementary school to doctorate level, in addition, 335 (57.2 %) have an undergraduate or higher degree and 310 (52.9 %) were married.

#### **3.5.2. Hypotheses Testing**

This study used SPSS 21.0 to analyze the correlations between the studied variables. Regression models were estimated through structural equation modeling (SEM) using LISREL 9.1 to determine the effects of the hypothesized variables based on 5,000 bootstrap samples and requested 95% confidence intervals for the Bias-corrected option formula by Preacher and Hayes (2004).

For the reliability determination of the scales Cronbach's alpha values (varies between .912 and .931, Table.1) and validity of the exploratory factor analysis were used. To control for common-method bias, all the items of all variables were entered in exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to test the original single factor. Where eigenvalues of three factors varied between 3.81 and 5.49 (all  $> 1.00$ ), 68.95 % of the total variance explained, no single factor emerged, and it was concluded that no threat could be posed by common-method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Table 1 shows factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and construct reliability of the scales used in this study. The minimum cut-off points .50 for items' factor loadings and .70 for construct reliability were fulfilled (Hair et al., 2005).

**Table 1.** Factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, AVE and CR values of scales

Items	Items' Factor Loadings (r>0.5)	AVE (AVE>0.5)	Construct Reliability (CR>0.7)	Cronbach's Alpha
<b><i>Peace of Mind</i></b>		<b>.624</b>	<b>.930</b>	<b>.931</b>
PoM2	.870			
PoM8	.844			
PoM3	.834			
PoM7	.819			
PoM1	.798			
PoM4	.728			
PoM6	.705			
PoM5	.701			
<b><i>Grit</i></b>		<b>.583</b>	<b>.918</b>	<b>.923</b>
GR3	.815			
GR1	.792			
GR8	.773			
GR2	.770			
GR7	.759			
GR6	.739			
GR5	.736			
GR4	.722			
<b><i>Career Satisfaction</i></b>		<b>.686</b>	<b>.789</b>	<b>.912</b>
CS3	.877			
CS4	.877			
CS2	.852			
CS1	.768			
CS5	.759			

KMO = .924; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square = 9523.220, df = 210, Sig. = .000)

Regarding discriminant validity to assess whether the constructs are sufficiently distinct from each other, Table 2 indicates that the value of square root of AVE for all latent constructs were higher than the correlation coefficient between the focal and other constructs. Accordingly, it testified the "reasonableness" of the constructs used in this study.

**Table 2.** Mean, standard deviation, correlation matrix of the latent constructs

Constructs	Mean	Std.Dev.	1	2	3
<b><i>Peace of Mind</i></b>	3.999	1.198	(.790)		
<b><i>Grit</i></b>	4.058	1.149	.498***	(.763)	
<b><i>Career Satisfaction</i></b>	3.301	1.375	.360***	.438***	(.828)

\*\*\* p < 0.001.

Note: The squared root of AVE of each construct presented on the diagonal.

The parameters: factor loadings > .50, ( $\chi^2/df$ ) < 5.0, RMSEA < .08, GFI > .90, CFI > .90, IFI > .90, and TLI > .90 were considered to determine the model fit for both measurement and structural models in SEM analyses. Hooper et al. (2008) suggested that the researcher should choose the fit indices that indicate the best fit. According to results the structural model's fit indices ( $\chi^2/df$ ) = 3.89, RMSEA = .07, GFI = .92, CFI = .92, IFI = .92, and TLI = .91. Where indices' values exceeding .90

signifies a good model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016), it was indicated acceptable fit for proposed structural model.

Due to the answers of the respondents; grit has the highest mean value (4.06), followed by peace of mind (4.00) and career satisfaction (3.30). Where six-point-Likert type scales were used as results showed that grit and peace of mind mean values were high, also career satisfaction was good, which could be seen as a good sign for their organizations (Table 2).

Grit has a significant positive bivariate correlation with peace of mind ( $r = .498^{***}$ ) and career satisfaction ( $r = .371^{***}$ ), additionally peace of mind has positive bivariate correlations with career satisfaction ( $r = .438^{***}$ ). Bivariate correlations are reported in Table.2.

To test Hypotheses 1 regression analyses were applied. It was found that grit has a positive effect on career satisfaction (Std.  $\beta = .438$ ,  $t = 11.787$ ,  $p = .000$ ) where  $R^2$  of the model .192 ( $F = 138.939$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

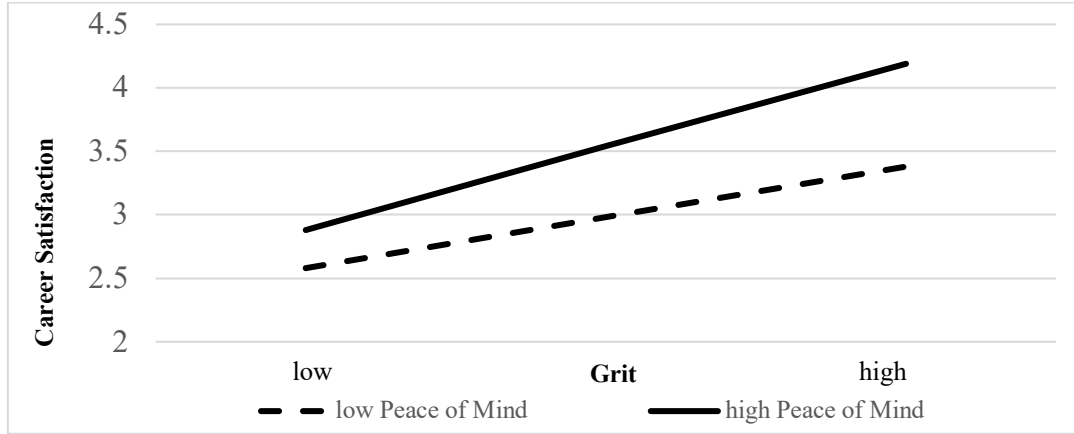
We used Hayes (2013) SPSS macro with Model 1 of PROCESS with grit as a predictor and career satisfaction as an outcome with peace of mind as moderator with 5,000 bootstrap samples to calculate 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the effects to calculate the estimates (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Moderating model PROCESS outputs

<i>Model Summary</i>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>MSE</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>P</b>
	.226	1.472	56.491	3	582	<b>.0000</b>
<i>Model</i>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>se</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>LLCI</b>	<b>ULCI</b>
<b>Constant</b>	1.962	.568	3.453	<b>.001</b>	.846	3.078
<b>Grit</b>	.114	.142	.802	.423	-.165	.392
<b>Peace of Mind</b>	-.112	.153	-.731	.465	-.411	.188
<b>Grit x Peace of Mind</b>	.078	.035	2.262	<b>.024</b>	<b>.010</b>	<b>.146</b>
<i>Moderating Effect</i>	<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>		<b>F</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Grit x Peace of Mind</b>	.007		5.115	1	582	<b>.024</b>

The moderation effect of peace of mind between grit and career satisfaction was found statistically significant where the multiplication term (grit x peace of mind) has a positive effect on career satisfaction ( $\beta = .078$ ,  $p = .024$ , LLCI = .010, ULCI = .146) and the increase in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = .007$ ,  $p = .024$ ) is statistically significant. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

It was found that employees having higher level of peace of mind have higher level of career satisfaction at all the levels of grit. Besides, the increase of the level of career satisfaction is higher by the employees who have a higher level of peace of mind compared to a lower level (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The moderating effect of peace of mind on the relationship between grit and career satisfaction

#### 4. Conclusion

This study developed a novel conceptual framework for understanding the moderating effect of peace of mind on the relationship between grit and career satisfaction. The findings of this study provide strong evidence to support the proposed structural model and the posited relationships. To summarize, grit has a positive, direct effect on the peace of mind and career satisfaction; peace of mind has a positive, direct effect on career satisfaction; and peace of mind moderates the relationship between grit and career satisfaction.

The present study may be the first study to explore a direct relationship between grit and career satisfaction. Therefore, it will contribute to identifying the critical role of the employees' grit in their career satisfaction.

Practically, the findings should encourage leaders to retain employees who have grit and create a better organizational climate in order to enhance the peace of mind of the employees. By implementing an organizational climate that provides peace of mind among employees, the organizations will contribute to individuals' career satisfaction, which is associated with their satisfaction with their entire careers (Lounsbury et al., 2008; Sauer, 2009). In order to be truly strategic, human resources departments of the organizations should align their practices with the business strategy of the organization. Today organizations are directly linking their human resources policies and practices to business goals as they are developed in response to assessing present and predicted internal and external environmental realities (Delery & Doty, 1996).

Lastly, there are opportunities for future research to further explore the influence of demographic factors on grit, peace of mind, and career satisfaction.

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