

## The Relationship Between Grit and Work Engagement Among Employees

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**Abstract:** In dynamic organizational settings, low employee work engagement, marked by discipline issues and absenteeism, poses challenges to productivity, particularly at PT X, a container terminal operator. This study aims to examine the relationship between grit and work engagement among employees. Employing a quantitative correlational design, it surveyed a census population of 113 employees at PT X using validated Likert-scale instruments: the 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.916$ ) and 12-item Grit Scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.861$ ). Data analysis involved Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality ( $p=0.071>0.05$ ), linearity tests, and Pearson Product-Moment correlation via SPSS 25. Results reveal a moderate positive significant correlation ( $r=0.343$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ), indicating higher grit levels associate with elevated work engagement. In conclusion, grit positively predicts work engagement, suggesting organizations foster perseverance through training for sustained performance.

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### Introduction

In today's dynamic and highly competitive organizational environment, organizational success is largely determined by the quality of its human resources. Employees play a crucial role as drivers of productivity, innovation, and organizational competitiveness in increasingly complex work settings. Therefore, the development of employee competence, motivation, and engagement has become a primary concern for organizations. Employees are individuals who contribute their labor or intellectual capacity in exchange for predetermined compensation (Hasibuan, 2009), and they are considered a vital element in sustaining organizational operations across various sectors (Sari et al., 2019). According to Data Indonesia (August 2024), Indonesia's labor force reached 152.11 million people, with approximately 95% actively employed, indicating a significant potential workforce that must be effectively managed to achieve organizational goals.

Employees are valuable human assets whose participation and involvement significantly influence organizational performance (Solehan, 2024). Active employee involvement in work and decision-making processes contributes positively to organizational success, as engaged employees tend

to demonstrate a strong drive to contribute collectively (Haryono & Rahmanita, 2023). This condition is also relevant to PT X, a company engaged in container terminal management in Surabaya and Gresik, including operations at Terminal Berlian. The success of PT X's operational activities heavily depends on employee performance and engagement in executing daily tasks within the port services sector.

Based on observations conducted during fieldwork at PT X, several issues related to employee discipline were identified, such as tardiness, non-compliance with working hours, frequent sick leave without clear medical evidence, and taking breaks outside scheduled times, which disrupted workflow. Additionally, there were findings of employees recorded as present despite being absent from work. These conditions indicate potential low levels of work engagement. This concern aligns with findings from the Gallup State of the Global Workforce 2024, which reported a global decline in employee engagement from 23% to 21%. A lack of discipline, responsibility, and commitment to organizational rules may reflect weak emotional and cognitive connections between employees and their work.

Work engagement is defined as a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees demonstrate high energy, enthusiasm, and focus, and they are emotionally and cognitively connected to their roles (Mujiasih, 2015). Several factors influence work engagement, including well-being, information clarity, fairness, career and talent management, and employee involvement (Cook, 2018). Among these factors, grit plays an essential role in fostering work engagement. Grit refers to perseverance and sustained passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). Employees with high levels of grit tend to be more resilient, persistent, and motivated when facing challenges, making grit a critical psychological factor in enhancing work engagement in organizational settings.

## Research Methods

### 1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational research design. The correlational method was used to examine the relationship between two variables, namely grit as the independent variable (X) and work engagement as the dependent variable (Y). The strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables were measured using a correlation coefficient, allowing the researcher to determine the extent to which grit is associated with employees' level of work engagement.

### 2. Population and Participants

The population of this study consisted of all employees of PT X, totaling 113 employees. According to Sugiyono (2014), a population refers to a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that possess certain characteristics determined by the researcher. This study applied a population study technique, in which all members of the population were involved as research participants (Arikunto, 2010). Therefore, the total number of participants in this study was 113 employees, representing the entire workforce of PT X.

### 3. Research Instruments

Data were collected using self-report questionnaires based on a Likert scale. The work engagement variable was measured using an adapted version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). The scale consisted of 17 favorable items covering three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Responses were rated on a Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always." Validity testing showed that all items were valid, with corrected item-total correlation values exceeding 0.30. Reliability analysis indicated a high level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.916.

The grit variable was measured using an adapted version of the Grit Scale developed by Duckworth (2009). This scale consisted of 12 items, comprising both favorable and unfavorable statements that reflect two dimensions: consistency of interest and perseverance of effort. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale. The validity test results showed that all items met the validity criteria, with corrected item-total correlation values above 0.30. Reliability testing demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.861.

### 4. Data Analysis Techniques

Prior to hypothesis testing, prerequisite tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions of parametric analysis. Normality testing was performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the results indicated that the data were normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ). Linearity testing was

also conducted and showed a linear relationship between grit and work engagement ( $p > 0.05$ ). After fulfilling these assumptions, data analysis was carried out using Pearson's Product Moment correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between grit and work engagement among employees of PT X.

## Results and Discussion

This study examined the relationship between grit and work engagement among employees by distributing questionnaires directly to employees of PT X. The data collection process was conducted over a three-day period, from July 7 to July 8, 2025. This study employed a quantitative correlational approach aimed at identifying the relationship between two variables. Participant selection was carried out using a population study technique, in which all employees who met the research criteria were included as participants.

### 1) Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test, as both the grit and work engagement variables met the assumptions of parametric testing based on the results of the normality test. Therefore, the Pearson Product Moment correlation method was applied to examine the relationship between grit and work engagement. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test**

Variabel	Rxy	Sig	Keterangan
<i>Grit_Work Engagement</i>	0,343	0,000	Sangat Signifikan

Based on Table 1, the hypothesis testing analysis using the Pearson Product Moment correlation with the assistance of SPSS 25 for Windows yielded a correlation coefficient ( $r_{xy}$ ) of 0.343 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ). These results indicate a positive and highly significant relationship between grit and work engagement.

### 2) Descriptive Analysis

**Table 2 Results of Descriptive Analysis**

Variabel	Nilai Terendah	Nilai Tertinggi	Mean	Standar Deviation
Grit	28	44	36	8
Work Engagement	44,4	72,6	58,5	14,1

The descriptive data for the grit variable indicate that the lowest score obtained was 28, while the highest score reached 44. The mean score for grit was 36, with a standard deviation of 8. For the work engagement variable, the lowest score obtained by participants was 44.4, and the highest score was 72.6. The mean score for work engagement was 58.5, with a standard deviation of 14.13.

#### a. Gender

Based on the data obtained, the gender distribution of participants in this study is presented as follows:

**Table 3 Distribution of Research Participants by Gender**

Keterangan	Jumlah	Presentase
Laki-laki	71	62,6 %
Perempuan	42	37,4%
Jumlah	113	100%

Based on the table above, the majority of employees were male, totaling 71 individuals, which accounted for 62.6% of the total workforce. The remaining 42 employees were female, representing 37.4% of the participants.

b. Age

**Table 4 Distribution of Research Participants by Age**

Keterangan	Jumlah	Presentase
21 – 29 Tahun	24	23%
30 – 39 Tahun	37	27%
40– 50 Tahun	52	50%
<b>Jumlah</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, participants aged 21–29 years totaled 24 individuals (23%), those aged 30–39 years amounted to 37 individuals (27%), and participants aged 40–50 years constituted the largest group, with 52 individuals (50%).

## Discussion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between grit and work engagement among employees of PT X. Based on the demographic data, the participants in this study consisted of 113 respondents, including 71 male and 42 female employees who participated by completing the questionnaire. Based on the results of hypothesis testing conducted using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between grit and work engagement. This is evidenced by a correlation coefficient of 0.343 with a significance value of less than 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that grit is significantly associated with work engagement among employees of PT X.

The results of the analysis further indicate that grit simultaneously serves as a positive predictor of work engagement. In other words, the higher the level of grit possessed by employees, the higher their level of work engagement. These findings support the proposed hypothesis, indicating that it can be accepted. This result aligns with Baker's (2002) study on work engagement, which describes engagement as a pervasive and generalized state characterized by high levels of energy, mental resilience, willingness to invest effort, and sustained persistence, even in the face of difficulties. The findings of the present study suggest that enhancing employees' work engagement is closely related to strengthening their grit.

Furthermore, the theory proposed by Riggio (2018) regarding the dimensions of work engagement also supports the findings of this study. Dimensions such as vigor reflect mental strength at work and a strong internal drive to perform tasks persistently despite challenges. Employees at PT X tend to experience their work with a sense of enjoyment, high enthusiasm for achieving long-term goals, deep focus, and immersion in their tasks to the extent that they may lose track of time while working. However, when employees are unable to maintain adequate levels of grit and work engagement, this condition may exacerbate stress and trigger emotional exhaustion, as work is perceived as overly demanding.

Overall, maintaining a healthy balance between grit and work engagement is essential, as these conditions extend beyond the workplace and influence employees' ability to manage additional projects and responsibilities. A balanced level of grit and work engagement contributes to a more productive and active quality of life and fosters a healthy and harmonious work environment. The findings of this study have several practical implications for organizations and management. Companies can utilize these results to design programs aimed at enhancing work engagement, such as training programs that strengthen perseverance, resilience in facing challenges, and the ability to view work as a source of inspiration. Initiatives such as job crafting—where employees proactively adjust their tasks and interactions to make their work more meaningful—can help employees perceive their roles as purposeful and motivating.

Additionally, leadership training is essential, as work engagement is often influenced by how supervisors treat their subordinates. Supportive leadership can foster a sense of appreciation and enthusiasm among employees. Organizations also play a crucial role in enhancing grit by providing regular performance feedback and continuous support. Such practices help reduce the perception of work as a burden and promote a supportive relationship between supervisors and employees. In conclusion, grit is a critical factor in maintaining stable levels of work engagement among employees. Individuals with strong perseverance and consistent interests tend to be more emotionally and cognitively engaged in their work. Therefore, enhancing grit through supportive work environments and

targeted training programs can serve as an effective strategy for optimizing sustainable employee performance and strengthening organizational outcomes.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, there is a positive correlation between grit and work engagement among employees. This indicates that the higher the level of perseverance and passion (grit) possessed by employees, the higher their level of work engagement. It can be concluded that grit plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' work engagement. The presence of a positive correlation suggests that higher levels of grit are associated with higher levels of work engagement, which in turn encourage active, motivated, and persistent work behavior. Therefore, it is important for both organizations and employees to collaboratively enhance engagement through programs that effectively support work processes.

Furthermore, based on the analysis of data collected from 113 employee respondents, the results indicate a significant relationship between grit and work engagement, with a correlation coefficient of 0.343 and a significance value of less than 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings confirm that the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted.

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