

## Emotional Intelligence and Grit among Young Adults: A Correlational Study

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### Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to regulate one's moods, prevent distress from impairing thought, control impulse, delay gratification, and empathize which may affect Grit, the propensity to pursue long-term goals with persistence and unwavering passion. **Aim:** To explore the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Grit among Young Adults. **Method:** The study comprised of 136 young adults (76 females and 60 males) who were selected through Convenience Sampling. The Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) and Grit Scale short (Grit-8) was administered on the participants. **Results:** The findings of the inferential statistics indicates that there was a significant positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Grit ( $r = .188$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) A significant gender difference exists in EI between Females ( $M = 33.42$ ) and Males ( $M = 28.95$ );  $t = 2.251$ ,  $p = .026$ ; and in Grit between Females ( $M = 27.21$ ) and Males ( $M = 25.53$ );  $t = 2.009$ ,  $p = .047$ . **Conclusion:** It was concluded that Emotional Intelligence and Grit have a significant positive relationship. There is a significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and Grit among Young Adults.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence (EI), Grit, Young Adults, Correlation, Gender difference.

### Introduction

Emotional Intelligence was introduced in 1964, by science journalist Daniel Goleman who defined EI as the array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance- "a set of



skills or competencies, which provide human resource professionals, managers, and anyone in the world of work, with a comprehensive tool to define, measure and develop emotional skills”. Goleman explains that there are four basic aspects of his theory to emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-motivation, social awareness and empathy, and our skill to connect, to interact, to reach decisions, to relate positively and respectfully with others.

1. Self-awareness- Defined as “when we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behavior to our internal standards and values. We become self-conscious as objective evaluators of ourselves” (Shelley Duval, Robert Wicklund). It is the ability to recognise oneself as who we are and what we’ve always been, being mindful of ourselves, our actions, behavior, emotions.
2. Self-management- Described as being able to deal with oneself and handling one’s behavior, emotions, conflicts and managing them effectively. It means to accept self and its attributes with the positives and the negatives and tackle them with equal strength. A responsible individual is supposedly able to manage themselves accurately.
3. Social awareness- It is the skill of an individual to know what is happening around his social environment and being able to have a perspective on the same. An individual who can interact with their society, empathize with its people, and communicate well is considered ‘social aware.’
4. Social skills- The interpersonal component of emotional intelligence is social intelligence, which includes empathy and social skills. It is how an individual communicates and interacts with society. (Cherniss, C., Extein, M., Goleman, D., & Weissberg, R. P., 2006)



Emotional Intelligence comprises social skill, emotional strength, compassion, and veracity. It is described as “the ability to motivate self, to persevere in the face of disappointments; to regulate impulse and delay gratification; to control one's tempers, to keep distress from intervening with the capability to think; to empathize, to hope, to perform, to be creative by Goleman, Salovey and Mayer, Bar-On and others” (Maree, J. G., & Ebersöhn, L., 2002)

A tripartite model of EI was created as a result of past discussions on whether EI is an ability or a characteristic. This paradigm proposes knowledge, talents, and qualities as the three EI levels. The complexity and breadth of understanding about emotions are referred to as the knowledge level (Laborde, S., et. al., 2016). The emphasis is on understanding emotions and handling emotionally charged situations. Several validation benchmarks have now been successfully met by the EI construct. According to formal theory, EI satisfies conventional standards for intelligence (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000a). Emotional intelligence (EI), as Goleman has stated, falls neatly within the range of personal intelligence, focusing on the function of emotions in the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences, according to the influential multiple intelligences’ paradigm developed by Howard Gardner (1999). And there are now many instruments that have been validated for evaluating various components of EI (see, for example, Bar-On, 2000a; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000b; Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000).

Grit is the passion and perseverance for long-term goals (Angela Duckworth). In a 2007 study, she explained that grit accounted for an average of 4% of the variance in success outcomes thus it may be a predictor of our ability to accomplish goals in the long run despite a



lack of positive feedback. It can help to “predict an individual’s achievement in stimulating areas over and beyond measures of aptitude,” explains a recent 2020 study. It is linked with but different from conscientiousness, resilience, aspiration, hardiness, self-control, interest, endurance, and motivation. It is the predisposition to pursue long-term goals with determination and continuing passion in terms of role demonstrating and inventing, as well as inspiring, empowering and backing up supporters, grit is an important predictor of leadership behavior and projects both practical and theoretical implications (Caza, A., & Posner, B. Z., 2018).

"Perseverance of effort" and "consistency of interest" are two of the lower-order features that make up the higher-order construct known as "grit." These two characteristics—perseverance and consistency—refer to the propensity to work hard despite setbacks and the propensity to hold onto goals and interests over the long term, respectively. Both are believed to play a role in success: consistency because it typically takes many hours of deliberate practise to become proficient in a skill, and persistence because achieving mastery in a field frequently involves initial failures that the person must persevere through (Ericcson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993). That is to imply, people who either give up when faced with challenges or frequently switch their pursuits are less likely to ever practice something deliberately enough to reach high levels of performance. Indeed, Duckworth (2007) emphasized that earlier studies of highly successful people had long noted the significance of grit for achievement (Howe, 1999).

Ryans (1939) came to the following conclusion after reviewing the literature of the time that: "The presence of a general trait of Grit, saturates all behavior of the individual, has not



been established, while evidence both for and against such an idea has been revealed." Positive psychology has recently rekindled interest in the empirical investigation of character in general and the quality of perseverance (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In 2007, Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly developed the concept of "grit," which they characterized as "trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals." They demonstrated that, in addition to measures of talent, grit predicted success in difficult domains.

Grit contrasts from the urge for achievement, which McClelland (1961) defined as the need to achieve attainable goals that permit quick feedback on performance. People with higher levels of grit intentionally create highly long-term goals for themselves and do not deviate from them even during the absence of adequate feedback—in contrast to people with higher levels of need for achievement, who chase goals that are not always too simple or too difficult. The need for achievement is by definition an unconscious need for inherently rewarding activities, and as such, it cannot be measured via self-report techniques (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1992). Contrarily, grit can refer to commitment to either implicit or overtly rewarded aims.

The present study can be helpful for counsellors, clinical psychologists, educational institutions, and workplaces to provide an insight and awareness about the relationship with emotional intelligence. A relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Grit, can pave way towards formulation of a therapeutic intervention for individuals with a vulnerability of these traits during adolescence. Thus, leading to healthier coping mechanism and psychosocial skills, and a better adjusted personality during the transit from adolescents to young adults.



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## Method

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Grit among Young Adults. The objectives of the study were to understand the relationship between Emotional intelligence and grit and the gender difference among young adults. Null hypotheses were formed. The sample was collected from the universities and college of Lucknow. 136 individuals were selected for the study (N=136). These young adults filled the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale-10 (BEIS-10) and Grit Questionnaires (Female=76, Male=60). All of them were between the age range of 18 to 25 years. Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (Davies, K. A., Lane, A. M., Devonport, T. J., & Scott, J. A., 2010) is a 10-item instrument designed to assess individuals' ability to appraise internal and external emotional cues, regulate emotional states, and use emotional information to solve problems (Davies et al., 2010). It has an Internal consistency Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.81$ , McDonald's  $\omega = 0.82$  and Factorial Validity was established. The Grit Scale Short (Duckworth, A.L, & Quinn, P.D., 2009)- This scale encompasses 8 items designed to measure the extent to which individuals can maintain focus and interest and persevere in obtaining long term goals. The scale has two subscales: Consistency of Interest and Perseverance of Effort. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). It had an Internal consistency Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.83$  and Content Validity was established.

The data for this study was analysed by using Mean, Standard deviation, Independent Sample T-test, and Pearson's Correlation on IBM SPSS Version 20.



## Results

Statistical analysis of the data was done through the SPSS version 20. Pearson's Correlation Analysis was used to study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Grit. Independent samples t-test was performed to obtain the descriptive statistics and to examine the mean difference between males and females in Grit, and Emotional Intelligence individually. Represented in the tables below is the analysis of the data and its results.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics for Group (Total N= 136, Female F= 76, Male M= 60)*

	Age			Emotional Intelligence			Grit		
	N	F	M	N	F	M	N	F	M
<b>Mean</b>	20.64	20.86	20.37	31.45	33.42	28.95	26.47	27.21	25.53
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	2.25	2.37	2.07	11.67	11.04	12.06	4.89	5.28	4.22

**Figure 1**

*Illustration of the Mean Age (Total N= 136, Female F= 76, Male M= 60)*

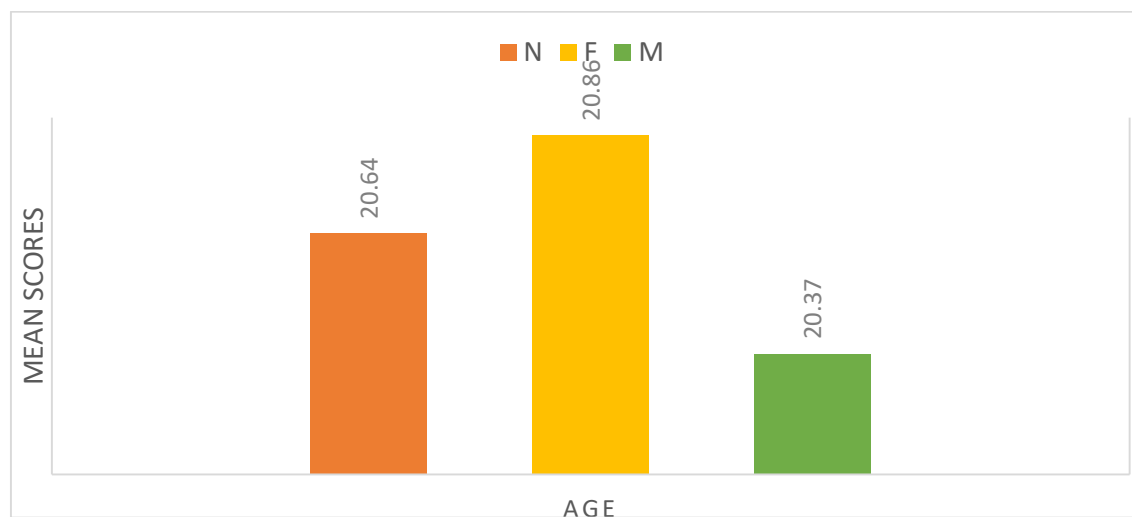


Table 1 depicts the Mean and Standard Deviation of Age, Emotional Intelligence, and Grit among the Total Sample (N=136), Females (76) and Males (60). The sample of 136 participants contained 76 Females (55.9%) and 60 Males (44.1%) between the ages of 18 and 25 (range=7), with a mean age of 20.64±2.25 for total, 20.86±2.37 for Females and 20.37±2.07 for Males. Figure 1 depicts the graphical representation of the mean difference of Age among Young Adults.

The Mean for the total sample on the Emotional Intelligence Scale was 31.45±11.67, for Females the mean was 33.42±11.04 and for Males the mean was 28.95±12.06. The Mean for the total sample on the Grit Scale was 26.47±4.89, for Females the mean was 27.21±5.28 and for Males the mean was 25.53±4.212.

**Table 2**  
*Correlation between Grit and EI*

	Grit	Emotional Intelligence
<b>Grit</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	1
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.188*
	<b>N</b>	136
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	1
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.029
	<b>N</b>	136

Table 2 depicts a Pearson correlation coefficient that was computed to assess the linear relationship between Grit and Emotional Intelligence which indicates towards a significant positive relationship (r= .188; p<0.05).





**Table 3**

*Gender Difference between Emotional Intelligence*

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P value
Emotional Intelligence	Female	76	33.42	11.04	2.251	.026
	Male	60	28.95	12.06		

**Figure 2**

*Descriptive statistics for Emotional Intelligence (Total N= 136, Female F= 76, Male M= 60)*

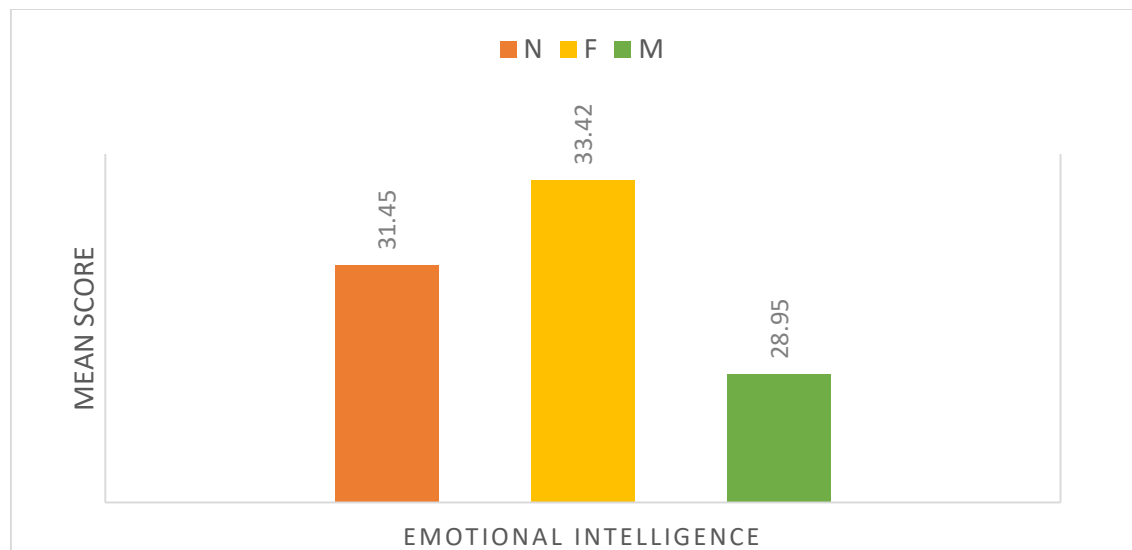


Table 3 depicts an independent sample t-test that was performed to compare Emotional Intelligence in Males and Females.

There was a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between Females (M= 33.42, SD= 11.04) and Males (M=28.95, SD= 12.06);  $t = 2.251$ ,  $p = .026$ . Figure 2 depicts the graphical representation of the mean gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among Young Adults.

**Table 4**

*Gender Difference between Grit*

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P value
Grit	Female	76	27.21	5.27	2.009	.047
	Male	60	25.53	4.22		

**Figure 3**

*Descriptive statistics for Grit (Total N= 136, Female F= 76, Male M= 60)*

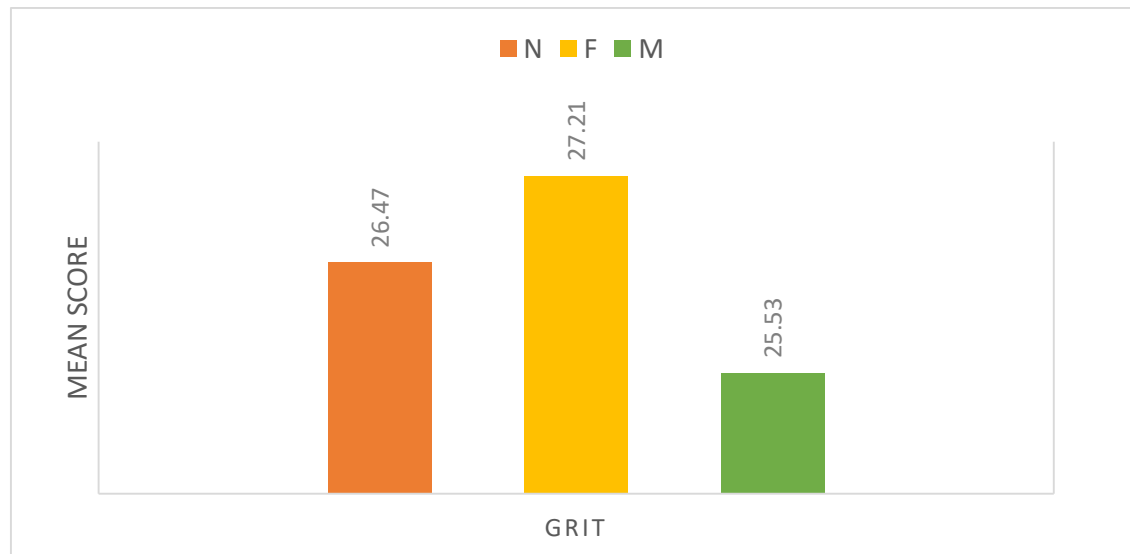


Table 4 depicts an independent sample t-test that was performed to compare Grit in Males and Females.

There was a significant difference in Grit between Females (M= 27.21, SD= 5.27) and Males (M=25.53, SD= 4.22);  $t = 2.009$ ,  $p = .047$ . Figure 3 depicts the graphical representation of the mean gender difference in Grit among Young Adults.

### Discussion

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Grit among Young Adults.

In the present study, the sample of 136 participants comprised of 76 Females (55.9%) and 60 Males (44.1%) between the ages of 18-25 years. Table 1 depicts the Mean and Standard Deviation of Age, Emotional Intelligence, and Grit among the Total Sample, Females and Males. A mean age of  $20.64 \pm 2.25$  for total,  $20.86 \pm 2.37$  for Females and  $20.37 \pm 2.07$  for Males. Figure 1 depicts the graphical representation of the mean difference of Age among Young Adults. There was no significant mean difference depicting the sample was comparable and well matched. The average of approximately 20 gives us an appropriate range to assess and understand the changes that may occurring the future or may be plausible.

In the present study, Table 2 depicts a Pearson correlation coefficient that was computed to assess the linear relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Grit. A significant relationship and positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Grit ( $r = .188$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This infers those individuals who are gritty may have a higher emotional awareness which in turn leads them to have higher persistence and determination to achieve goals and overcome challenges without getting demotivated and surrendering. The findings are supported by various literatures “a statistically significant correlation is found between emotional intelligence and grit” (Ain, N. U., Munir, M., & Suneel, I., 2021; Kwapisz, A., Schell, W. J., Aytes, K., & Bryant, S., 2022)

Table 3 depicts an independent sample t-test that was performed to compare Emotional Intelligence in Males and Females. There was a significant gender difference;  $t = 2.251$ ,  $p = .026$ . The Mean for the total sample was  $31.45 \pm 11.67$ , for Females the mean was  $33.42 \pm 11.04$  and for Males the mean was  $28.95 \pm 12.06$  (Table 1). As illustrated by Figure 2, the mean score of females on Emotional Intelligence was higher than that of males indicating the females

during young adulthood have a higher emotional intelligence. Thus, their ability to understand self and others emotion is better than males and have a better problem solving when related with socio-emotional problems. The findings are supported by literature as quoted ahead, “Female students have higher scores in their Emotional Intelligence hence depicting higher self-control, self-awareness and social awareness” (Molaie, E., Asayesh, H., & Ghorbani, M., 2012; Das, R. P., & Sahu, T. L., 2015; Bindu, P., & Thomas, I., 2006; Fida, A., Ghaffar, A., Zaman, A., & Satti, A. N., 2018). Contrarily a study by Ahmad, S., et. al., in 2009 showed contradictory results as they found higher emotional intelligence in males than in females indicating that in comparison to women, men exhibit more assertiveness, self-awareness, independence, and situational management.

Table 4 depicts an independent sample t-test that was performed to compare Grit in Males and Females. There was a significant gender difference;  $t= 2.009$ ,  $p= .047$ . The Mean for the total sample was  $26.47 \pm 4.89$ , for Females the mean was  $27.21 \pm 5.28$  and for Males the mean was  $25.53 \pm 4.22$  (Table 1). As illustrated by Figure 3, the mean score of females on Grit was higher than that of males indicating that females are grittier hence showing higher non-cognitive skills like resilience and persistence when it comes to achieving long term goals and putting in consistent efforts towards those goals. In support of the current findings, literature quoted that “Girls seem to work harder over longer time and with more focus than boys” (Sigmundsson et al., 2017b, Sigmundsson et al., 2018, Sigmundsson, H., Haga, M., & Hermundsdottir, F., 2020). Previous research on grit and gender have also shown conflicting findings, with either no association between the two or somewhat higher grit ratings for females than males (Batres, 2011; Bazelais et al., 2016; Flanagan, K. M., & Einarson, J., 2017;



Sigmundsson, H., Guðnason, S., & Jóhannsdóttir, S., 2021). Therefore, it is not surprising that there is significant difference in grit between males and females. As it may depend on other features like culture, nurture, and early life experiences.

## **Conclusion**

The findings from the present study reflect that among Young Adults, Emotional Intelligence and Grit had a significant positive correlation which indicates that individuals who score greater on the emotional intelligence scale tend to be grittier and vice versa. This indicates that an absence of emotional awareness or inability to identify one's own emotion may increase the chances of surrendering and decreased determination.

Emotional Intelligence was found to be higher in females which explains how the society expects more empathy, emotional insight, and sensitivity from females than males. Grit was found to be higher in females which again lays in line with the general understanding that females may aim higher and achieve better if they set their mind to it without giving up whereas males tend to get distracted or give up easily.

## **Limitations**

The finding of the study could not be generalized as the sampling method employed was convenience and there was a comparatively smaller sample size. The sample was limited to a particular geographical area of Lucknow. An absence of equal data in males and females could have potentially affected the results of the study. More extensive tools could be employed to study each variable in detail for the purpose of generalization and a deeper level



understanding. The data was majorly self-reported which may increase the chances of a reporting bias.

### Implication and Future Directions

This study helps in understanding the inter-relationship between emotional intelligence, and grit. The personality of young adults is still in a transition phase, thus an intervention at this stage can help in better emotional adjustment as adults. As the emotional intelligence of the individual is dynamic, young adulthood may be the suitable stage to help enhance these skills. It gives us an Indian perspective of the occurrence of the under studied variables among youth. This study provides the researcher with a base for research on a larger scale.

A study based on the sub dimensions can be conducted using the same data to understand the finer details and relationship amongst each variable. A longitudinal study can be done on adolescents that can help in understanding the progression of these variables and interdependence. This will also give us a better understanding of the role of Emotional Intelligence as a protective factor.

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