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The Relationship of Grit, Career Adaptability, Self-Regulated Learning, and Academic Adjustment: Focusing on the Multiple Mediation Effects

Hyo Jin Lim¹, Mae Hyang Hwang², Hyesuk Ha³

¹ Graduate School of Education, Seoul National University of Education, Seoul, South Korea

² Department of Education, Gyeongin National University of Education, Incheon, South Korea

³ Department of Youth Education, Korea National Open University, Seoul, South Korea

Received: May 27, 2021 ▪ Reviewed: June 23, 2021 ▪ Accepted: July 24, 2021 ▪ Published: August 30, 2021

Abstract:

This study aimed to examine the relationship of grit, career adaptability, self-regulated learning, and academic adjustment for students in the Open University in Korea. We specifically investigated how grit can be mediated by career adaptability and self-regulated learning. We administered survey questionnaires for 300 university students and analyzed 289 responses using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Results showed that the direct effect of grit on academic adjustment was not statistically significant; however, indirect effects via career adaptability and self-regulated learning were statistically significant. It suggests that when students' grit is higher, they are more likely to have higher career adaptability and self-regulated learning, impacting academic adjustment. Our research was conducted with students in the Open University, where the students took online-based courses throughout four academic years. The present findings indicate that grit can significantly facilitate academic adjustment for students in non-traditional institutions.

Keywords: grit, career adaptability, self-regulated learning, academic adjustment, multiple mediational effects.

毅力、职业适应性、自我调节学习和学业调整的关系：关注多重中介效应

摘要：

本研究旨在研究韩国开放大学学生的毅力、职业适应性、自我调节学习和学业调整之间的关系。我们专门

Corresponding Authors: Hyo Jin Lim, Graduate School of Education, Seoul National University of Education, Seoul, South Korea; email: hyolim@snu.ac.kr; Mae Hyang Hwang, Department of Education, Gyeongin National University of Education, Incheon, South Korea; email: maehyang@ginue.ac.kr; Hyesuk Ha, Professor, Department of Youth Education, Korea National Open University, Seoul, South Korea; email: maumaum@knou.ac.kr

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研究了职业适应性和自我调节学习如何调节毅力。我们对300名大学生进行了调查问卷，并使用验证性因素分析和结构方程模型分析了289份答复。结果表明，毅力对学业调整的直接影响没有统计学意义；然而，职业适应性和自我调节学习的间接影响在统计上是显著的。这表明，当学生的毅力越高，他们就越有可能具有更高的职业适应性和自我调节学习，从而影响学业调整。我们的研究是在开放大学的学生中进行的，学生们在四个学年里都参加了在线课程。目前的研究结果表明，毅力可以显著促进非传统机构学生的学业调整。

关键词： 毅力、职业适应性、自我调节学习、学业调整、多重中介效应。

1. Introduction

With the rapid social changes, the need for life-long learning after school age increases for the adult population. This is also reflected in the paradigm shift in the education system because the modern knowledge-based economy and advanced information-communication technology (ICT) require new knowledge and skills continuously. It is surely known that distance education provides adult learners with the advantage of life-long learning due to its flexibility (Kara et al., 2019). Therefore, more and more adults enter college to meet the desire to pursue a quality life. Distance universities and open universities are burgeoning to meet the demand of adult learners (Cross, 2014; Neroni et al., 2018). Most distance/open universities have provided flexible, part-time programs using an online course delivery system (Archbald, 2011). The number of adults, who earned their undergraduate, graduate, and even doctorate degrees using this system, has been gradually growing (Cross, 2014). The pandemic confirms online teaching as the best solution, and the discussion on the benefits and downsides of online learning has begun.

Generally, adult learners who attend so-called non-traditional education institutions are very diverse in terms of age group, educational background, and motivation for going to school. However, for most of them, it is hard to balance working and studying, and the conflict often causes academic difficulties (Archbald, 2011; Cross, 2014; De Paepe et al., 2018). Recently, some studies try to deal with work-life conflict (WLB) more systematically in higher education (Atay & Bayraktaroglu, 2020). Because of the academic-family conflict, adult learners at distant colleges may have difficulty adapting to school life, earning credits, and even completing their degree programs (Choi & Kim, 2018).

However, research has shown that learners' intention to achieve the degree and other career goals is high, and the psychological characteristics seem to support them in adapting to academic work. Among the psychological characteristics, the importance of non-cognitive factors such as attitudes, values, and motivation are becoming critical (Lee & Stankov, 2013). The change of non-cognitive characteristics is relatively easier than that of cognitive ones (i.e.,

intelligence, aptitude). In the meantime, several studies support the hypothesis that non-cognitive factors are significantly associated with academic achievement (Steinmayr et al., 2019). One of the most important non-cognitive characteristics related to academic success is learning motivation. It is widely known to predict overall academic adjustment in terms of selecting, making an effort, and continuing learning behaviors.

Among the motivational variables, we paid our attention to persistence which makes it possible to overcome difficulties in the learning process. Successful academic adjustment is not a short-term outcome but a continuous developmental task that requires a large amount of commitment. Angela Duckworth once introduced the concept of grit, defined as "passion and perseverance for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit has two sub-factors: consistency of interest, capturing tendencies to pursue the same or similar activities over time, and perseverance of effort, capturing tendencies to overcoming difficulties and keeping working toward one's goals (Duckworth et al., 2007, 2011). One of the studies reported that grit affects student academic performance and success in first-year college students in physics (Bazelais et al., 2016). Grit has shown positive effects on organization members in the medical, educational, and enterprise fields. For example, workers with high grit levels are believed to make better use of their abilities and be less frustrated by common failures and setbacks, resulting in greater personal achievement and lower job burnout (Seguin, 2019).

To the best of our knowledge, there has been little research regarding grit and academic achievement, especially for non-traditional students. A few studies (Aparicio et al., 2017; Cross, 2014; MacCann et al., 2012) displayed grit's prediction on positive outcomes among adult learners; however, little is known how and why grit explains those outcomes. In other words, educators and researchers must delve into the mechanism of grit in predicting academic success.

The present study is inspired by the research gap mentioned above. For adult learners in distance-learning situations, it was found that when students perceived and committed to academic goals, their

motivation for an academic degree and academic success increased (Ahmet, 2019). It has been known that gritty people are more likely to pursue their goals in many circumstances (Duckworth et al., 2007, 2011). Under such a working background, adult learners need to keep persevered and stick to their original goal to insist on achieving their goal (Liang, 2021). Moreover, we assumed that grit's impact on academic success would be mediated by self-regulated learning and career adaptability.

Self-regulated learning is another important factor in academic success. Self-regulated learners tend to be "cognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their learning" (Zimmerman, 1990), and those learners tend to have higher academic achievement in both traditional (Pintrich, 2004; Garcia & Pintrich, 2012) and non-traditional college settings (Artino & Stephens, 2009; Justice & Dornan, 2001; Wibrowski et al., 2017). Prior studies (Komarraju et al., 2009; Wolters & Hussain, 2015) demonstrated the positive correlation between grit and self-regulated learning. For example, Wolters and Hussain (2015) found out that grit's consistency predicted only some of the self-regulated strategies (i.e., time/environment management and procrastination) while grit's perseverance predicted all of the self-regulated strategies (i.e., self-efficacy, task values, strategies, time/environment management, and procrastination), suggesting that higher grit can take into account more self-regulated learning behavior.

In addition, grit has been proved as a predictor of career outcomes (Ting & Datu, 2020). Career adaptability represents the career outcomes of the adult population and involves the general competencies and specific behaviors necessary for anticipating and adapting to changing conditions (Savickas, 1997; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Previous studies (Duckworth et al., 2009; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014) reported that successful teachers in their career, despite adversities, demonstrated higher grit in their job. Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) recognized that gritty people tend to retain their jobs longer (e.g., grittier sales employees were more likely to keep their jobs). Andera et al. (2016) also found that grittier workers behave less counterproductive in their job. Based on these finding, we hypothesize grit predict career adaptability of adult learners.

This study aimed to examine a relationship between grit, career adaptability, self-regulated learning, and academic adjustment. We also investigate how grit, directly and indirectly, predicts academic success via career adaptability and self-regulated learning. The scope of this study included quantitative and statistical analyses based on the survey responses collected from adult learners who enrolled in the Open University in Korea.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

We surveyed 300 college students (91.7% of female students) recruited from an Open University in South Korea. Students live in various regions such as urban, rural, and metropolitan cities in South Korea. We distributed questionnaires to lecturers who agreed to participate in our study, and students were asked to respond to the survey during classes. The mean age of the subjects was 44.17 (SD = 7.79), freshmen were 1.7%, sophomores - 38.3%, juniors - 29.7 %, and seniors - 30.0%. We excluded 11 participants who answered patterned responses and finally analyzed 289 cases. Missing values (less than 5%) were imputed using a full information maximum likelihood (FIML) method.

2.2. Measures

Students were asked to answer items of grit, career adaptability, self-regulated learning, and academic adjustment. Grit was assessed by the translated version of the Grit-S (Short Grit scale) developed by Duckworth and Quinn (2009). Among the 12 items of Grit-O (Original Grit scale) (Duckworth et al., 2007), Duckworth and Quinn (2009) selected eight items that had higher correlations among others to create the Grit-S. The scale consists of four items of perseverance of effort (e.g., "I finish whatever I begin") and four items of consistency of interests (e.g., "I often set a goal but later choose to a different one"). Items of consistency of interests were reverse-coded, and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) were .80 for perseverance and .69 for consistency. The whole scale's α turned out to be .80.

Career adaptability was assessed by the Career-Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). It contains 24 items, and those items are divided into four subscales that measure concern (e.g., "Thinking about what my future will be like"), control (e.g., "Making decisions of myself"), curiosity (e.g., "Exploring my surroundings"), and confidence (e.g., "Performing tasks efficiently"). The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) were .87 for concern, .83 for control, .80 for curiosity, and .90 for confidence, and .93 for the whole scale.

Self-regulated learning was assessed by adapted items from the Motivation Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (Pintrich et al., 1993). We used four subscales among MSLQ such as effort regulation (four items, e.g., "I work hard to do well in the class if I don't like what we are doing"), time management (five items, e.g., "I make good use of my study time for the class), study environment management (four items, e.g., "I usually study in a place where I can concentrate on my classwork"), and help-seeking (five items, e.g., "I ask the instructor to clarify concepts I don't understand well"). The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) were .62 for effort regulation, .87 for time management, .80 for study environment management, and .79 for help-

seeking, and .88 for the whole scale.

The academic adjustment was measured by ten items from Lee et al. (2008), who assessed the degree to which students perceive their academic issues in terms of class, assignment, and exam (e.g., "I have difficulties in finishing class assignments"). Items were reverse-coded so that a higher score of this scale represented a higher level of adjustment and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's α) was .86. All items were measured on the five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (= *strongly disagree*) to 5 (= *strongly agree*). Except for academic adjustment, all survey items underwent a back-translation process to confirm the consistency in meaning. We first translated all items into Korean and back-translated those items into English.

2.3. Analysis

We utilized a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to find out factor structure and a structural equation modeling (SEM) to test our hypothesized model. Since we hypothesized multiple mediators (i.e., career adaptability and self-regulated learning), we analyzed grit's direct and indirect effects on academic adjustment.

Before running the main analyses, we decided to use an item parceling method because there are too many measurement items, and our sample is not big enough. If there are too many items to measure one factor in a structural equation model analysis, measurement errors could be overestimated, and the fit may not be acceptable. Thus, items of grit and academic adjustment variables were divided into parcels according to the sequence of factor loadings within the same factor; items of career adaptability and self-regulation were divided into parcels according to their sub-factors. For example, four composite scores from subscales of career adaptability were created according to concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, and these scores were used as a parcel. Each parcel was used as a measured variable to reflect the latent variable.

To evaluate model fit, we used the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). TLI and CFI over .90 and RMSEA under .08 indicate the model fit data well (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables

Descriptive statistics of study variables are presented in Table 1. There are no extreme values or outliers in terms of mean, standard deviation, skewness/kurtosis, suggesting that the normal distribution of study variables can be assumed. Correlation coefficients showed that all of the coefficients of variables were

statistically significant at $p < .05$ level or above. Specifically, variables of grit were positively correlated with those of career adaptability ($r_s = .13$ to $.53$) and self-regulation ($r_s = .22$ to $.43$), and academic adjustment ($r_s = .16$ to $.48$). Variables of career adaptability were positively correlated with those of self-regulated learning ($r_s = .26$ to $.43$) and academic adjustment ($r_s = .44$ to $.93$). Finally, self-regulated learning variables were also positively correlated with academic adjustment ($r_s = .17$ to $.38$).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
CI1	2.93	0.77	0.09	-0.57
CI2	3.33	0.78	-0.39	-0.14
PE1	3.34	0.77	0.13	-0.45
PE2	3.73	0.74	-0.12	-0.26
CONS	3.80	0.59	-0.20	0.11
CONT	3.96	0.49	-0.21	0.66
CURI	3.87	0.48	0.04	0.33
CONF	3.69	0.54	-0.03	-0.24
EFFR	3.47	0.52	0.34	0.08
TIMM	2.96	0.72	0.41	0.26
ENVM	3.50	0.66	-0.05	0.15
HELP	2.93	0.62	0.20	0.15
ACD1	3.94	0.63	-0.20	-0.07
ACD2	3.67	0.64	-0.32	0.29
ACD3	3.89	0.62	-0.44	0.62
ACD4	4.09	0.53	-0.02	0.53

Note: CI - consistency of interest, PE - perseverance of effort, CONS - concern, CONT - control, CURI - curiosity, CONF - confidence, EFFR - effort regulation, TIMM - time management, ENVM - study environment management, HELP - help-seeking, ACD - academic adjustment. Table 1 is the authors' design.

3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Results from the CFA model without any error covariance revealed that the four-factor solution fit was marginally acceptable based on the fit indices ($\chi^2 = 243.745$ [$df = 98$, $p < .001$], TLI = .892, CFI = .912, RMSEA = .072, C.I. = .061, .084). Therefore, we freed one error covariance path based on modification indexes if they had pointed to significant covariation among error terms. This path involved items that were adjacent on the survey, and two indicators were loaded on the same latent variable (i.e., academic adjustment). The final CFA model showed a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 222.208$ [$df = 97$, $p < .001$], TLI = .908, CFI = .926, RMSEA = .067, C.I. = .055, .078). All factor loadings were statistically significant at $p < .001$ level, and the standardized coefficients were larger than .30, showing the measured variables appropriately reflected the hypothesized factor structure.

The patterns of correlation among latent variables were similar to those of zero-order correlations; however, the coefficients became larger since the

measurement errors were controlled. For instance, grit was positively correlated with career adaptability ($\Phi = .73$), and self-regulation ($\Phi = .73$), and academic adjustment ($\Phi = .50$). Career adaptability and self-regulation were positively correlated with academic adjustment ($\Phi_s = .56, .59$, respectively) (Table 2).

Table 2 Standardized and unstandardized factor loadings for the measurement model

		B	SE	Beta	p
Grit	←CI1	1.000	0.000	0.423	.000
	←CI2	1.360	0.229	0.576	.000
	←PE1	1.706	0.279	0.734	.000
	←PE2	1.581	0.268	0.707	.000
	←Concern	1.000	0.000	0.718	.000
Career Adaptability	←Control	0.852	0.076	0.737	.000
	←Curiosity	0.921	0.078	0.798	.000
	←Confidence	0.976	0.090	0.742	.000
	←Effort regulation	1.000	0.000	0.675	.000
Self-regulated Learning	←Time management	1.470	0.147	0.759	.000
	←Help-seeking	0.815	0.122	0.474	.000
	←Environment	1.113	0.132	0.597	.000
Academic Adjustment	←AA1	1.000	0.000	0.453	.000
	←AA2	1.855	0.306	0.554	.000
	←AA3	3.007	0.434	0.759	.000
	←AA4	3.061	0.479	0.815	.000

Correlations among Latent Variables

Grit	↔Career Adaptability	0.099	0.019	0.730	.000
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Grit	↔Self-regulated Learning	0.088	0.018	0.725	.000
Career Adaptability	↔Academic Adjustment	0.104	0.016	0.670	.000
Grit	↔Academic Adjustment	0.035	0.009	0.503	.000
Career Adaptability	↔Self-regulated Learning	0.049	0.010	0.556	.000
Self-regulated Learning		0.046	0.009	0.588	.000

Note: CI - parcel of consistency of interest, PE - parcel of perseverance, AA - parcel of academic adjustment. Table 2 is the authors' design.

3.3. Structural Equation Modeling

We tested the SEM among grit, career adaptability, self-regulated learning, and academic adjustment. The hypothesized model was also found to have a reasonable fit ($\chi^2 = 226.353 [df = 98, p < .001]$, TLI = .905, CFI = .923, RMSEA = .068, C.I. = .056, .079). Table 3 and Figure 1 showed standardized path coefficients in SEM. Grit predicted career adaptability ($\beta = .774, p < .001$) and self-regulated learning ($\beta = .777, p < .001$). Career adaptability and self-regulated learning significantly predicted academic adjustment ($\beta_s = .325$ and $.403, p < .05$, respectively), but grit did not significantly predict academic adjustment ($\beta = -.030, p = .897$). Finally, self-regulated learning also predicted negatively academic maladjustment ($\beta = -.326, p < .01$).

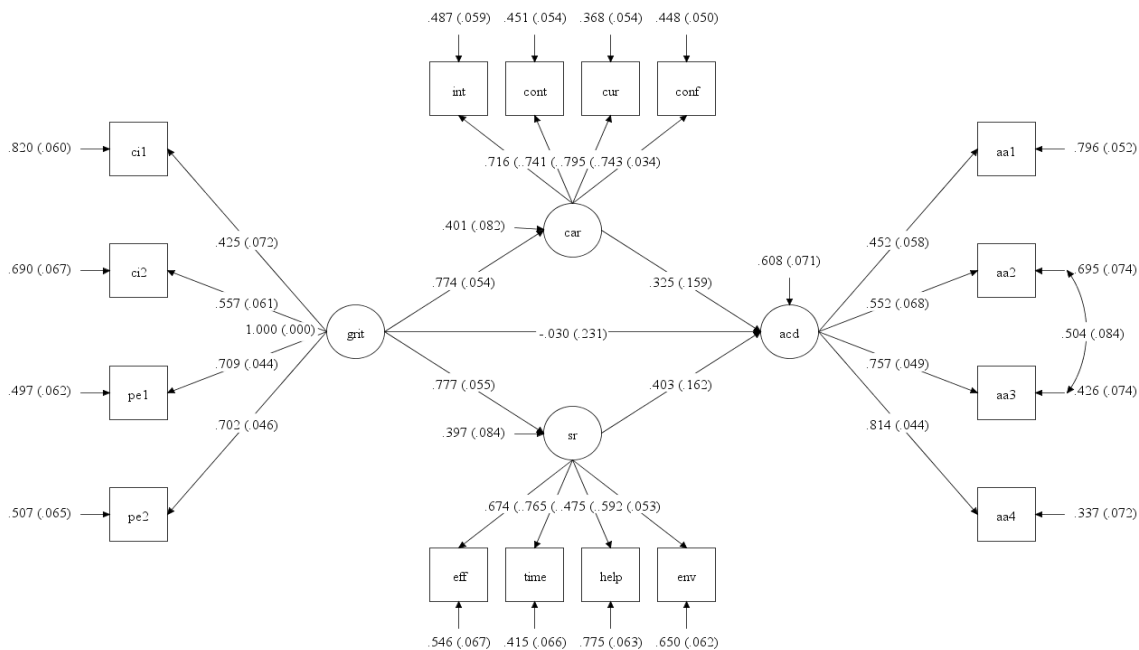


Figure 1 Standardized path coefficients of the research model

Note: CI - parcels of consistency of interest, PE - parcels of perseverance of effort, INT - concern, CONT - control, CUR - curiosity, CONF - confidence, EFF - effort regulation, TIME - time management, ENV - study environment management, HELP - help-seeking, CAR - career adaptability, SR - self-regulated learning, AA - parcels of academic adjustment, ACD - academic adjustment. Figure 1 is the authors' design.

Since the direct effect of grit on academic adjustment was not statistically significant, we assumed the mediation effect of career adaptability and self-

regulated learning. In other words, grit can be mediated by career adaptability and self-regulated learning in predicting academic adjustment. To confirm our

hypothesis, we analyze the specific indirect effects of grit on academic adjustment.

Table 3 Path coefficients for structural equation model

		B	SE	Beta	p
Grit	←CI1	1.000	0.000	0.425	.000
	←CI2	1.311	0.274	0.557	.000
	←PE1	1.644	0.424	0.709	.000
	←PE2	1.564	0.467	0.702	.000
	←Concern	1.000	0.000	0.716	.000
Career Adaptability	←Control	0.859	0.084	0.741	.000
	←Curiosity	0.920	0.096	0.795	.000
Self-regulated Learning	←Confidence	0.979	0.111	0.743	.000
	←Effort regulation	1.000	0.000	0.674	.000
	←Time management	1.482	0.152	0.765	.000
Academic Adjustment	←Help-seeking	0.818	0.148	0.475	.000
	←Environment	1.105	0.133	0.592	.000
	←AA1	1.000	0.000	0.452	.000
	←AA2	1.854	0.316	0.552	.000
Academic Adjustment	←AA3	3.008	0.461	0.757	.000
	←AA4	3.064	0.590	0.814	.000
	←Grit	-0.019	0.163	-0.030	.897
	←Career Adaptability	0.164	0.085	0.325	.041
Self-regulated Learning	←Self-regulated Learning	0.227	0.097	0.403	.013
Self-regulated Learning	←Grit	0.880	0.201	0.777	.000
Career Adaptability	←Grit	0.980	0.265	0.774	.000

Note: CI-parcel of consistency of interest, PE-parcel of perseverance, AA-parcel of academic adjustment. Table 3 is the authors' design.

3.4. Analysis of Effect Decomposition

To examine the grit's effect in detail, we utilized bias-corrected bootstrapping procedures (Hayes, 2013). In the current analysis, we used bootstrap samples to generate 95% confidence intervals around the parameter estimate. We determined an effect to be statistically significant if the confidence interval did not include zero. Table 4 displays statistically significant total, direct, and indirect effects of grit. Results showed that the direct effect of grit on academic adjustment was not statistically significant; however, indirect effects via career adaptability ($B = .160$) and self-regulated learning ($B = .200$) were statistically significant, meaning when a student's grit is higher, they are more likely to have higher career adaptability and self-regulated learning, which increase academic adjustment.

Table 4 Effects on grit on academic adjustment

	B	Beta	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	0.341	0.534	0.392	0.676
Total indirect effect	0.360	0.564	0.179	0.949
Grit→Career Adaptability→Academic Adjustment	0.161	0.251	0.003	0.499
Grit→Self-regulated Learning→Academic Adjustment	0.200	0.313	0.049	0.576

Direct effect				
Grit→Academic Adjustment	-	-	-	0.423
	0.019	0.030	0.483	

Note: The bootstrap sample size is 5,000. The indirect effect is considered significant when the confidence intervals do not contain zero. LLCI - the lower limit of the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval; ULCU - the upper limit of the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval. Table 4 is the authors' design.

4. Discussion

We have learned from our previous studies that grit brings a better outcome when other critical characteristics, especially career adaptability and self-regulation, are sufficient. Our study addresses that there is a significant relationship between grit and career adaptability and self-regulation.

First, people who show high levels of grit also have high career adaptability so that they are proactive and strive for their future careers. This finding suggests that grit positively affects career development (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014) and career adaptability. Career adaptability is affected by psychological temperament because of its feature of psychologically positive resources, and it often results in adaptive behavior (Savickas, 2013). In addition, career adaptability is found to enhance career development during adolescence and career preparation and ameliorate stress levels and misbehavior (Hirschi, 2009; Sultisiani & Handoyo, 2017; Pouyand et al., 2012).

Our results are consistent with the previous studies that students show better career adaptability with higher grit (Bowman et al., 2015). According to a recent study, grit (particularly consistency of interest) has a significant effect on the career adaptability of college students. Consistency of effort is a sub-factor of grit and has a statistically significant relationship with career interest, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence, sub-factors of all career adaptability (Han, 2018). It also has been demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between consistency of effort and career adaptability in high school and college students (Jeong, 2019). In Jeong's study, college students showed higher consistency of effort and career adaptability than high school students.

Second, we have also noted that the students show better self-regulation as they have higher grit to change their reaction to the environmental stimuli to adapt to it better. The results of our study support the idea that the relationships between grit and self-regulation are consistent with those of previous research (Armstrong et al., 2018; Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Wolters & Hussain, 2015). Grit shares some aspects of self-regulation to resist the temptation, bearing the pain during the process. This implies that grit has the characteristics of a person who endeavors to achieve goals (Duckworth et al., 2016). In other words,

the initiation of grit is self-regulation because enduring temptation is the first step of accomplishing a goal. As a result, our present study is significant. It shows the synergistic effect of career adaptability and self-regulation on academic success, investigated as separate constructs in previous studies. Our finding indicates that a high level of grit is critical for better self-regulation and career adaptability simultaneously.

Third, we demonstrated the positive effect of grit on academic adjustment, well known in previous studies. Grit has a positive effect on academic achievement (Strayhorn, 2014; Wolters & Hussain, 2015) and school adjustment (Ha et al., 2015; Slick & Lee, 2014). Notably, our finding further reveals that grit plays an indirect role in predicting the outcome, supporting the prior research showing that grit functions through mediation variables rather than directly impacts achievement. Indeed, it has been reported by many researchers that the mediation variables do increase academic achievement (Bashant, 2014; Duckworth & Eskreis-Winkler, 2015; Strayhorn, 2014). Our findings indicate that career adaptability and self-regulated learning are significant mediators between grit and academic adjustment.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between grit, career adaptability, self-regulated learning, and academic adjustment. We specifically investigated how grit indirectly predicted academic success through career adaptability and self-regulated learning. When a student's grit is higher, s/he is more likely to have higher career adaptability and self-regulated learning, which may influence academic adjustment.

While most of the previous studies on grit have focused on adolescents and undergraduate students, we collected data from adult learners in the non-traditional educational system. These students take online courses throughout four academic years; therefore, self-paced academic progress has been considered critical for them. The results showed that grit significantly affected academic and career success, even in distance learning. It has been suggested that the Open University helps adult learners in terms of the cognitive (e.g., academic aptitude) and affective (e.g., motivation to learn) aspects (Simpson, 2004). However, because many adult students have full-time jobs, they often cannot acquire sufficient time to study. Also, some students are likely to struggle with the online-based course system that learners and professors are physically separated. For these reasons, many students experience maladjustment or fail courses (Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Hermans et al., 2009). Based on the present study results, it is expected that students would be successful when the university helps them build their grit for self-motivation to improve career adaptability and self-regulation.

6. Limitations and Further Study

First, further study is needed to strengthen our findings by using a different method in that we only used self-report measures that are relatively subjective. Further research can be conducted by using a better method to measure the level of grit, such as observations of teachers and instructors. Second, future research is needed to generalize our findings by studying different age groups in other universities in other countries. Third, it would be important to investigate how to strengthen grit for better career adaptability and self-regulation. This will eventually help us learn how to improve academic adjustment for adult learners. Thus, it is necessary to develop a program or an intervention to apply the present findings to the higher education field.

Authors' Contributions

All authors conceived the research hypotheses and contributed to write and revise the manuscript. Hyo Jin Lim performed statistical analyses and presented methodology and interpretation. Mae Hyang Hwang worked out the introduction of the study and supervised data collection and analysis. Hyesuk Ha collected the data, discussed the results, and worked as a corresponding author.

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