



The role of psychological capital in flourishing among job seekers: Grit as a mediator

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Abstract: Psychological resources are crucial in enhancing individual potential, yet few studies have focused on positive psychological variables among job seekers. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the influence of psychological capital on flourishing, with grit as a mediator. A cross-sectional survey method was employed, with data collected using questionnaires involving 226 participants. Three instruments were included in the questionnaire: the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ), the Flourishing Scale, and the Short Grit Scale. The data were analyzed using bootstrapping mediation analysis via PROCESS software. The results show that all the psychological capital dimensions (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) significantly influenced grit, with β ranging from .21 to .57 ($p < .000$), and also significantly influenced flourishing, with β ranging from .23 to .40 ($p < .000$). Grit also significantly mediated the psychological capital dimensions and flourishing. These findings indicate that psychological capital, grit, and flourishing are important in developing individuals' potential. It is hoped that they will be useful in designing employability training which incorporates positive psychology resources as intervention modules to assist graduates seeking job opportunities.

Keywords: flourishing; grit; job seeker, predictor; psychological capital

Abstrak: Sumber daya psikologis sangat penting dalam meningkatkan potensi individu, namun masih sedikit penelitian yang berfokus pada ruang lingkup psikologi positif dengan subjek pencari kerja. Oleh karena itu, tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji pengaruh modal psikologis (*psychological capital*) terhadap *flourishing*, dengan *grit* sebagai mediator. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode survei *cross-sectional*. Tahap pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner yang melibatkan 226 peserta dengan tiga instrumen, yaitu *Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)*, *Flourishing Scale*, dan *Short Grit Scale*. Data yang diperoleh selanjutnya dianalisis menggunakan analisis mediasi *bootstrapping* melalui perangkat lunak *PROCESS*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua dimensi modal psikologis (harapan, keberhasilan, ketahanan, dan optimisme) secara signifikan mempengaruhi *grit*, dengan β mulai dari 0,21 sampai 0,57 ($p < 0,000$), dan juga secara signifikan mempengaruhi variabel *flourishing*, dengan β mulai dari 0,23 hingga 0,40 ($p < 0,000$). *Grit* juga secara signifikan memediasi variabel modal psikologis dan *flourishing*. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa modal psikologis, *grit*, dan *flourishing* merupakan tiga hal penting untuk mengembangkan potensi individu. Hasil riset diharapkan dapat berkontribusi untuk merancang pelatihan ketenagakerjaan berbasis perspektif psikologi positif sebagai modul intervensi yang membantu para lulusan mencari peluang kerja.

Kata Kunci: *flourishing*; *grit*; pencari kerja; prediktor; modal psikologis

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Introduction

Human capital development is one of the critical factors in generating and sustaining Malaysia's economic growth. The availability of a highly skilled workforce is essential in supporting the transition of all economic sectors to knowledge-based activities, generating work force productivity, and attracting foreign investors (ILO, 2011). This requires employable individuals in the workforce so that an efficient and open labor market can balance labor supply and demand (He, 2022). Consequently, Malaysian society will also receive benefits from the country's competent workforce, which will increase economic growth.

Based on data from the Graduate Tracking Study of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2021), the employability rate of graduates from higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia in 2018 was 80.2%, which in 2019 increased by 6% to 86.2%, but fell by 1.8% in 2020 to 84.4%. Even though the employability rate of students shows a different trend every year, issues regarding human capital, productivity, skills and potential continue to be a concern, as these involve the future of Malaysia (Ma'dan et al., 2020). HEIs are not only responsible for imparting knowledge and skills, but also responsible for marketing graduates after they complete their studies. According to the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education's Graduate Tracking Study, a total of 54,103 graduates were unemployed 6 months after their studies were completed in 2020 (MOHE, 2021). The highest unemployment rates are for business, applied science, human resource management, accounting, literature, and social sciences courses.

Universities are always seen as the best suppliers of employees for the job market, thus ensuring highly skilled workers in the future (Bakari et al., 2017). De Cuyper et al. (2011) argue that employability is the perception of employees

developed through an analysis of the job market and their skills. A study involving 664 adult Australians found that individuals who had a purpose in life tended to have a high level of self-perception of employability and life satisfaction (Praskova et al., 2015). In fact, Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) found that individuals with high well-being tended to secure job interviews and to be more productive in their work. In addition, the perception of employability also has a positive relationship with happiness and well-being. The perception of high employability encourages individuals to evaluate themselves positively in the work environment, which leads to better physical health and well-being (Berntson & Marklund, 2007).

Employability indicators are also often linked to flourishing. Individuals who are unemployed or underemployed tend to have lower levels of well-being than those employed (Argyle, 2001). It is because work provides goals, and maintains self-identity and self-esteem (Conroy, 2010). Furthermore, individuals who do not work are often prone to feeling useless, isolating themselves, and losing self-confidence, affecting their daily functioning (Conroy, 2010; Zechmann & Paul, 2019). It is evidence that flourishing is closely related to employability, as it emphasizes the functioning of an individual's life. Those who have optimal life functioning subsequently have a high level of employability.

According to Artess et al. (2017), although unemployment among graduates occurs in various contexts, employers are clear in the traits they want from their future employees. These include communication and interpersonal skills, knowledge mastery, and resilience. The employability of graduates not only depends on the knowledge and skills required in the job market, but it also involves psychological resources, which play an important role in employability (Bakari & Khoso, 2017).

This highlights the importance of psychological capital among individuals, as it can be considered an individual psychological resource. F. Luthans et al. (2015) define it as having four dimensions: 1) hope (a motivational state focused on the agency and pathways to complete goals); 2) efficacy (individuals' confidence in the capabilities needed to execute tasks successfully in a given situation); 3) resilience (individuals' ability to bounce back from hardship and achieve success); and 4) optimism (thinking that good things will happen in the present and future) (F. Luthans et al., 2015). The presence of psychological capital as an internal resource can increase a person's desire to learn and succeed. This is supported by Yorke and Knight (2006), who explain that psychological capital is able to influence the learning process that leads to employability skills. Furthermore, the higher the employability skills of a university student, the higher their confidence in securing a job. Studies also show that psychological capital is related to job seeking behavior (Chen & Lim, 2012). Georgiou et al. (2019) found that individuals with a high level of psychological capital tended to make great efforts to secure jobs, which leads to more interviews and job offers.

On the other hand, flourishing refers to psychosocial functioning, which is achieved by meeting the human psychological need for relationships, respect, self-esteem, competence, meaning, and a purpose in life (Diener et al., 2010). Diener et al. (2010) developed the Flourishing Scale as a summary measure of this construct. Seligman (2011) further states that flourishing refers to individual well-being, which concerns living a pleasant, good and meaningful life; he proposes that flourishing is a state of positive mental health, characterized by the presence of positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and a sense of accomplishment. Lippman et al. (2014) also conceptualize flourishing as a state of thriving and

focusing on positive aspects of well-being. This also leads to optimal psychological functioning and self-potential (Seligman et al., 2005). The two models of Diener et al. (2010) and Seligman (2011) agree that flourishing involves maximizing one's potential and living to the fullest to achieve optimal psychosocial functioning.

The relationship between psychological capital and flourishing has been the subject of several studies. F. Luthans et al. (2007) explain psychological capital as a capacity, potential and positive psychological strength that can be developed and improved by knowing yourself, being your true self and becoming what you want. F. Luthans et al. (2007) also state that individuals' psychological capital will help them develop and improve their abilities and well-being. Therefore, studies have shown a positive relationship between psychological capital and advantageous employee behaviors and attitudes such as job satisfaction (Avey et al., 2011; Larson & Luthans, 2006; F. Luthans et al., 2006); employee well-being and happiness at the workplace (Avey, Luthans, Smith, et al., 2010); organizational commitment (Avey et al., 2009, 2011; Larson & Luthans, 2006); and work behaviors, for example organizational citizenship behaviors (Avey et al., 2006; Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010).

Besides psychological capital and flourishing, another important characteristic is grit, which is defined as motivation based on interest and perseverance in achieving long-term goals or "passion and perseverance for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit entails the capacity to sustain both effort and interest in tasks that take long periods of time to complete. As such, it is always treated as a unidimensional construct. Successful individuals do not depend on talent alone but are also judged by their tenacity and consistency over a long period of time (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Grit is a characteristic that can be a predictor of excellent achievement in various

domains (Duckworth et al., 2007). Gritty individuals are more likely to persevere and succeed despite difficulties in achieving their desired goals, such as securing a job in the competitive labor market (Kasler et al., 2017).

A study by K. Luthans et al. (2018) examined the relationship between psychological capital and grit among 156 undergraduate business students. Their results indicate that psychological capital was significantly and positively related to grit. Riolli's (2012) study also demonstrates that students with psychological capital can cope better with stressful events during their academic studies, which indicates resilience, efficacy, hope and optimism. Luthans and Youssef (2007) suggest there is a need for students to cultivate psychological capital to prepare themselves for the competitive marketplace. In addition, Avey et al. (2008) found that individuals with higher psychological capital levels were more able to cope with daily struggles at work than their counterparts. Grit has also been related to academic success (Hodge et al., 2018); happiness (Singh & Jha, 2008); satisfaction and a sense of belongingness (Bowman et al., 2015); psychological well-being (Goodman et al., 2018); value and self-efficacy (Muenks et al., 2017, 2018); and self-esteem (Weisskirch, 2018). A study by Jain and Sunkarapalli (2019) also found a significant relationship between grit and flourishing. However, few studies focus on the role of grit in mediating the relationship between psychological capital and flourishing, despite the fact that significant relationships between psychological capital and grit, psychological capital and flourishing, and between grit and flourishing, indicate the potential of grit as mediating variable.

Although previous studies have acknowledged the role of positive psychology variables, these have mostly been conducted among students in high schools and universities or employees at the workplace. Few studies have

focused on psychological capital, grit, and flourishing among job seekers, which are important in understanding how individuals can become more resilient, optimistic and persistent in seeking jobs. Based on the discussion in previous studies, this study therefore aims to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Psychological capital dimensions (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) significantly influenced grit.

H2: Psychological capital dimensions (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) significantly influence flourishing.

H3: Grit significantly influences flourishing.

H4: Grit mediates the relationship between psychological capital dimensions (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) and flourishing.

Method

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was employed, including questionnaires as a data collection medium. This method was suitable for the study requirements to understand the respondents' thoughts, beliefs, emotions, feelings, and attitudes toward the variables that were the focus of the study. According to Shaughnessy et al. (2012), the cross-sectional survey method is one of the research designs frequently used by researchers today. This method helps obtain a representative sample of the population based on their characteristics concerning the phenomenon being studied. The data collected were then analyzed using bootstrapping mediation analysis via PROCESS software (Hayes, 2013).

Respondents

Based on the Higher Education Statistics (MOHE, 2021) released by the Malaysian Ministry

of Higher Education, as of December 31, 2020 a total of 266,110 students had graduated from private higher education institutions, while as of 15 December 2020, a total of 68,606 had graduated from public ones. The study used data from students who had graduated from a bachelor's degree and had been unemployed for a period of at least six months. The statistics show a total of 13,906 students from public HEIs and 17,125 from private ones who were still unemployed in 2020 (MOHE, 2021). Green (1991) suggests that if the objective is to test a model, the minimum sample size should be $50 + 8k$, where k is the number of predictors. If the study has five predictors, the estimate is $50 + 8(5) = 90$. Cochran's (1977) sample size formula was used, with $n = (z^2pq)/d^2$, $z = 1.96$, $p = 0.50$, $q = 0.50$, and d as the acceptable margin of error for the proportion being estimated 0.05. Therefore, based on this calculation, a sample size of 384 was used to select the respondents.

Research Instruments

Three instruments were used: the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) to measure psychological capital, the Flourishing Scale to measure flourishing, and the Short Grit Scale to measure grit.

Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)

The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) was developed by F. Luthans et al. (2007) and consists of four dimensions: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. It contains 24 items. Respondents answer using a Likert scale from 1 to 6. Scale 1 represents "Strongly Disagree", 2 "Disagree", 3 "Slightly Disagree", 4 "Slightly Agree", 5 "Agree" and 6 "Strongly Agree". The results of the reliability assessment of F. Luthans et al. (2007) show that the value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the PCQ questionnaire was very strong, with hope $\alpha = .87$, efficacy $\alpha = .92$,

resilience $\alpha = .83$, optimism $\alpha = .92$ and overall psychological capital $\alpha = .80$. A further study by B. C. Luthans et al. (2012) also obtained very strong reliability values, with hope $\alpha = .86$, efficacy $\alpha = .84$, resilience $\alpha = .72$, optimism $\alpha = .75$ and overall psychological capital $\alpha = .90$. The reliability analysis showed a very strong alpha coefficient value, with overall psychological capital $\alpha = .94$, dimensions of hope $\alpha = .89$, efficacy $\alpha = .84$, resilience $\alpha = .85$ and optimism $\alpha = .91$.

Short Grit Scale

The Short Grit Scale is a self-report instrument developed by Duckworth et al. (2009). Although two dimensions of grit are tested in the scale, consistency of interest and perseverance of effort, most studies analyze the construct as a unidimensional one, as both dimensions are needed to characterize a gritty person (Duckworth et al., 2009). The scale contains eight items (Duckworth et al., 2009). The perseverance items are 2, 4, 7, 8 and the consistency of interest ones 1, 3, 5, 6, which are also negative items. Respondents answer using a Likert scale of 1 to 5. Scale 1 represents "Does not describe myself at all"; 2 "Does not describe myself very much"; 3 "Describes myself"; 4 "Describes myself most of the time"; and 5 "Describes myself very much".

Duckworth and Quinn (2009) reported very good reliability of the scale, with grit $\alpha = .76$, perseverance $\alpha = .65$ and consistency of interest $\alpha = .74$. In a further study by Culin et al. (2014), strong alpha coefficient values were also reported, with grit $\alpha = .82$, perseverance $\alpha = .68$ and consistency of interest $\alpha = .84$. For this study, reliability was satisfactory, showing a very strong alpha coefficient value of $\alpha = .71$, while the dimensions of perseverance and consistency of interest also had strong values of $\alpha = .71$ and $\alpha = .74$.

The Flourishing Scale

The Flourishing Scale was developed by Diener et al. (2010) and is used to measure flourishing. It comprises eight items. Respondents answer using a Likert scale of 1 to 7; Scale 1 represents "Strongly Disagree", 2 "Disagree", 3 "Slightly Disagree", 4 "Moderately Agree", 5 "Slightly Agree", 6 "Agree" and 7 "Strongly Agree". Diener et al. (2010) reported the reliability of Cronbach's alpha coefficient value to be very strong, at $\alpha = .87$. The reliability analysis for this study also showed a very strong alpha coefficient value of $\alpha = .91$.

Results

Relationship between Psychological Capital, Grit and Flourishing

The findings in Table 1 show that there was a significant positive relationship between hope and grit ($r = .43, p < .000$). Similar results were obtained for that between efficacy and grit ($r=.48, p < .000$). The Pearson correlation analysis that was performed between resilience and optimism also shows a significant positive relationship ($r = .49, p < .000$), and ($r = .28, p < .000$). The results mean that the higher the psychological capital, the higher the grit scores obtained by the respondents. Job seekers who have higher scores in hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism consequently have higher scores in grit, and vice

versa. This allows them to be consistent in their interest and to persevere in their efforts to seek job opportunities.

The study findings also demonstrate very strong significant positive relationships between hope and flourishing ($r = .82, p < .000$) and efficacy and flourishing ($r = .71, p < .000$). In addition, the dimensions of resilience and optimism also showed strong significant positive relationships with flourishing ($r = .64, p < .000$) and ($r = .69, p < .000$). This indicates that the higher the psychological capital, the higher the scores in flourishing obtained by the respondents.

H1: Influence of psychological capital on grit

Regression analysis using PROCESS was conducted to examine the influence of psychological capital dimensions on grit. Table 2 summarizes the results. The PROCESS model for the psychological capital dimension of hope showed $R^2 = .19, F (1,224) = 51.73, p < .001$, efficacy $R^2 = .23, F (1,224) = 67.46, p < .001$, resilience $R^2 = .25, F (1,224) = 74.43, p < .001$, and optimism $R^2 = .08, F (1,224) = 18.67, p < .001$. As can be seen in Table 2, these dimensions have significant positive regression values of $\beta = .42, t = 7.19, p < .001$ for hope; $\beta = .46, t = 8.21, p < .001$ for efficacy; $\beta = .57, t = 8.63, p < .001$ for resilience; and $\beta = .21, t = 4.32, p < .001$ for optimism. This shows that psychological capital has a significant influence on grit after controlling for other

Table 1

Results of Correlation Analysis between the Psychological Capital Dimensions, Grit and Flourishing among Job Seekers

Variable	Grit	Flourishing
Hope	.43*	.82*
Efficacy	.48*	.71*
Resilience	.49*	.64*
Optimism	.28*	.69*

* $p < .000$

Table 2

Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis of Psychological Capital Dimensions on Grit among Job Seekers

Variable	Constant	β	t	Sig.
Hope	17.33	.42	7.19	.000
Efficacy	16.73	.46	8.21	.000
Resilience	15.80	.57	8.63	.000
Optimism	23.28	.21	4.32	.000

Table 3

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis of Psychological Capital Dimensions on Flourishing among Job Seekers

Variable	Constant	β	t	Sig.
Hope	3.16	.34	21.70	.000
Efficacy	9.88	.38	15.18	.000
Resilience	11.92	.40	12.48	.000
Optimism	16.72	.23	14.43	.000

Table 4

Summary of PROCESS Analysis of Grit on Flourishing among Job Seekers

Variable	Constant	β	t	Sig.
Grit	21.71	.65	6.14	.000

variables in the model. Accordingly, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Having higher scores in hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism significantly predict job seekers' ability to be consistent in their interest and to persevere in their efforts to seek job opportunities.

H2: Influence of psychological capital on flourishing

Regression analysis using PROCESS was conducted to examine the influence of the psychological capital dimensions on flourishing among job seekers. Table 3 summarizes the inferential statistics of the results. The PROCESS model for the psychological capital dimensions of hope showed $R^2 = .68$, $F(1,224) = 471.13$, $p < .001$; of efficacy $R^2 = .51$, $F(1,224) = 230.49$, $p < .001$; of

resilience $R^2 = .41$, $F(1,224) = 155.65$, $p < .001$; and of optimism $R^2 = .48$, $F(1,224) = 208.37$, $p < .001$. As can be seen in Table 3, these dimensions have significant positive regression values of $\beta = 1.36$, $t = 21.70$, $p < .001$ for hope; $\beta = 1.16$, $t = 15.18$, $p < .001$ for efficacy; $\beta = 1.25$, $t = 12.48$, $p < .001$ for resilience; and $\beta = .89$, $t = 14.43$, $p < .001$ for optimism. This shows that psychological capital has a significant influence on flourishing, after controlling for other variables in the model. Accordingly, this hypothesis is also accepted. Job seekers who have higher scores in hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism consequently have higher scores in flourishing, and vice versa. These characteristics indicate that they can cope with stressful events when seeking job opportunities.

H3: Influence of grit on flourishing

Regression analysis using PROCESS was conducted to examine the direct influence of grit on flourishing among job seekers. Table 4 summarizes the inferential statistics of the results. The PROCESS model for grit showed $R^2 = .14$, $F(1,224) = 37.73$, $p < .001$. As can be seen in Table 4, grit has a significant positive regression value of $\beta = .65$, $t = 6.14$, $p < .001$. This shows that it has a significant influence on flourishing, after controlling for other variables in the model. Accordingly, this hypothesis is accepted.

H4: Role of grit as a mediator in the relationship between the psychological capital dimensions and flourishing

From the analysis conducted using least squares path analysis in PROCESS, it was found that there was an indirect effect of grit as a mediator between the influence of psychological capital dimensions (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) on flourishing. As can be seen in Table 5, respondents who obtained high scores on hope ($a_2 = 0.421$, $p = .000$), efficacy ($a_2 = 0.459$, $p = .000$), resilience ($a_2 = 0.571$, $p = .000$) and

optimism ($a_2 = 0.211$, $p = .000$) would produce a high level of grit with an unstandardized coefficient value, and those who obtained a high score for grit would obtain a high score for flourishing, with an unstandardized coefficient value ($b_2 = 0.082$, $p = .000$).

The bias-corrected bootstrap confident interval for the indirect effect of grit shows a significant direct effect of grit as a mediating variable ($ab = .0006$), based on 5,000 bootstrap samples that did not include of zero value (0.177 to 0.501). Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. The results are also shown in Figure 1.

Discussion

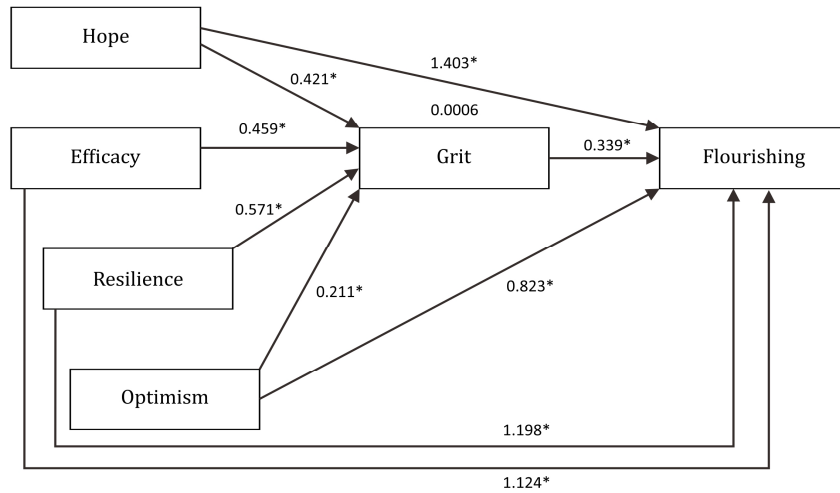
Based on the findings of the study, the psychological capital dimensions of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism showed a significant influence on flourishing among the job seekers. This indirectly supports the findings of previous studies on the influence of hope (Curry et al., 1997; Irving et al., 1998); efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Bandura et al., 2001; Faust, 2017); resilience (Stoffel & Cain, 2018); and optimism (Coomer, 2016) on flourishing. The results indicate that

Table 5

Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors and Summary Model Information for Grit as a Mediator between Psychological Capital and Flourishing among Job Seekers

Antecedent	M1 (Grit)			c'	Y (Flourishing)			Bias-Corrected Bootstrap 95%	
	Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p	Lower	Upper
X1 (Hope)	0.421	.059	.000		1.403	.077	.000	1.251	1.554
X2 (Efficacy)	0.459	.056	.000		1.198	.101	.000	0.998	1.390
X3 (Resilience)	0.571	.066	.000		1.124	.126	.000	0.875	1.373
X4 (Optimism)	0.211	.040	.000		0.823	.072	.000	0.731	1.014
M1 (Grit)	-	-	-	b ₂	0.339	.082	.000	0.177	0.501
Constant	17.334	1.634	.000	y	7.591	3.623	.037	0.451	14.730
$R^2 = .188$				$R^2 = .683$					
$F(1,224) = 51.728$				$F(3,222) = 159.583$					
$p = .000$				$p = .000$					

Figure 1
Results of Mediation Analysis



Note. * $p < .000$

job seekers who have higher scores in these dimensions have higher scores in flourishing, which is another indicator of individual well-being, as suggested by Seligman (2011). The findings of this study are also consistent with those of Maulida and Shaleh (2017), who found a significant influence of psychological capital and work engagement on the subjective well-being of employees in Indonesia.

The hope dimension is often associated with goal expectations and achievement (Curry et al., 1997; Irving et al., 1998). Coinciding with this finding, which supports previous studies, hope shows an effect on grit that is considered an individual trait in achieving long-term goals. Indirectly, this means that the desire and planning to achieve goals motivates a person to stick to the long-term goals set. In other words, job seekers who have hope will persist in applying for jobs and will not give up easily. Hope refers not only to desire, but it also concerns an individual's ability to have alternative plans when facing challenges

and expectations to achieve success (Avey, Luthans, Smith, et al., 2010; Snyder et al., 1991). This also coincides with the concept of grit which does not merely focus on consistent interest, but also emphasizes the aspect of diligence, which can also be linked to the aspect of hope that focuses on alternative planning.

Several previous studies support this finding on the influence of efficacy on grit (Bandura, 1997; Bandura et al., 2001; Faust, 2017). The concept of efficacy is strongly related with grit when these two factors refer to an individual's ability to achieve a certain goal. Indirectly, the finding demonstrates that job seekers who believe in their own abilities will increase their stamina to persist with their goals, even if they must face challenges and difficulties. In reality, grit plays an important role for job seekers who are looking for work as it helps them to continue to persevere with their efforts. In such cases, efficacy helps to ensure that individuals continue to believe in their own abilities.

Resilience was also found to significantly influence grit in this study. This finding supports the research of Stoffel and Cain (2018), who also found a connection between resilience and grit. Resilience refers to a person's ability to persevere and continue their efforts after facing challenges to the achievement of their goals, while grit concerns individuals' stamina to continue to persevere even when faced with challenges. In other words, the finding indicates that job seekers who have high resistance to challenges will be able to increase their stamina and continue to persevere to achieve their goals.

In addition, the dimension of optimism also showed a significant influence on grit, which supports the findings of Coomer (2016). This indirectly explains the effect of optimism on grit among job seekers. Optimistic thinking is seen as positive thinking about the future. This is very important to ensure that job seekers continue to maintain their efforts and interest in achieving their long-term goals. Those who have positive thoughts and feel good about the future will be able to stay motivated.

Based on the findings of the study, the psychological capital dimensions of hope, efficiency, resilience and optimism showed a significant and positive influence on flourishing amongst job seekers. This supports several previous studies that also obtained similar findings on the influence of hope (Wandeler et al., 2011); efficacy (Giblett & Hodgins, 2023); resilience (Aswini & Deb, 2017; Younes & Alzahrani, 2018); and optimism (Carver et al., 2005; Keyes, 2002) on flourishing.

The findings also show that hope has an influence on flourishing. This concerns the role of desire and planning in achieving goals that can improve the functionality of a person's life. Job seekers who have a high level of flourishing are also seen as those who have a clear desire and plan to achieve what they want in life. In relation

to their situation, this finding demonstrates the importance of the dimension of hope in flourishing because it can help to improve the functionality of individuals' lives. In fact, for the group of job seekers in this study, the life functioning is an important variable because they are in a new phase after graduating. A low level of life functioning can lead to mental health deficiencies (Asebedo & Seay, 2015), which will definitely make it more difficult to find work. It can also result in an unproductive life. Therefore, the desire and planning to achieve goals can help to ensure that good life functionality is maintained.

Grit is a personality trait that involves persistence, consistency, and making continuous efforts. Individuals with the trait will ensure that they are consistent and that their efforts continue to achieve long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007; Roberts, 2009). On the other hand, flourishing is a concept of high-level well-being that focuses on a meaningful life, having a direction, optimal life functionality and a good quality of life. The two concepts are positive psychological constructs that are oriented towards success and excellence and can be considered as a process of self-improvement according to Maslow's hierarchy theory.

The findings showed that grit is a significant mediator in the relationship between psychological capital and flourishing. This is supported by Kasler et al. (2017), who state that individuals with high grit are more likely to persevere and succeed in spite of difficulties faced in achieving their desired goals, such as competing for jobs. Previous studies are consistent in showing that grit has a significant and positive influence on higher goal attainment (Sheldon et al., 2015); academic achievement (Bowman et al., 2015); and remaining employed (Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014).

Grit has the characteristics of high-level well-being because it promotes the development of individual potential in achieving long-term goals (Machell, 2017). According to Diener (1984), success in achieving goals is the key to the development and maintenance of well-being. On the other hand, flourishing is one of the perspectives of eudaimonic well-being that emphasizes aspects of a person's potential and is closely related to the pursuit of perfection in life. The eudaimonic approach places great emphasis on optimizing psychological functioning, the formation of individual potential, and life fulfilment (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Seligman, 2002, 2011). In fact, grit is very important in the role of interest in and passion for something, allowing it to remain a long-term goal. Seligman (2011) introduced the dimension of meaning and achievement in measuring flourishing. The introduction to the dimension of meaning clearly proves the meaning of life, while finding a direction in life is an important aspect in flourishing. Having an interest in and passion for something can encourage individuals to achieve meaning in life. This is clearly evidence that resilience is also focused on the perspective of Eudaimonia, such as flourishing.

As for empirical implications, there are still few studies which have examined positive psychological variables among job seekers. Although the field of positive psychology has developed over more than two decades, most of its constructs, such as psychological capital, grit and flourishing, are still considered new in the field. Therefore, through this study, the exploration of the relationship between psychological capital and grit and flourishing can be used as a guide for future studies. As suggested by K. Luthans et al. (2018), an exploration of the relationship between psychological capital, grit and flourishing has been made in the study.

Although some studies have linked aspects of grit with employability issues, such as that of van der Vaart et al. (2021), who proposed the development of a grit intervention programme for job seekers, the notion is still in its early stages. This study has empirically demonstrated that positive psychological constructs play an important role in graduate employability. In addition, the findings also suggest that future studies should examine the role of grit more widely and develop related theories. Although present theory explains the development phase that can lead to flourishing, relevant variables need to be explored in the relationship. Not only do internal strengths have a direct impact on flourishing, they also require other variables based on specific situations and backgrounds.

Among the limitations of the study is in the question of the study sample, as the definition of job seekers as it is not the same as that of the unemployed. The definition is important because the study sample was taken from those who had just graduated or completed their studies no more than six months previously. The term 'unemployed' may indicate individuals who have been out of work for a longer period of time. Another limitation is that the sample consisted of individuals who graduated from different universities and courses, which may produce differences due to the existence of external factors beyond the control of the researchers. In addition, although the desired number of respondents was obtained, the data collection process took quite a long time due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, job seekers who have a high level of psychological capital have higher grit and flourishing. These characteristics mean that individuals who are consistent in their efforts to achieve long-term goals, despite facing various

challenges, will have a better quality of life. This is because consistency in what one desires helps to overcome weaknesses and increase one's potential for improvement. Indirectly, it improves the quality of life of individuals, allowing them to lead a better life. For determined job seekers, this

helps them to know what they want after graduation, giving them a direction in life. At the same time, having psychological capital and grit prepares people to continue planning on the basis of their goals and helps them complete all their tasks well in relation to the world of work.[]

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Author Contribution Statement

Wan Shahrazad Wan Sulaiman: Conceptualization; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Writing Original Draft; Writing, Review & Editing. **Mohammad Izzat Akmal bin Shariff:** Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Writing Original Draft; Writing, Review & Editing. **Rozaine Khairudin:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Writing, Review & Editing.

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