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RESEARCH PAPER

The Impact of Part-Time Employment on Grit and Academic Motivation of Secondary School Students in Lahore: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the impact of part-time employment on grit and academic motivation among Grade 10 science students in Lahore, Pakistan. Though part-time employment among Grade 10 students has emerged as a common phenomenon because of financial necessity, including the desire for professional experience. The influence of this employment on the grit and academic motivation of students and academic achievements remains indefinite. This study employed a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with 12 secondary school students. At the first stage, stratified sampling was employed to ensure representation from Lahore's five tehsils, followed by purposive sampling at the second stage to select 12 male students (6 employed part-time and 6 unemployed) from boys' secondary schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data were analyzed through Braun and Clarke's thematic framework using NVivo. Findings reveal that employed students exhibit significantly higher grit, characterized by greater perseverance, clearer goal orientation, and stronger resilience when facing academic challenges compared to their non-employed peers. They also demonstrate a stronger belief in effort over innate talent, reflecting a growth mindset. The study challenges the concern that employment detracts from academics, instead highlighting its potential to develop critical non-cognitive skills that support academic success. However, the cross-sectional design limits causal conclusions, and further longitudinal research is recommended to clarify whether employment cultivates grit or if inherently gritty students are more likely to work. Educational policymakers and schools are encouraged to consider integrating grit-building and mentorship programs that leverage the motivational benefits of part-time employment. Overall, this study underscores the positive role of part-time work in nurturing perseverance and motivation among Pakistani adolescents navigating academic challenges.

| **KEYWORDS** | Grit, Academic Motivation, Employment |

Introduction

Education signifies a critical pathway for socioeconomic development in countries like Pakistan. Science education is specifically valued for opening doors to many prestigious professions and economic opportunity. Within this educational landscape, the academic success of students is determined not only by their cognitive abilities but also by non-cognitive skills like grit and academic motivation

The dynamics of academic achievements are complex. These achievements show a complicated relationship among personal traits, school environments, and socio-economic factors (Hamouda & Deiwa, 2022). Academic motivation is seen as a student's desire and drive to participate in learning activities. Motivation includes both extrinsic and intrinsic drivers that push students to reach academic goals with determination,

particularly in science subjects that require steady effort and resilience (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

In urban centers such as Lahore, the intersection of socioeconomic challenges and educational aspirations often compels adolescents to undertake part-time employment to continue their education. This dual-role context underlines a unique opportunity to explore how the status of employment interacts with academic motivation and grit among Grade 10 science students. Studies conducted around the globe have established connections among motivation, grit, and academic achievement (Credé et al., 2017). There is a lack of qualitative studies examining these psychological constructs within the sociocultural settings of South Asia. Therefore, this qualitative comparative study aims to explore the distinguishing opportunities and challenges faced by both employed and unemployed Grade 10 science students in Lahore, Pakistan.

Researchers have suggested both positive and negative effects on their academic environment. The positive effects include increased academic motivation, improved self-reliance, and confidence. Whereas fatigue, poor time management, and low academic engagement, especially when working hours are excessive (Taseer et al., 2023; Ngan, 2021). Despite the mixed findings from these studies, there is limited qualitative research, particularly comparing the grit, academic motivation, and profiles of part-time employed and non-employed secondary school students. This gap makes it difficult to develop evidence-based recommendations for balancing employment and studying during adolescence.

Most of the available literature focuses on university students, leaving the experiences of secondary school students underexplored, despite the unique developmental challenges faced at this stage (Nuvianto Al Azis & Yusanti, 2021). Although the family and peer support are known to impact grit, and academic motivation, fewer studies have analyzed how these support systems interact with the employment status to influence academic motivation and resilience among employed adolescents (Lase & Wibowo, 2024).

Literature Review

Qualitative studies in Pakistan demonstrate that grit among adolescents is shaped by some local factors such as personal beliefs, growth mindset, family dynamics, and socio-economic backgrounds (Arif et al., 2020). Numerous studies underline the need to explore grit within specific socio-economic settings, and cultural, contextual especially for students facing academic challenges and financial instability. In urban areas like Lahore, students who work part-time show moderate academic achievements but experience growing pressures (Ali et al., 2021). Academic self-concept and achievement motivation in higher grades are key predictors of grit, indicating a link between academic motivation and perseverance (Rashid & Aslam, 2021). Globally, research shows that adolescent employment presents both challenges and opportunities for academic achievement. Secondary students juggling work and studies often deal with non-academic responsibilities that significantly affect their motivation and grit (Jennings, 2021). Past research indicates that individuals with higher grit tend to show resilience against setbacks and a stronger dedication to their goals, leading to greater academic achievements (Qiao, 2022). Academic motivation includes self-belief in intrinsic interests, external rewards, and perceived values that motivate students to face academic challenges. Many studies suggest that part-time work can develop life skills such as time management, responsibility, independence, and self-reliance, which may indirectly

foster grit and motivation (Alam et al., 2021). Since this study particularly focuses on science students, it is important to note that research indicates that engagement and enjoyment in science subjects significantly influence academic performance. A higher level of enjoyment correlates with increased grit, and grit, in turn, strongly predicts overall well-being and classroom enjoyment (Yang, 2021).

Academic Motivation

Motivation is one of the key topics in educational psychology and has been widely studied and researched as a psychological construct (Koenka, 2020). The word "*motivation*" originates from the Latin term *"movere"*, meaning "to move," highlighting its role to energize the actions of individuals (Eccles et al., 1998; T. Jansen et al., 2022). In academic literature, motivation is normally defined as *"a process in which goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained"* (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 5). Studies on academic motivation aim to understand the reasons behind students' behaviors and how these behaviors influence their learning and other psychological skills (Schunk et al., 2014).

Motivation Framework

Self-determination theory (STD), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000), presents a comprehensive framework for understanding human motivation, personality, and well-being. Its foundations lie in earlier investigations into intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971, 1975; Ryan & Deci, 2019). The Self-Determination Theory theorizes that intrinsically motivated behaviors characterized by actions are autonomous and not driven by external controls or reinforcements (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Additionally, unlike expectancy-value theory and social cognitive theory, which still emphasize the role of external incentives, such as anticipated or actual rewards, Self-Determination Theory offers a different perspective by focusing on internal factors behind motivation.

Grit in Educational Contexts

Duckworth et al. (2007) conceptualized grit as perseverance of effort and consistency of interests over time. Grit has emerged as a critical determinant of success (Han, 2021), a key psychosocial factor in predicting scholastic success, a motivation booster, and a source to develop their academic abilities in the face of setbacks (Yuan, 2022). A broad understanding of how grit interplays with psychological constructs like enjoyment, hope, and overall well-being might indicate a more complex situation of the variables influencing various academic outcomes (Zhao, 2023). Recent studies in Pakistan have demonstrated grit as a unique attribute of academic resilience, revealing field-specific dissimilarities among students in higher grades (Arif et al., 2020).

Grit and Academic Motivation

Grit is exhibited in the ability of a student to be persistent in continuous effort and carry on with their interest in tasks over a longer period despite setbacks and challenges. Grit helps achieve optimal performance and success in challenges (Sigmundsson et al., 2021). Academic motivation is a dynamic psychological construct that is influenced by personal and environmental factors, like intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in students (Zhao et al., 2023). Intrinsic motivation could happen when a student is involved in a task due to a sincere interest or enjoyment in the content. Extrinsic motivation could occur when a student's engagement is the outcome of an outside reward or pressure.

Factors That Affect Motivation and Grit

Multiple factors may affect academic motivation and grit, including personal characteristics, contextual factors, and pedagogical factors. The first one is the personal attributes, which include students' beliefs about themselves, goal orientations, and emotional states, all of which may influence whether a student exhibits grit and motivation to study. The second one is the age-related variations in motivation and grit. Grit level may also decrease after certain age ranges. This suggests that age-appropriate interventions may be tailored to increase grit and motivation (Liu, 2022). Achievement anxiety can either reduce academic motivation, or motivate academic motivation, depending on how a student understands and manages their anxiety (Zhao et al., 2023). Grit is displayed in the ability of a learner to be persistent in continuing to try and carry interest in tasks over longer periods, even when challenged and faced with setbacks. Academic motivation is a dynamic construct that is influenced by personal and environmental factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Zhao et al., 2023)

The Complicated Relationship between Grit and Academic Motivation

The relationship between grit and academic motivation is complex and cyclical, in which one encourages the other. Gritty learners likely experience more persistence in completing a task, which reciprocally promotes their intrinsic motivation (Zhao et al., 2023). This indicates that students with more grit have higher levels of academic motivation, which, in turn, may promote intrinsic motivation that may result in high levels of academic learning outcomes.

Impact of Part-Time Employment

The impact of part-time jobs on academic outcomes is quite complex and context-dependent. Researchers have explored that part-time employment can help students improve their time management skills and motivation level when job-related responsibilities align with academic interests and environment (Putra et al., 2021). El Galad et al. (2024) suggested that many students face financial constraints that necessitate part-time employment, affecting their academic engagement and motivation.

Material and Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with 12 secondary school students. Six respondents were involved in part-time employment in various fields, which included gardening, retail, software development, online business, peer-tutoring, and general store management. While the other set of six respondents was not employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data to explore experiences and perceptions of students, including a richer understanding of the interplay between grit, academic motivation, and part-time employment (Zhao et al., 2024). All participants were asked identical questions about grit and motivation. Responses were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and subthemes.

Population

The population of this study was the 21014 grade 10 science students enrolled in public schools in five Tehsils of Lahore. These Tehsils are: City, Cantonment, Model Town, Shalimar Town, and Raiwind.

Sample

This study sampled six part-time employed and six non-unemployed grade 10 students from five Tehsils of Lahore. A stratified purposive sampling method was adopted to select the sample for this study.

Table 1
Population and Sampling Method

Description	Key Details
Population	21,014 Grade 10 Science Students, Ten Public Sector Schools from 5 Tehsils of Lahore
Sampling Method	Stratified Purposive
Sample	12 Students: 6 Employed and 6 Non-employed
Data Collection	Semi-structured interviews (identical questions on Grit & Motivation)
Data Processing	Record → Transcribe → Code
Analysis Technique	Thematic analysis
Output	Main Themes, Sub-Themes on Grit, Motivation and Employment

Data Collection Tool

Cresswell (2017) suggests qualitative data collection procedures involve four different types of strategies, including qualitative observation, qualitative interviews, archival or qualitative documents, and qualitative audio-visual material. Semi-structured interview, consisting of 10 questions, was used to collect qualitative data from the students. The questions were designed by adopting and then tailoring the Motivation and Grit Scales. Three experts from the relevant research field, two academicians and three grade 10 teachers, were requested to help create a valid instrument to collect data in the shape of semi-structured interview questions. Initially, there were 8 questions during the process of piloting. Two students, each from the employed and unemployed categories, were interviewed. The feedback and results led to further improvement of the tool under the guidance of the experts, as mentioned earlier, and the interview questions increased from eight to ten. For the convenience of respondents, the questions were translated into Urdu. All participants were asked identical questions about grit and motivation. Responses were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and subthemes.

Table 2
Respondent Profiles and Job Descriptions

Respondent	Employment Status	Job Description
R1	Employed	Helping gardener father after school
R2	Employed	Works in departmental store
R3	Employed	Works in software house
R4	Employed	Learning and managing online business
R5	Employed	Peer tutoring
R6	Employed	Helping father run general store
R7	Non-employed	Student only
R8	Non-employed	Student only
R9	Non-employed	Student only
R10	Non-employed	Student only
R11	Non-employed	Student only
R12	Non-employed	Student only

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, which involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. The six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021) guided the analysis, which included: 1) Familiarization with Data, 2) Initial Coding, 3) Searching for Themes, 4) Reviewing Themes, 5) Defining and Naming Themes and 6) Producing the Report.

Results and Discussion

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Table 3
Responses to Semi-Structured Interview Questions on Grit

No.	Main Themes	Sub-Themes	
		Impact on Grit	
1	1) Task Completion and Persistence	a)	Task management, Completion, and Persistence
		b)	Prioritizing Technique
		c)	Strategic Pursuit and Goal Orientation
		d)	Consequence-Driven Completion
		e)	Habit Formation
2	2) Perspectives on Perseverance and Passion	a)	Perseverance
		b)	Passion Fuels Effort
		c)	Resilience Narratives
		d)	Adaptive Mindset and Situational Intelligence
3	3) Response to Setbacks	a)	Action After Failure
		b)	Correction Behaviors
		c)	Preventive Strategies
4	4) Beliefs About Talent vs. Effort	a)	Effort Superiority Belief
		b)	Growth Mindset Evidence
		c)	Talent Superiority Belief
		d)	Riggers of a Fixed Mindset

Task management, Completion and Persistence

A notable difference was observed in how the learners managed multiple tasks. The part-time employed students exhibited better task management strategies, which converged into skills for their work environments. Their approaches to overcoming distractions and prioritizing competing demands were also noted during the exploration process.

Respondent 1, who helps his gardener father, shared his strategy for task management:

Sometimes, umm, I do get distracted while getting new tasks, especially if they appear to be more challenging than what I am currently doing. When such challenges come… umm, I try my level best to send a reminder to myself that accomplishing what I have already begun is important. Assisting my father in gardening has taught and trained me that if you fail to complete one task appropriately before moving towards the other one, you won't be able to get the required results.

Prioritizing Technique

Likewise, Respondent 4, who runs an online business with his uncle, explains using formal systems:

Whenever any new tasks emerge, I analyze them based on the value they have and the potential return on the investment, both in schoolwork and business. Over time, I have also developed skills to prioritize tasks and pursue them to the best of my abilities.

Strategic Pursuit and Goal Orientation

In contrast, non-employed students typically reported more basic or still-developing strategies. Respondent 8 acknowledged:

I do find it hard when I find distractions, especially when new tasks or assignments come up. I have also begun to use app blockers during study time to keep a priority list so that I know what should be done first.

These variances suggest that work or job experiences may provide practical contexts for these students to develop and then apply task management strategies that help in their academic settings.

Consequence-Driven Completion

The data revealed the differences in how students approached their task completion. The students who are employed have shown a consistent emphasis on the importance of the accomplishment of tasks before moving to the next one. They, more often, refer job of job-related challenges and consequences of leaving things undone or unfinished.

Respondent 2, working in a departmental store, shared, "I try not to complete the assigned tasks first at the store, as unfinished or left undone tasks are not acceptable over here. I make sure to complete the given assignments before moving on to any other ones."

Habit Formation

Respondent 6, who assists in running the store of his family, similarly noted:

I have developed a skill, rather than a strong habit, of completing what I have started. This skill helps me with my school assignments, too. I try to complete the tasks at hand first before moving to another one without considering how attractive or interesting it is. Unemployed students have shared more variable completion patterns, like expressing formidable habits of completion, while others accepted being a struggler with the completion of the tasks. Respondent 12 openly admitted: I do sometimes leave assignments incomplete or other projects at once. I like to start tasks enthusiastically, but tend to lose my interest before their completion. I am trying to improve upon it with the help of checklists and learning to accomplish at least one assignment completely before beginning with something new.

These patterns underline that the part-time employed students may strengthen the habits to complete through real-world outcomes and consequences that their academic settings alone might not provide.

Perseverance

The employed students preferred passion over perseverance, often referring to work experiences that exhibited the significance of persistence through setbacks or unexciting tasks.

Persistence in Tasks

Likewise, Respondent 4, who runs an online business, emphasised:

Undoubtedly, passion is more important than perseverance, as passion instills excitement initially, especially when kicking off an online business."

Passion Fuels Effort

Similar to the unemployed students more often prioritized passion over perseverance. They often describe the belief that passion naturally produces the motivation required for perseverance. Respondent 7 suggested, "I believe passion is more important than perseverance because if you are passionate about anything, perseverance does come naturally."

Resilience Narratives

Respondent 10 stated, "I think passion has more importance than perseverance."

Adaptive Mindset and Situational Intelligence

The data also showed that some students from both the employed and unemployed groups acknowledged the importance of both attributes and qualities. Although with different perspectives and understanding. Respondent 3, who works at a software house, suggested, "Both perseverance and passion are important…"

Action after Failure

Following their failures, the specific actions that both groups took varied significantly. Students who are employed constantly shared specific corrective measures, which were based on their own analysis of what they thought went wrong at certain moments.

Respondent 5, who works as a peer tutor, expressed, ""When I, like... Ione of my tutees fails to achieve good grades or fails sort achieve the set targets umm, I think back to find out the reason behind this failure, or was there something solely wrong with my approach?"

Correction Behaviors

Students also shared experiencing negative emotions when coping with challenges or facing failure. But there was a significant difference in how they processed these negative experiences and set their priorities to accomplish the given tasks. Employed students more often expressed quick transformations from their emotional response to analytical problem-solving situations.

Respondent 4, who runs an online business, noted, "What I have learned in online business with my chachoo (uncle), I faced challenges. I reflect to get to know why this happens…, and then, with a new frame of mind, apply them to the next attempt."

The unemployed students typically described much stronger emotional responses that took more time to process.

Respondent 8 accepted, "Umm, if I talk about failure, failures make me feel bad about myself. Sometimes, umm, I try to avoid challenging assignments because I find it hard. When I fail, I usually think, need some time to reflect, to process before I can plan to try again."

Preventive Strategies

There was more variety and dimensions of action patterns in unemployed students after they failed to achieve their goals. On the other hand, some of them, like Respondent 11, shared some systematic approaches and strategies that were similar to those employed. Whereas other students reported responses with a less systematic approach. Respondent 10 described:

"When I do not perform well on something really important, umm, I usually ensure that I take a break from, umm, thinking about it for a while. And eventually, I try to figure out, umm, what went wrong with this, umm, though sometimes I just… move on to the next thing accordingly."

Effort Superiority Belief

The data have shown a striking difference in patterns regarding their beliefs about the relative importance of effort versus talent. Students who are employed shared their beliefs in the dominance of effort over the gifted natural talent. More often, they cited their work experiences to highlight this principle.

Respondent 2, "… Umm, actually, effort is important than talent…"

Growth Mindset Evidence

Respondent 6, who helps run a family store, similarly noted:

"See, from what I have observed, in our business, the effort we make consistently outperforms the talent we have."

Talent Superiority Belief

Conversely, some unemployed students noted stronger beliefs in the significance of gifted talent. Respondent 8 explained, "Umm, to me, talent plays a bigger role than most people admit. Some students hardly study and even then get top marks, while others work hard and gain average results."

Riggers of a Fixed Mindset

Respondent 12 explained, "I think, umm, talent plays a pivotal role in one's success. umm, effort matters too, but it looks like people who have to try hard rarely reach the same level as those with natural gifts." This pattern explains that work experiences may provide concrete proof of what effort leads to improvement and success that educational settings alone might not consistently exhibit a fixed mindset.

Table 4
Responses to Semi-Structured Interview Questions on Motivation

Impact on Motivation				
No.	**Main Themes**		**Sub-Themes**	
1	1)	Academic Challenges	a)	Motivation vs Obstacles

		b)	Stress Appraisal
		c)	Purpose Attribution
		d)	Real-World Connection
		e)	Applied Learning
		f)	Stakeholders' Awareness
2	2) Drivers of Academic Achievement	a)	Internal vs External Factors
		b)	Autonomy to Achievements
		c)	Reward System

Motivation vs Obstacles

Both employed and unemployed students demonstrated distinctive perceptions related to the academic challenges. Students with part-time jobs seemed more inclined to accept challenges as a source of motivation, and also preparedness for real-world challenges and diversity.

Respondent 1, who helps his gardener father, explained, "I have a challenge, umm, is time management between both the school assignments as homework and sparing time to assist my father in his tasks. Umm, I do get physically tired sometimes."

Stress Appraisal

The unemployed students expressed the challenging situations as hurdles, sources of anxiety, or stress. Respondent 10 described, "Umm, I feel the stress, I do get anxious about exams or tests, particularly the time-bound tests, tasks with time limits..., I begin to avoid the concepts or subjects that trigger more anxiety and stress."

Purpose Attribution

Similarly, Respondent 3 noted: Actually, umm, the real challenge that I face is how to apply classroom learning to the practical. Sometimes, the knowledge I get from my school appears to be irrelevant or disconnected from what I observe or face in real-world applications. This becomes motivation for me as the help with my father offers me an opportunity to observe how classroom learning and key concepts apply in a professional environment or such settings…

Real-World Connection

One of the recurring themes among the employed students was related to their ability to connect academic setbacks or challenges to real-world applications, which made them more meaningful a relevant.

Respondent 6, who works in his family's store, shared, "The main challenge, umm, I face is how to make classroom learning applicable to the outer world; like turning theory into practical, umm, practical business settings..." This connection to real-world applications was less evident in the responses of non-employed students, who more frequently described academic challenges in isolation from practical contexts.

Applied Learning

Respondent 6 further added, "Being a student with the knowledge that we have, umm, or we learn in lessons, something new, we need to think about whether it should also be applicable, otherwise I find it a waste of time".

Stakeholders' Awareness

Respondent 5 was of the view that, "Umm…, what I think, we cannot be successful until our parents, teachers, and students understand each other and work together to make us good students".

Internal vs External Factors

When asked, the employed students emphasized the internal factors like sense of responsibility, self-reliance and regulation, work habits, and inner (intrinsic) motivation.

Respondent 5, who teaches other students, said, "… if I share my own experiences with you, as a peer tutor, to become a high achiever, one will have to develop consistency, be a self-regulated learner. High achievers, to me, do not just work hard; they also work smart."

Autonomy to Achievements

The unemployed students mentioned some of the external factors like gifted talent, natural or situational intelligence, considerate and supportive environments, and above all, the external rewards. Respondent 12 noted, "Umm, the high achievers more often have their parental support, their situation, and natural intelligence, time management, and other required organizational skills… public recognition, appears to be a huge source of motivation for the high achievers in our academic settings."

Reward System

Respondent 8 shared, "Until there is a good system to appreciate and award hard workers, motivation will be missing. So, a system of awards should be there in our school".

Discussion

Social research offers insights into human perspectives and service improvement (Creswell, 2007). This qualitative study explores how grit and motivation differ between employed and non-employed grade 10 students. Employed students displayed greater self-drive, responsibility, and task completion—consistent with Duckworth et al.'s (2007) grit theory, which defines grit as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Their job experiences reinforced the idea that grit can be developed through real-life challenges (Duckworth et al., 2007), supporting its domain-specific application (Rost et al., 2024). A core finding is the differing emphasis between perseverance and passion. Employed students valued sustained effort, in line with Duckworth (2019), citing real-world adversity as formative. Unemployed peers leaned more on the belief that passion naturally fuels perseverance, reflecting a less tested ideal of motivation (Yengkopiong, 2025). This supports grit as a developmental trait shaped through challenge.

Students doing part-time jobs approached setbacks analytically, showing greater resilience and a growth mindset (Larson & Rusk, 2011). They used meta-cognitive strategies and showed adaptive responses, likely reinforced by job-related experiences. Their belief in effort over talent echoed the "grit over gift" framework (Duckworth, 2016), reinforced by workplace realities valuing reliability over raw ability. In contrast, unemployed students showed fixed mindsets, often attributing success to innate talent. Part-time employment also enhanced competence and autonomy, fulfilling

psychological needs defined in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan; Yengkopiong, 2025). Employed students showed higher self-reliance, motivation, and reframed academic setbacks as growth opportunities. These findings align with recent work on autonomy-supportive environments promoting motivation (Çelik, 2024).

Research supports grit as domain-specific and transferable (Rost et al., 2024), demonstrating that perseverance developed through job or work benefits academic contexts as well. The study offers practical implications: embedding real-world, task-oriented learning in schools, connecting academics to future goals, and explicitly promoting perseverance over innate talent to nurture student resilience and motivation. The take away is that the part-time employment appears to foster grit, motivation, and adaptive mindsets in grade 10 students, reinforcing the importance of real-world experiences in educational development.

Conclusion

This study highlighted notable differences in motivation and grit between employed and unemployed grade 10 students in Lahore. Employed students consistently showed stronger task completion, clarity of goal, perseverance, growth mindsets and adaptive responses to challenges, leading to higher academic motivation and resilience. The findings affirm that real-world experiences like part-time jobs foster both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and non-cognitive skills such as grit. This supports research showing grit's impact on academic achievement through variables like self-control and self-efficacy (Lee et al., 2024; Koç & Gökalp, 2023). As Rost et al. (2024) noted, grit's domain-specific nature means perseverance developed at work can transfer to academics, enhancing long-term goal pursuit. Congruent with Self-Determination Theory (Çelik, 2024), part-time employment does satisfy autonomy, psychological needs, competence, and responsibility, boosting students' resilience and engagement. To have real-world experience and experiential consequences for effort helps students reset and review the challenges they face as growth opportunities.

These findings offer implications for teachers, educators, and policymakers: integrating authentic, goal-driven tasks in curricula, teaching the value of perseverance, and supporting balanced part-time work can aid adolescent development across academic and social domains. .

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several key recommendations emerge for policymakers, educators, and parents to foster grit and motivation in adolescents:

- Schools should integrate projects that mirror workplace expectations, promoting task completion, accountability, and relevance—fostering responsibility and perseverance (Clark & Malecki, 2022).

- Teachers should link academic tasks to students' long-term goals to enhance motivation and purpose (Rost et al., 2024).

- Real-world experiential learning should be encouraged to build resilience and coping strategies (Larson & Rusk, 2011).

- Instruction should highlight the value of sustained effort over innate talent, encouraging a growth mindset (Duckworth et al., 2007).

- Parents and educators should help students see effort and failure as learning opportunities, reinforcing resilience and adaptive mindsets (Yengkopiong, 2025).

- Where suitable, students should be supported in pursuing part-time jobs to balance academic growth and real-life skill development (Rost et al., 2024).

- Researchers should account for grit's contextual nature and develop tools that capture its domain-specific expressions (Rost et al., 2024).

- Schools should cultivate environments that support autonomy, competence, and meaningful engagement to enhance motivation and self-regulation (Çelik, 2024).

Implementing these strategies can help create educational ecosystems that strengthen grit, motivation, and resilience—preparing students for academic success and real-world challenges.

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