

Achievement requires passion and grit

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To achieve your goals you need passion, grit and a positive mindset—or expressed another way, the belief that you'll succeed if you just keep at it.

But what's the connection between these factors, and what's the most important one? That, it turns out, depends on who you are.

A recent study has investigated the links between this particular combination of factors. Previous studies show that many factors play a role in achieving success. But the new research reveals that what is most important can vary between the sexes.

"We found big differences between the sexes in some areas," says Professor Hermundur Sigmundsson at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology's (NTNU) Department of Psychology.

Women and men have about the same degree of grit and positive [mindset](#). Men, however, have significantly higher scores on the [passion](#) factor.

For women, all the factors—passion, grit and a positive mindset—are closely intertwined. All three factors are quite strongly correlated with each other.

The researchers did not find this strong interconnectedness to the same degree in men.

Nor did they find a strong correlation between attitude and positive mindset. What they did find in men was a strong interaction between passion and grit.

"Men have to burn more for something to succeed at it. They need to be more passionate about what they undertake," says Sigmundsson.

The fact that passion is so important for men who want to achieve good results is an important finding that could prove useful for people involved in shaping the education of the future.

Sigmundsson and his research colleagues speculate whether this finding might be a reason why girls generally do better at school.

Boys apparently need to be more fervently enthusiastic about a topic for their grit to kick in. Perhaps this finding should impact how we educate, and can lead us to concentrate more on students' individual interests, strengths and resources. We may need to if we want to light the fire of more boys.

This doesn't mean that a positive mindset does not play any role for men. Mindset is an important underlying factor for everyone, and multiple factors come into play regardless of gender.

"But even though a positive mindset is a good starting point, it isn't enough. You also need focused training, passion, [grit](#), and support from others—like mentors, teachers and coaches," says Sigmundsson.

The survey was conducted in Iceland, with 146 young Icelanders participating.

More information: H. Sigmundsson et al, Passion, grit and mindset in young adults: Exploring the relationship and gender differences, *New Ideas in Psychology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.newideapsych.2020.100795](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2020.100795)

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