

# **The Role of Adult attachment on Meaning in Life and Grit**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of

Master of Science in Psychology

By

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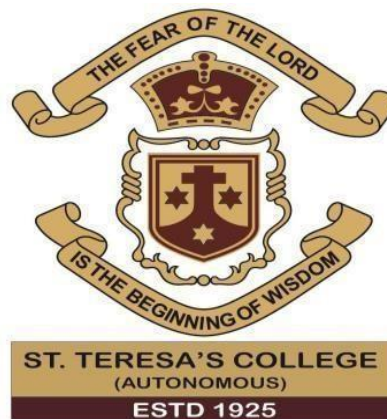
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Nationally Re-accredited at 'A++' level (4th cycle)

Affiliated to: Mahatma Gandhi University

**APRIL 2023**

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, “The Role of Adult attachment on Meaning in Life and Grit”, is a bonafide record submitted by Sreyah Susan Kurian, SM21PSY011, of St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Sara Sunny and that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Sreyah Susan Kurian, do hereby declare that the work represented in the dissertation embodies the results of the original research work done by me in St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Sara Sunny, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam. It has not been submitted by me to any other university or institution for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

It is not possible to prepare a project report without the assistance and encouragement of other people. This one is certainly no exception. I would like to express my deep heartfelt gratitude to the Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam for providing me with the opportunity to undertake the research.

I acknowledge my indebtedness and deep sense of gratitude to my research guide, Ms.Sara Sunny, Assistant Professor, Psychology, for encouraging and guiding me throughout all the phases of my research.

I extend my sincere thanks to my parents, teachers and my friends who all have supported me throughout the time. I am grateful to each and every one who has given me guidance, encouragement, suggestions and constructive criticisms which has contributed immensely for this project.

Above all, I thank God Almighty for blessing me in all the stages of the project and for helping me complete the project successfully.

Thanking you

Sreyah Susan Kurian

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the role of adult attachment on meaning in life and grit among individuals aged 20-40 years old. Adult attachment is the emotional connection people have with significant others over the course of their lives, whereas meaning in life is a person's sense of direction and purpose. Grit is the capacity to persist and maintain long-term goals in the face of challenges and disappointments. Three hundred and one participants from Kerala completed The Meaning In Life Questionnaire (MLQ), Short Grit Scale (Grit-S) and Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version. Findings from the study revealed that there was a weak positive and significant correlation between Grit and Meaning in Life and that both Grit and Meaning in Life had a weak and significant correlation with dimensions of Adult attachment except for Depend attachment. Moreover, results indicated that Grit predicts Meaning in Life and that Dimensions of Adult attachment did not moderate the relationship between Grit and Meaning in Life. These results demonstrate the importance of Grit on an individual's sense of meaning which can have positive implications for personal and professional success, mental health, and well-being.

Keywords - *Grit, Meaning In Life, Adult attachment.*



## Chapter I

### Introduction

Meaning in life, an important predictor of psychological and physical well-being is important in driving goal pursuit. As life presents different challenges, having a meaningful life can be a fundamental psychological reserve that one can fall back on, especially since unprecedented changes overrun our life. Thus, meaning can be judged to be one of humanity's aid to institute stability in life and to make sense of their own existence (Baumeister, 1991). According to Steger et al.(2012), meaning endows one with “the sense that our lives matter, that they make sense, and that they are more than the sum of our seconds, days, and years”. Thus, meaning yields a feeling of coherence or a sensation that events in life fit together; provides a sense of purpose or direction and engagement; present a belief that one's existence is significant and valuable (George & Park, 2016). Meaning in life is characterized by two dimensions namely, presence of meaning and search for meaning. Presence of meaning is defined as “the degree to which people experience their lives as comprehensible and significant, and feel a sense of purpose or mission in their lives that transcends the mundane concerns of daily life” (Steger et al., 2008). Search for meaning is the extent to which one is motivated to pursue or discover meaning and his/her effort to actively improve upon meaning previously found or established (Steger et al., 2006). These independent dimensions of meaning are differentially linked to correlates of wellbeing. Specifically, presence of meaning was positively associated with life satisfaction and positive emotions and negatively linked to depression and negative emotions. Conversely, search for meaning was positively linked to depression, and several negative emotions (i.e. fear, sadness and shame). However, studies have shown that the distressing nature

of search for meaning unfolds only in the relative absence of meaning in life and that such search appears positive when people have already found meaning (Park et al. 2010). In addition, although search for meaning is relatively reported to be higher in early life stages its effects are more detrimental to wellbeing in later stages (Dewitte & Dezutter, 2021). According to Wong(2012) the process of pursuit for meaning is characterized by six stages (a) the inertia stage, in which individuals have not yet started their search for meaning; (b) the exploratory stage, in which individuals are grappling to find meaning but have not yet done so; (c) the discovery stage, in which individuals have found success in major spheres of life; (d) the completion stage, in which individuals stop or pause their pursuit as a result of uncovering adequate answers to all their existential concerns; (e) the emergency stage, in which an abominable event overwhelm one's presumptions triggering a search for meaning; and (f) the stagnant stage, where people become entrenched in their search as a result of imploring the wrong questions. Meaning making is a lifelong process as emphasized by Reker and Chamberlain (2000), who maintain that "the will to meaning is a continuous process, triggered by changing circumstances, shifting value orientations, and renewed aspirations".

It is up to the organism to assume responsibility for making meaning. The active pursuit of goals can be seen as part of this responsibility (Frankl, 1992). Goals organize current activities and provide a channel for directing and fulfilling energies, efforts, and ambitions. Despite the fact that goals emphasize a future orientation, they also provide more immediate rewards by reinforcing and building upon any sense of accomplishment one may already have. Since most human endeavors exercise one's ability to pursue life goals, having grit- an intrapersonal psychological force characterized by the presence of long-term interests and passions, and the unbending will to not give up and persevere through obstacles and setbacks, has been argued to

be an important non-cognitive predictor of success. Grit is defined as passion and perseverance for long-term aspirations (Duckworth et al., 2007). It includes two components, consistency of interest and perseverance of effort. Consistency of interests is defined as the degree to which individuals constantly focus on accomplishing their long-term aspirations. Perseverance of effort is the extent to which individuals can brave through challenges and setbacks with unrelenting personal effort and tenacity (Datu et al., 2016). The concept of grit has leveraged the urgency towards positive conceptualization of life as advocated by positive psychologists around the world. The construct has been used to describe why some individuals outperform others in spite of having comparable ability in a domain. From its initiation into the psychological discipline grit has been widely studied in the context of academics and was found to predict academic retention and achievement; future success; higher educational attainment etc. Investigations into mechanisms underlying the link between grit and achievement revealed the prospect of deliberate practice and counterfactual thinking, specifically downward counterfactual thinking in explaining their association (Duckworth & Eskers-Winkler, 2015). Psychological constructs that predict grit have also been investigated, particularly hope, engagement and meaning. Duckworth and Gross (2014) have also distinguished grit from self-control, a closely related construct influencing success. Whereas self-control is related to everyday success, grit accompanies achievements that require years to accomplish.

Another source of meaningful life is the formation of close and satisfying relationships. Most often past relationships, especially those formed during critical periods of development inform and guide future relationships. The importance of child – parent relationship in a child’s psychological development was theorized by Freud and later extended by Bowlby in understanding its prospective influence on later close relationships in adult life. Research on

early experiences of children and their primary caregivers have contributed to the development of one of the most influential frameworks in psychology - Attachment theory. Attachment theory was born out of Bowlby's astute clinical observations and adoption of principles from other disciplines to explain affectional bonding between infants and their caregivers and the long-term effects of early attachment experiences on personality development, interpersonal functioning, and psychopathology. According to Bowlby (1982) infants have primal behaviors evolutionarily programmed to warrant proximity to supportive others (attachment figures) as a safeguard against physical and psychological threats and to develop effective regulation strategies that make future exploration, learning, and participation in social relationships more effective. These attachment behaviors are regulated by an innate attachment behavioral system, evolved to increase the likelihood of survival and reproduction among social primates born with immature capacities for locomotion, feeding, and self-defense. Reactions to proximity and support from primary figures usher infants to internalize such reactions in the form of internal working models (i.e., mental representations) of self and others creating individual variations in attachment system. Ainsworth contended that these representations can be classified into four patterns - Secure, Insecure-avoidant, Insecure-anxious and Disorganized attachment pattern. Sensitive, warm and caring response to the infants' need for proximity helps them feel secure in their attachment. This security then facilitates the belief that the world is generally safe and one can count on attachment figures to be there for them when needed (Bodner et al., 2014a). Rejecting or unresponsive response from an attachment figure leads to insecure avoidant or anxious attachment patterns. Disorganized patterns are borne out of experience with an unpredictable caregiver (Rasmussen et al., 2019). Although the attachment system is most important early in life, Bowlby (1988) claimed it is operational across the life span and is evident in thoughts and

behaviors related to proximity seeking in times of need. In addition, in spite of the stability in one's attachment orientation, important interactions with close others can alter a person's working models of attachment. Thus, individuals with maladaptive or negative histories of attachment can compensate for and buffer the effects of early care through close relationships. Close relationships with others can offer a positive foundation and reroute the effects of negative attachment history to produce more or less positive results. For e.g., Salvatore et al. (2013) reported that experience of positive adult relationships can protect individuals from the impact of inadequate early supportive care on depressive symptoms in adulthood.

Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) theorized a model of adult attachment process in which mental representations of attachment security create scripts that contain declarative and procedural knowledge helping one maintain optimistic expectations and calmly problem solve in response to stressors. In the declarative domain, security is associated with resilience supportive beliefs while the procedural domain includes constructive ways of coping (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2013). Exploration of variance in attachment system functioning in adults has focused on attachment orientations (or styles)-“the pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviors that results from internalizing a particular history of attachment experiences” (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Adult attachment style can be described by three related concepts- Close, Depend and Anxious attachment. Close dimension indicates the extent to which one is comfortable with closeness; dependent dimension indicates one's dependability on others and anxious dimension reveals one's fear of being abandoned or left alone. An adult with a secure attachment type is comfortable relying on and forming deep relationships with others. Adults with an avoidant attachment style find it challenging to express intimacy, are uncomfortable being close to others, and struggle to rely on and trust others. Adults with an anxious-ambivalent

attachment type frequently worry that their partner doesn't love them or won't stay with them (Collins, 1996).

Young adulthood is a period of important decision making in professional and personal lives. Thus, they require a repository of resources to help cope and adapt with demands that flood them. Compared to other age groups, young adults face frequent transitions in life, are exposed to dynamic environments and relational contexts and encounter ill-defined problems. This increases the need for young adults to be equipped with factors such as grit, meaning in life and attachment. Grit equips young adults to self-regulate and persevere to achieve long term goals. Meaning provides them with a sense of purpose, signals the presence of reliable patterns in one's environment and communicates his/her significance (Van Tongeren et al., 2018). Attachment security sets the stage for how adults approach intimacy and close relationships since resolving the conflict of intimacy Vs isolation is a crucial task in young adulthood as theorized by Erik Erikson. Thus grit, meaning in life and adult attachment are indispensable factors for young adults.

## **Need and Significance of the study**

Meaning in Life and Grit are two constructs that are receiving considerable attention in the field of positive psychology. The positive outcomes and consequences associated with these constructs make them an indispensable and inevitable resource in today's day and age. Researchers have identified that grit, an innate tendency characterized by determination and long-term commitment to goals, contributes to an individual's success in ways other than cognitive functioning (Duckworth et al., 2007). Thus, gritty individuals endure disappointments and adversity by sustaining their effort and maintaining relentless focus on fulfilling long term goals (Datu et al., 2017). Pursuit of goals provide individuals with a sense of purpose and direction adding a greater sense of meaning in life. Meaning in Life provides the belief that life is significant beyond the trivial or momentary aspects, that life has purpose, or that it has a coherence that trumps chaos (King et al., 2006). Attachment security provides the belief that the world is safe and that one can rely on others.

By exploring how meaning in life, grit, and adult attachment are related to each other, researchers can gain insights into the complex ways in which these psychological constructs interact. As the relevance of grit in domains of performance is growing, there is a growing need to understand factors influencing grit so interventions can be created to support its development. Inclusion of adult attachment in the study may add to the relational context in which grit develops and helps contribute to previous literature that provides a description of an individual with grit. While adult attachment and grit have both been separately shown to influence meaning in life, these variables have not been explored together. Thus, exploring the role of adult attachment in meaning in life and grit helps understand the specific ways in which attachment may enhance resilience and wellbeing. In addition, findings from the study may help identify the

specific context in which grit and meaning in life are strongly associated. Moreover, research focusing on factors that promote positive adaptation are needed to address the growing concerns among young adults. Therefore, findings from the study can pave the way towards formulation of a therapeutic intervention tailored to develop these resources in young adults to better cope with their life.



## Chapter II

### Review of literature

This chapter discusses the existing and significant literature on the study variables to help inform the present research.

Study from Lucas et al. (2015) uncovered that gritty individuals are more likely to persist in tasks and invest in more effort in a losing battle at a cost for their persistence. Commitment to a purpose was found to be a strong predictor of grit among a sample of college students, more specifically students' initial levels of purpose commitment at the beginning of the semester predicted the levels of grit at the end of the semester (Hill et al., 2016). According to Pace and Zappulla (2011) commitment was negatively associated with anxious and avoidant attachment in a sample of adolescents. Grit is substantially connected with both past and present attachment according to research by Levy and Steele (2011). A study by Singh and Jha (2008) reported a positive relationship between grit and subjective wellbeing among a sample of university students. Grit was found to be an important predictor of meaning in life, hope and happiness among a sample of university students (Muhammad et al., 2020). A meta-analysis of 10 studies revealed that secure attachment facilitates resilience and can lower the likelihood of negative consequences in adulthood as a result of adverse experiences in childhood. In addition, the effect of resilience is not only limited to early attachment figures, rather lifelong attachment experiences can also contribute to building resilience (Rasmussen et al., 2019). Anxiety attachment was found to be negatively associated with grit whereas close attachment was positively associated with grit (Teriba & Foley-Nicpon, 2021). Study by Dahan and Mikulincer (2021) reported that attachment anxiety was found to be associated with decreased task

persistence in academic tasks among adolescents but perception of teachers as a secure base buffered the detrimental effects of anxiety attachment on task persistence. Attachment anxiety and avoidance was negatively associated with life satisfaction and presence of meaning in life and positively associated with search for meaning in life. Mikulincer and Shaver (2013a) reported that individuals with low scores on anxious and avoidant attachment had higher meaning in life. Li et al. (2021) reported that presence of meaning had a strong relationship with the life satisfaction component of subjective well-being with the effect being stronger among individualistic cultures. The same study also reported that although search for meaning had a weak effect on subjective well-being, participants from collectivistic nations had stronger links between search for meaning and subjective well-being. According to the study by Bodner et al. (2014) securely attached individuals scored higher on presence of meaning subscale and lower on search for meaning subscale when compared to individuals with insecure attachment. In a sample of university and college students, individuals with profiles of high presence of meaning and high search for meaning as well as individuals with high presence of meaning and low search for meaning were reported to have more adaptive psychosocial functioning. Specifically individuals with high presence of meaning and low search for meaning reported more favorable psychosocial functioning (Dezutter et al., 2014).

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This chapter describes the aim, objectives, hypothesis, study design, sample and sampling design, tools and procedure of the study.

#### **Aim**

To examine the role of adult attachment on meaning in life and grit.

#### **Objectives**

- To assess the relationship between grit and meaning in life
- To assess the moderating role of adult attachment on meaning in life and grit

#### **Hypothesis**

H1: There is a relationship between Grit and Meaning in life.

H2: There is a relationship between Grit and Close attachment.

H3: There is a relationship between Grit and Depend attachment.

H4: There is a relationship between Grit and Anxiety attachment.

H5: There is a relationship between Meaning in Life and Close attachment.

H6: There is a relationship between Meaning in Life and Depend attachment.

H7: There is a relationship between Meaning in Life and Anxiety attachment.

H8: There is a moderating effect of Close attachment on Grit and Meaning in Life

H9: There is a moderating effect of Depend attachment on Grit and Meaning in Life

H10: There is a moderating effect of Anxiety attachment on Grit and Meaning in Life

### **Operational definition**

- Grit: Grit is operationally defined as the sum of the scores obtained on perseverance of effort subscale and consistency of interest subscale of Short Grit Scale. Consistency of interest is operationally defined as the sum of the scores on consistency of interest subscale of Short Grit Scale. Perseverance of effort is operationally defined as the sum of the scores on perseverance of effort subscale of the Short Grit Scale.
- Meaning in Life: Operational definition of meaning in life is the sum of the scores obtained on dimensions of presence of meaning and search for meaning subscale of Meaning in Life Questionnaire. Presence of meaning in life is operationally defined as the sum of the scores obtained on presence of meaning subscale of Meaning in Life Questionnaire. Search for Meaning in Life is operationally defined as the sum of the scores obtained on search for meaning subscale of Meaning in Life Questionnaire.
- Adult attachment dimensions: Operational definition of close attachment is the sum of the scores obtained on close subscale of Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version. Depend attachment is defined operationally as the sum of the scores obtained on depend subscale of Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version. Similarly anxiety attachment is operationally defined as the

sum of the scores obtained on anxiety subscale of Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version.

### **Design of the study**

The design opted for the present study was descriptive design

### **Sample**

A sample of 301 participants (238 Females and 63 males) belonging to the age group of 20-40 who met the criteria participated in this study.

### **Population**

Population of the study includes young adults from kerala

### **Sampling design**

The sampling design opted for this study was convenience sampling.

### **Inclusion criteria**

- Individuals within the age group the ages 20 - 40
- Individuals who are working, not working and studying
- Individuals who are divorced, married, in a relationship and single.

### **Exclusion criteria**

- Respondents who do not consent to the study
- Participants who are not proficient in English

## Tools

### 1. Sociodemographic data sheet:

The socio demographic sheet was provided to gather details of the participants with respect to their age, gender, occupation, relationship status and email address.

### 2. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire:

Authors: Michael F. Steger, Patricia Frazier, Shigehiro Oishi and Mathew Kaler

Year: 2006

The Meaning in Life Questionnaire was developed to measure the presence of meaning and the search for meaning. This 10 item questionnaire is rated on a seven-point scale (1 = absolutely untrue, 2 = mostly untrue, 3 = somewhat untrue, 4 = can't say true or false, 5 = somewhat true, 6 = mostly true, 7 = absolutely true). The questionnaire has two subscales. The Presence of Meaning subscale measures the degree to which one perceives lives to be meaningful. The Search for Meaning subscale measures how engaged and motivated respondents are in efforts to find meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives. Internal consistency was found to be(.86) for Presence of meaning(MLQ-P) and(.87) for Search for meaning (MLQ-S) subscales. One-month test–retest stability coefficients were .70 for the MLQ–P and .73 for the MLQ–S.

### 3. Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version

Authors: Nancy Collins

Year: 1996

This 18 item scale measures how one generally feels in important close relationships such as family members, romantic partners, and close friends. The scale contains three subscales (each with 6 items):

- (a) The Close subscale measuring the degree to which a person is comfortable with closeness and intimacy;
- (b) The Depend subscale assesses the extent to which a person is comfortable depending on others and believes that people can be relied on when needed; and
- (c) The Anxiety subscale measures the extent to which a person is worried about being rejected and abandoned by others.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient for close, depend and anxiety subscales ranged from .81-.82, .78-.80,.83-.85 respectively in 3 samples of undergraduates

### 4. Short Grit Scale (Grit-S)

Authors: Angela Duckworth and Patrick D. Quinn

Year: 2009

This self-report measures the trait of grit using 8 items with two subscales - perseverance of effort and consistency of interest and is scored on a five-point Likert scale. The Short Grit Scale displayed acceptable internal consistency, with alphas ranging from .73 to .83 across four

samples. Internal consistency of Consistency of Interest subscale ranged from .73 to .79. Alpha's coefficients were somewhat lower for Perseverance of Effort, with values ranging from .60 to .78.

### Reliability Analysis

Table 1:

*Reliability of instruments obtained on the entire sample*

Scale	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Short Grit Scale (Grit-S)	0.633
Meaning In Life Questionnaire (MLQ)	0.826
Close dimension	0.516
Depend dimension	0.519
Anxiety dimension	0.878

The 8-item Short Grit Scale shows a moderate level of reliability since Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.633.

The 10-item Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) was found to have a moderate level of reliability since Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.826. In the Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close

Relationships Version, the dimensions - Close and Depend show poor level of reliability since

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.516 and 0.519 respectively while Anxiety dimension shows moderate level of reliability ( $\alpha = .878$ ).



## Procedure

Participation in the study was conducted online through the use of google forms. After consenting to the study, participants were given standard instructions to fill the survey. The survey consisted of Meaning in Life Questionnaire, Short Grit Scale and Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version.

### Normality Analysis

Table 2:

*Summary of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of Normality of Grit, Meaning in life and dimensions of Adult attachment- Close, Depend and Anxious.*

Variable	N	KS	Sig.
Grit	301	0.066	0.003
Meaning in life	301	0.055	0.028
Close Dimension	301	0.090	<.001
Depend Dimension	301	0.071	<.001
Anxiety Dimension	301	0.062	0.007

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of Normality of Grit, Meaning in life and dimensions of Adult attachment- Close, Depend and Anxious shows that variables are not normally distributed in the sample ( $p < .05$ ).

### **Ethical consideration**

Ethical considerations for the present study involved the assurance of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants' data. In addition, participants were informed that data collected will be used strictly for research purposes and will not be shared with any other parties or organization. Informed consent was taken prior to their participation communicating the information pertaining to the purpose of the study and of their right to withdraw from the study at any point in time.

### **Data analysis techniques**

Statistical analysis was performed using the software application SPSS version 27. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine whether the data was normal. Following this reliability of the instruments was obtained. To examine the relationships between the study variables correlation analysis was performed. To determine the moderating effect of Adult attachment on meaning in life and grit, moderation analysis was performed using the statistical application Jamovi.

## Chapter IV

### Result and Discussion

This chapter reports the results obtained for the present study. The main objectives of the study were to find out if there exists a relationship between meaning in life and grit and to assess if Adult attachment moderates the relationship between meaning in life and grit.

#### Descriptive Statistics

Table 3:

*Table showing the distribution of Age, Gender, Occupation, and Relationship status of the sample*

	Variables	N	%
Gender	Female	238	79.1%
	Male	63	20.9%
Occupation	Student	181	60.1%
	Not working	16	5.3%
	Working	104	34.6%

Relationship Status	Single	212	70.4%
	In a relationship	53	17.6%
	Married	36	12.0%

The study sample consisted of 301 participants (238 Females and 63 males) with an average age of 23.7(SD = 3.95 years). Majority of the participants belonged to the age of 20 (N= 69; 22.9%); were students (N=181; 60.1%) and were single (N=212; 70.4%).

Table 4:

*Table showing Mean and Standard Deviation obtained by the sample on measures of Grit, Meaning in Life and Adult Attachment dimensions*

	N	Mean	SD
Grit	301	25.64	4.48
Meaning in life	301	47.16	10.13
Close attachment	301	19.09	3.88
Dependent attachment	301	16.86	3.98
Anxious attachment	301	17.81	6.23

The means and standard deviations for Grit, Meaning in Life and Adult attachment dimensions measures are as follows: Grit (M = 25.64, SD = 4.48); Meaning in Life (M = 47.16, SD = 10.13); Close attachment (M =19.09, SD = 3.88); Dependent attachment (M = 16.86, SD = 3.98); Anxious attachment (M =17.81, SD = 6.23).

Table 5:

*Summary of Spearman's rank correlation of Grit and Meaning in Life*

Variable	Meaning in Life
Grit	0.255**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Findings from Spearman's rank correlation suggests that there was a weak positive correlation between Grit and Meaning in Life and the relationship was significant at the 0.01 level ( $r_s = .255$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that high score in Grit is directly associated with high score in Meaning in Life. Hence the hypothesis, there is a positive relationship between Grit and Meaning in Life was accepted.

Table 6:

*Summary of Spearman's rank correlation of Grit and Close attachment*

Variable	Close attachment
Grit	0.168**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Findings from Spearman's rank correlation suggests that there was weak positive correlation between Grit and Close attachment and the relationship significant at the 0.01 level ( $r_s = .168$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that high score in Grit is positively associated with high score in Close attachment. Hence the hypothesis, there is a positive relationship between Grit and Close attachment was accepted.

Table 7:

*Summary of Spearman's rank correlation of Grit and Depend attachment*

Variable	Depend attachment
Grit	0.019

Findings from Spearman's rank correlation suggests that there was no relationship between Grit and Depend attachment ( $r_s = .019$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hence the hypothesis, there is a relationship between Grit and Depend attachment was rejected.

Table 8:

*Summary of Spearman's rank correlation of Grit and Anxiety attachment*

Variable	Anxiety attachment
Grit	-0.264**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Findings from Spearman's rank correlation suggests that there was a weak negative correlation between Grit and Anxiety attachment and the relationship was significant at the 0.01 level ( $r_s = -0.264, p < 0.01$ ). Hence the hypothesis, there is a relationship between Grit and Anxiety attachment was accepted.

Table 9:

*Summary of Spearman's rank correlation of Meaning in Life and Close attachment*

Variable	Close attachment
Meaning in Life	0.172**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Findings from Spearman's rank correlation suggests that there was a very weak positive correlation between Meaning in Life and Close attachment and the relationship was significant at the 0.01 level ( $r_s = .172, p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that high score in Meaning in Life is directly

associated with high score in Close attachment. Hence the hypothesis, there is a relationship between Meaning in Life and Close attachment was accepted.

Table 10:

*Summary of Spearman's rank correlation of Meaning in Life and Depend attachment*

Variable	Depend attachment
Meaning in Life	0.014

Findings from Spearman's rank correlation suggests that there was no relationship between Meaning in Life and Dependent Attachment but was not significant ( $r_s = .014$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hence the hypothesis, there is a relationship between Meaning in Life and Dependent attachment was rejected.

Table 11:

*Summary of Spearman's rank correlation of Meaning in Life and Anxiety attachment*

Variable	Anxiety attachment
Meaning in Life	- 0.061**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Findings from Spearman's rank correlation suggests that there was a very weak negative correlation between Meaning in Life and Anxiety attachment and the relationship was significant



at the 0.01 level ( $r_s = -0.061$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, the hypothesis there is a relationship between Meaning in Life and Anxiety attachment was accepted.

Table 12

*Table showing the moderating effect of Close attachment on Grit and meaning in Life.*

	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Grit	0.53020	0.1262	4.201	<.001
Close attachment	0.22741	0.1450	1.568	0.117
Grit * Close attachment	-0.00786	0.0266	-0.295	0.768

Findings from moderation analysis suggest that the moderating effect was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.117$ ). Since it is not statistically significant, the direct effect was examined. The direct effect of Grit was statistically significant ( $p = <.001$ ) but the effect of Close attachment was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.117$ ). Hence the hypothesis there is a moderating effect of Close attachment on Grit and Meaning in Life was rejected.

Table 13

*Table showing the moderating effect of Depend attachment on Grit and meaning in Life.*

	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Grit	0.5870	0.1278	4.594	<.001
Depend attachment	0.0208	0.1419	0.147	0.883
Grit * Depend attachment	0.0196	0.0292	0.669	0.503

Since correlation analysis obtained for Depend attachment with Grit and Meaning in Life showed that there was no relationship. The hypothesis there is a moderating effect of Depend attachment on Grit and Meaning in Life was rejected.

Table 14

*Table showing the moderating effect of Anxiety attachment on Grit and meaning in Life.*

	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Grit	0.5997	0.1259	4.762	< .001
Anxiety attachment	0.0479	0.0905	0.530	0.596
Grit * Anxiety attachment	-0.0198	0.0169	-1.171	0.242

Findings from moderation analysis suggest that the moderating effect was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.242$ ). Since it is not statistically significant, a direct effect was examined. The direct effect of Grit was statistically significant ( $p = <.001$ ) but the effect of Anxious attachment was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.596$ ). Hence the hypothesis there is a moderating effect of Anxious attachment on Grit and Meaning in Life was rejected.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of the present study was to examine the role of the adult attachment on meaning in life and grit. The results of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between Grit and Meaning in life. The results of the current study also proved that there is a positive relationship between Grit and Meaning in Life. This is consistent with the findings from Yang and Wu (2021) who reported that grit had a significant positive effect on meaning in life. This relationship may be a result of the influence of grit in helping individuals organize their goals and the tenacity that gritty individuals often embody thus helping them make sense of and find meaning in their life. Findings from the present study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between Grit and Close attachment. This is in accordance with Teriba and Foley-Nicpon (2021a) findings that individuals who were comfortable with closeness and intimacy i.e. close attachment had significantly more grit when compared to individuals with anxiety attachment. This may be because being intimate and close with others often provide a sense of security and support helping individuals feel motivated and ready to explore the challenges that face them. The present study did not find any relationship between Grit and Depend attachment. There is no literature that supports this assumption. However, Teriba and Foley-Nicpon (2021b) reported that there exists a partial correlation between Grit and Depend attachment when age was controlled. Thus, the results in the present study may have shown a

relationship between the variables if age was controlled. Moreover, some reasons as to why a relationship between grit and dependent attachment may not exist can be explained by the fact that dependency that individuals show as a result of their attachment pattern makes it difficult for them to take actions independently thus compromising their ability to self regulate. In addition individuals with dependent attachment style tend to prioritize their immediate needs thus foregoing goals in the long term. The present study also established that there is a relationship between Grit and Anxiety attachment. Findings from Teriba and Foley-Nicpon (2021c) supported this assumption as their study revealed that there is a significant and weak correlation between Grit and Anxiety attachment. Moreover individuals with anxious attachment are often plagued with self doubt, have a fear of rejection and view themselves negatively. These negative assumptions about the self and ability can often be a barrier in pursuing goals and can often demotivate individuals in pursuing a long-term goal. Correlation analysis of attachment dimension - Close attachment with meaning in life revealed a significant relationship. This result is consistent with findings from Mikulincer and Shaver (2013b) who reported that individuals with low scores on anxious and avoidant attachment had higher meaning in life. An explanation as to why such a relationship might exist between the variables is supported by the fact that individuals with close attachment often prioritize their close relationship providing him/her social support. The experience of support is then associated with meaning in their lives. Similarly correlation analysis of dependent attachment with meaning in life in the present study did not indicate a significant relationship. There is no literature that supports this assumption. Correlation analysis of anxiety attachment with meaning in life in the present study suggested a negative relationship. This result is consistent with findings from Mikulincer and Shaver (2013c) who reported that individuals with high scores on anxious attachment had lower meaning in life.

Moreover it is plausible that individuals with such attachment patterns often have a negative view of the self and are more prone to negative affect. As a result individuals may struggle to find meaning in life. Findings of the present study did not reveal a moderating role of attachment dimension on the relationship between grit and meaning in life. There is no existing literature that supports this finding. However, a rationale as to why adult attachment does not moderate the relationship between grit and meaning in life may be that the relationship between these constructs are complex and multidimensional. For e.g. presence of meaning may be related to grit in different ways depending on an individual's adult attachment .

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion**

This chapter discusses the findings, limitations and implications of the study

#### **Findings**

- There is a relationship between grit and meaning in life
- There is a relationship between Close attachment and Depend attachment on both grit and meaning in life.
- Grit predicts Meaning in Life
- Adult attachment does not moderate the relationship between grit and meaning in life

#### **Limitations**

Several limitations arise from the present study.

- Although the Meaning in Life questionnaire used for this study is well-founded and widely used, it may prove useful to examine the link between Meaning in Life and Adult attachment using other measures, especially those that employ a narrative measurement of Meaning in Life. Since understanding meaning in life in the context of personal relationships may enable us to explore further how differently attached individuals define and describe their lives in terms of what provides them with essence and meaning.

- Since the study was conducted through an online survey it may be possible that extrinsic factors such as motivation, interest, attention etc may have affected the data.
- Since the study did not include participants who were inaccessible or who did not consent to the study or those who were unwilling to participate, the study population may not be representative of the target population
- Participants who consented to the study may have responded favorably rather than providing genuine data.
- Since the study employed self reported instruments the validity of the data may be questioned

### **Implications**

- Findings from the study add to the literature that emphasizes the need to design interventions that promote meaning in life through the mechanisms of grit.
- The findings from the present study can add to the literature on factors and predictors that influence meaning in life
- Findings from the present study strengthens the understanding of the relationship of relational contexts, specifically attachment patterns with meaning in life and grit.
- Findings from the present study adds to the positive psychology literature and can help researchers better understand the relationship between these variables and further improve and extend the findings from the study

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## Appendices

Appendix A:

Dear Respondent ,

I am Sreyah Susan Kurian, pursuing my Master's in Psychology from St.Teresa's College, Ernakulam. As part of my final year dissertation, I am conducting a research survey on the topic " The role of adult attachment on Meaning in life and Grit." I would greatly appreciate it if you could take some time out to fill in the questionnaire which will take no more than 10 minutes. I kindly request you to complete the following survey if you belong to the age group 20-40 Please read the questions carefully and mark your responses honestly .If you need any clarifications or queries feel free to contact me. I assure you that all your responses collected will be kept confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of research.

Thankyou.

Sreyah Susan Kurian

Contact: [sreyah.susanssk@gmail.com](mailto:sreyah.susanssk@gmail.com)

Protection of Rights and Confidentiality

The purpose of the study is to understand the role of adult attachment experienced in close relationships and its effects on grit and meaning in life. All your responses will be kept confidential. The information collected is used only for academic purposes. The data is subjected to statistical analysis and may be published or presented in public forums.

However no identifying information will be used. Participation in the study is voluntary.

You may withdraw from this study at any time you wish to discontinue.

By clicking on the 'I agree' option, I consent to participate in the study and have truly understood the nature of the study

#### Appendix B :

Socio demographic sheet:

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Occupation
5. Relationship status
6. Email

#### Appendix C:

##### Meaning in Life Questionnaire

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life and existence feel important and significant to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:



Absolutely Untrue = 1

Mostly Untrue = 2

Somewhat Untrue =3

Can't Say True or False =4

Somewhat True = 5

Mostly True =6

Absolutely True = 7

1. I understand my life's meaning.
2. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.
3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose.
4. My life has a clear sense of purpose.
5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.
6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.
7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.
8. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.
9. My life has no clear purpose.
10. I am searching for meaning in my life.

Appendix D

Short grit Scale

Directions for taking the Grit Scale: Please respond to the following 8 items. Be honest – there are no right or wrong answers!

1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.\*
2. Setbacks don't discourage me.
3. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.\*
4. I am a hard worker.
5. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.\*
6. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.\*
7. I finish whatever I begin.
8. I am diligent.

#### Appendix E:

##### Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996 )- Close Relationships Version

The following questions concern how you generally feel in important close relationships in your life. Think about your past and present relationships with people who have been especially important to you, such as family members, romantic partners, and close friends. Respond to each statement in terms of how you generally feel in these relationships.

Please use the scale below by placing a number between 1 and 5 in the space provided to the right of each statement.( 1= Not at all characteristic of me; 5 = Very characteristic of me)

- 1) I find it relatively easy to get close to people. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) I often worry that other people don't really love me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) I am comfortable depending on others. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) I don't worry about people getting too close to me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) I find that people are never there when you need them. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) I often worry that other people won't want to stay with me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) When I show my feelings for others, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) I often wonder whether other people really care about me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) I am comfortable developing close relationships with others. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) I am uncomfortable when anyone gets too emotionally close to me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) I know that people will be there when I need them. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15) I want to get close to people, but I worry about being hurt. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16) I find it difficult to trust others completely. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17) People often want me to be emotionally closer than I feel comfortable being. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18) I am not sure that I can always depend on people to be there when I need them. \_\_\_\_\_