

Article

How Impactful Are Grit, I-Deals, and the Glass Ceiling on Subjective Career Success?

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Abstract: Due to the ever-changing organizational and societal conditions that make reliance on external definitions of success unworkable or undesirable, subjective career success has remained a critical topic in careers studies. Among the drivers of subjective career success, research has identified personality traits and job resources as essential sources. Grit, in the form of a personality trait, together with I-deals (job resource) and perceptions of employees' glass ceiling can provide new insights regarding factors, which can heighten employees' subjective career success. Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to investigate the direct and indirect effect of grit on each dimension of subjective career success via I-deals and perceptions of the glass ceiling. Surveys from 221 female security forces from both private and public sector in Oyo state, Nigeria, were collected and the data was analyzed using the smartPLS. The results showed that grit is positively related to I-deals, glass ceiling and career satisfaction, but not to happiness, psychological wellbeing, and work engagement. I-deals mediated the relationship between grit and subjective career success' dimensions, while the glass ceiling did not. This study was able to infer that personality trait (grit) has much to relate with how women perceive the existence of the glass ceiling in their organization.

Keywords: grit; I-deals; glass ceiling; subjective career success



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1. Introduction

According to some scholars, an employee who wants to achieve his/her goal successfully must possess a dispositional characteristic-grit [1]. With a passion for one's selected objective, the ability to self-regulate a wide variety of abstract goals far into the future remains the critical aspect of grit. In the same vein, Ref. [1] they stated that employees with a higher level of grit tend to be focused for a long time on activities, even when they are confronted with tests, hindrances, and harsh conditions.

Nevertheless, as a result of changes in demographics there are needs for employees to coordinate the pursuit of advancement in their career, their duties at work, and the responsibilities of being a parent [2,3]. Employees are employed based on the assumptions that the only responsibility attached to them is that of their official duty, and every other chore does not exist or has been handled by someone else [4]. This belief was born out of the conventional assumption of the breadwinner being male, while the female was just a "home maker" [5,6]. As such, this created difficulties for employees who regularly want to pursue their career, while simultaneously be a home maker [7].

Consequently, the development of I-deals was necessary. I-deals are personalized arrangements that give the receiver an opportunity to intensify responsibilities and career path [8]. For instance, individuals who were given the opportunity to negotiate their working conditions, were likely to have the privilege of attending trainings that would uplift their career, assign roles in-line with their career, or meet with mentors. As an example of organizational sponsorship, the development of I-deal proposes firstly that, to manage one's career proactively through career planning, positively relates to development

of I-deals; secondly, objective and subjective career success is positively affected by the development of I-deals by giving support and resources to the recipient for professional advancement, which other colleagues are not privileged to have.

However, since the increase in women's participation in the global labor market [9], it has become quite important to evaluate the career growth of women, since it follows inequality between supply and demand for higher posts, as shown in the literature [10,11]. In the Nigerian context, some of this disparity can be viewed as the conception of the sharia and customary law [12], traditions, early marriage for female children, and religion [13]. The supposed unseen barrier is expressed through a metaphor called the glass ceiling (GC). The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission made the term "glass ceiling" widely popular in a 1986 Wall Street Journal article portraying the unseen barriers that ladies encounter as they make way to the top of the corporate hierarchy [14]. As such, Ref. [15] stated that the glass ceiling applies to women in a work environment who are rewarded unreasonably small and have hindrances that keep them from getting superior positions. Consequently, Ref. [16] discovered that women made up nearly half of the workforce in the United States, but their representation decreases dramatically as one climbs the corporate ladder. Furthermore, Ref. [17] posed how women represent about 4.6 percent of CEOs in S&P 500 companies. The under-representation of women in executive roles can be attributed to two factors: (1) They are not being selected to the post of a CEO at the same rate as men, or (2) they do not remain in CEO positions for as long as men do.

Many qualitative studies have reported the perception of women about the GC [18,19]. These have helped scholars understand the model of glass ceiling beliefs [18,19]. Based on earlier studies on the glass ceiling and according to [20], the perception of women about the GC are classified into four different forms, which are: denial, resignation, acceptance, and resilience. The CPS is a means through which these beliefs can be measured, and scholars had established that these perceptions are associated with how successful women are [21]. The CPS represent the beliefs of women about the glass ceiling psychologically. In essence, it affects the female employees psychologically, and as such it determines how they cope with the barriers of the glass ceiling [22]. Moreover, the glass ceiling belief is built on both an optimistic and pessimistic reliance on the possibilities of women being able to climb up to higher echelons. Optimism involves resilience and denial, since they are based on the opinion that women can reach the upper echelon at their workplace, while the pessimism aspect involves resignation and acceptance, as they both hold that the gender inequality in the top management position may not experience a cessation or switch as a result of most female employees not having the vision to become a manager in their place of work [21,23,24].

Consequently, Ref. [25] opines that people's reaction is based on their credence and disposition in various circumstances. People's attitude towards anything is largely determined by their personality and beliefs [26]. Therefore, optimistic and pessimistic behavior in establishments is majorly formed by optimistic and pessimistic beliefs [27]. Among scholars, it is agreed that personality traits can lead to optimism and pessimism [28–30].

This study aims at addressing several loopholes in the research on glass ceiling literature. First, personality traits, such as grit [31] and glass ceiling belief [20], are the concepts which play an all-essential role when a woman wants to climb the echelon, which have yet to gain sufficient pragmatic attention. More so, a few studies on these concepts lay emphasis on the big five personality traits, Refs. [32,33] rather than grit. Personality trait and women's perception of the glass ceiling, as well as subjective career success research gap have been identified before [21,32,33], however, significant contributions in the area have not been provided. Putting this gap into perspective, Ref. [34] suggested that future steps should consider practices, mechanisms, and interventions modeled to improve grit and help people to become more in touch with their own organismic valuing process, perhaps by making sure important resources (I-deals) and self-relevance (grit) are put into proper consideration. Consequently, Ref. [35] suggested that, for the purpose of generalizing the result of their study (glass ceiling beliefs), a similar study should be conducted in

sectors, which are considered “male-dominated”. As such, this study contributes to the literature by collecting data from security forces in Nigeria. The sample of this study has been carefully selected.

These discussed research gaps are addressed in the current study, and aim to test the following, as depicted in Figure 1:

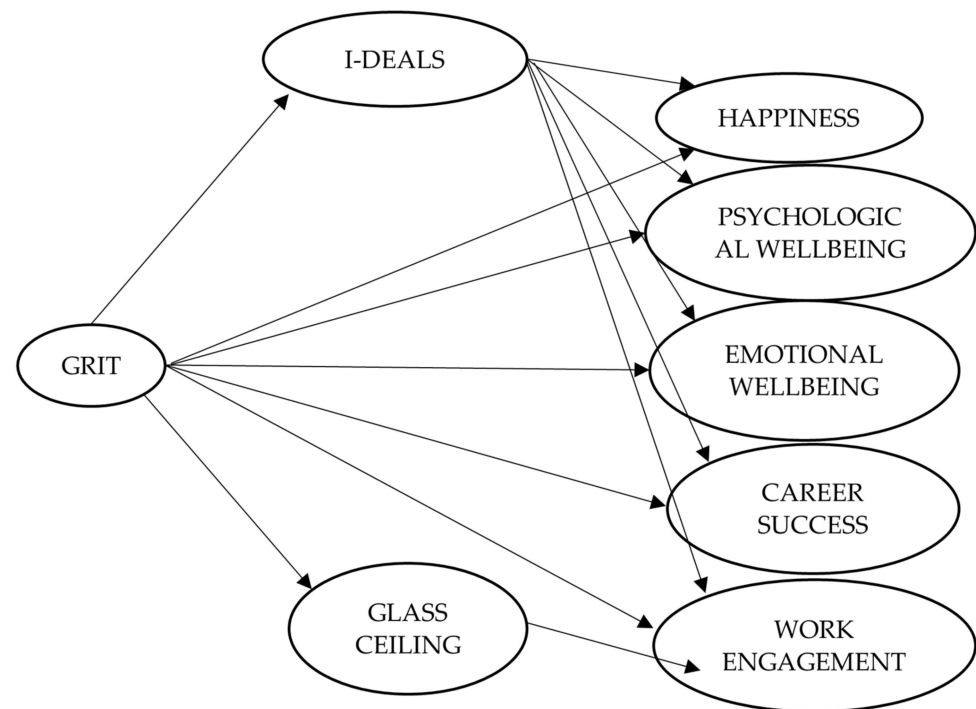


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

- (1) The impact of grit on women’s glass ceiling beliefs
- (2) The impact of grit on I-deals
- (3) The relationship between grit and career success
- (4) The mediating role of I-deals and glass ceiling belief between grit and subjective career success

2. Theoretical Framework

The study model examines the correlation between grit and subjective career success mediated by I-deals and the glass ceiling. It is proposed in this study that when employees display high levels of grit, they would become more optimistic, and when employees display less levels of grit, the more pessimistic they would be. The study also proposes that, in any organization, employees who have the privilege to negotiate the conditions or terms surrounding their work, will be happier and feel more fulfilled in their career than those who do not have such an opportunity.

2.1. Social Exchange Theory (SET) Theory

One of the most influential conceptual paradigms best used to understand workplace behavior is social exchange theory. Diverse opinions on SET have arisen, and scholars conceded that SET includes a series of exchanges, which generates responsibilities [36]. Research, carried out mostly in management, focuses more on the expectancy of reciprocity; nonetheless, SET has outlined other rules aligned with exchange. An interdisciplinary review has stated what was earlier referred to as SET [37]. Therefore, reciprocity is said to be in three different types: (a) reciprocity as a transactional pattern of interdependent exchanges, (b) reciprocity as a folk belief, and (c) reciprocity as a moral norm. How-

ever, this study goes with the type (a), which is reciprocity as a transactional pattern of interdependent exchange.

Reciprocal mutuality brings about mutual transactions, where the behavior of an individual determines the feedback from the other person. If party A supplies a benefit, party B who is at the receiving end should ordinarily respond in kind [38]. Therefore, a plain bargain is not considered as a reciprocal exchange [39,40]. Instead, the actions of party A are largely dependent on the behavior of party B. As a result, cooperation is being encouraged and thereby reducing risk, since the two parties understand that they are dependent upon one another [41]. The process begins when one party makes a “move,” and the other responds affirmatively. Each resultant value can replicate its cycle once the process is started. Since the sequence is likely to be continuous, it would be tough to break it down into discrete steps.

2.2. Optimism and Pessimism Theory

How people perceive themselves and their surroundings, how they process information, and how they decide to act depending on the information they have, is largely influenced by their psychological trait of optimism and pessimism. Optimists have the inclination to trust that the future will be fortunate for them, while pessimists believe that bad events are likely to happen to them; consequently, pessimists act in ways that make them prepare for the worse. Thus, optimism and pessimism act as powerful mental filters that alter the perception of every individual about their worldview and affect how they react and adjust and adapt to new situations. How an employee can handle a stressful and difficult situation is highly dependent on how optimistic and pessimistic they are [42,43]. Thus, this study intends to exploit the role of the glass ceiling on subjective career success.

3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

3.1. Grit and Subjective Career Success, I-Deals, and Glass Ceiling

Many kinds of undertakings necessitate determination and endurance in order to attain long-term goals, and hence past research has found that grit is linked to a variety of positive outcomes, including well-being and satisfaction [44,45]. Grit is a motivating attitude characterized by passion and perseverance toward long-term goals [1]; it entails persevering for years or even decades in the pursuit of a goal, despite setbacks. The construct was developed mostly as a result of research into what distinguishes elite achievers and specialists from the rest. Employees with a high level of grit will have their attention on their vision, they are resolute, and are able to overcome hindrances in order to attain the set goals [46]. The literature on grit, as categorized into two different facets, which are-POE-perseverance of effort and COI- consistency of interest. POE- is an unceasing passion for chasing visions and overcoming obstacles, while COI- is a continued focus on goals [47]. The focus of grit is on highly rated goals i.e., the choice of a specific career or more attainment of self-set targeted goals compared to tiny tasks. Additionally, for an employee to display various levels of grit, it involves having the insight and self-control to stay focused and passionate about reaching one’s goal [48]. The foundation of the relationship between employee and employer is built on a positive initiation of behavior, which can be initiated by the organization (i.e., financial incentives or location flexibility) or the employee (i.e., specialized skill-grit). Therefore, one type of behavior often causes the other, thereby making it possible for the employee to attain success subjectively in their chosen career.

Scholars opined that achievement of career success is associated with personality traits [49,50]. Furthermore, as opined by [51], the attribute of grit, which shows a desire to succeed at a high level in one’s industry and a readiness to invest massive amounts of time and effort, appears as a common trait in many of the women leaders surveyed in their study. The nature of women and the disposition of people regarding them, has a high impact in their advancement to the upper echelon of their career [52]. Attainment of the echelon for women is dependent on how well they can display their masculine traits [53]. Therefore,

for organizations to formulate a long-term strategy for both men and women, they first must understand how career success is being influenced by personality [52]. Furthermore, Ref. [54] has specifically linked grit to success and bolstered that, in most instances, grit predicts job success better than cognitive ability; therefore, grit is a crucial component of success that permits people to handle difficult conditions.

Besides, Ref. [55] proposed that for employees to perform effectively both at their official duties and at home, both the employer and the employee must come to terms in the arrangement of work. Therefore, according to [56,57], firms have started to negotiate employment conditions with prospective employees to comfortably accommodate highly valued employees' demands and preferences, in order to counteract the effects of a fast-growing transactional labor market. Employees have various contributions to the organization in different ways, such as their special skills, personality, and understanding; consequently, employees who are aware of their valuable contributions to the organization may want to leverage off this opportunity by negotiating their terms of work to commensurate their value, thereby achieving success subjectively in their career. This can be justified with the social exchange theory. Furthermore, Ref. [58] posed that investing in I-deals with a pool of competent personnel can help firms become more efficient. Negotiation of I-deals can be in four different forms, while some employees may just negotiate one of its dimensions, others may negotiate the whole four features. Consequently, Ref. [59] indicated that employees' capacity to handle a new task and ascertain their readiness or fitness for higher responsibility can be analyzed by applying I-deals through developmental challenges.

Subsequently, Ref. [60] poses that there is a marginal progression of women to a specific level in the hierarchy of the organization before they are confronted with the cliff which aborted their vision of attaining the higher echelon; hence, women represent a minimal fraction at the managerial level when compared to their male counterpart as a result of a few factors ranging from cultural preconception, issues related to family, lack of opportunity to networks, and influences of the organization. According to [61], corporate women are disturbed as a result of subsist corporate norms and the inability to secure a reputable job and stated organizational norms and "women home-maker" as the main hindrance to their advancement of career. Therefore, this study proposes that:

Hypothesis 1. *Grit has a positive relationship with (1a) happiness, (1b) psychological wellbeing, (1c) career success, (1d) work engagement, and (1e) emotional wellbeing.*

Hypothesis 2. *Grit has a positive relationship with I-deals.*

Hypothesis 3. *Grit has a positive relationship with the glass ceiling.*

3.2. I-deals and Career Success

The transactional relationships between employees and organizations are becoming a more balanced condition gradually, whereby, employed individuals can freely bargain on any aspect of their working conditions [62]. Additionally, Ref. [63] termed this as idiosyncratic deals, or I-deals, which is an unstandardized, willing, and customized arrangement between the employer and each employee, in terms that are beneficial to both parties. I-deals are scarce organizational resources, which every employee competes highly for [64]. Rousseau and colleagues [56,63,65] proposed that I-deals are mostly used to inspire, lure, and keep an employee, and can be negotiated in many diverse resources. To back this perspective up, experimental research [66] has shown that compensation (extrinsic) and flexible work hours (intrinsic) are the two types of negotiations employees were involved in, and a successful negotiation can be associated with work dedication, creativity, and commitment. Furthermore, Ref. [67] posed that I-deals were being negotiated by employees for two main reasons, first: to be dynamic and systematic so to be able to climb to the higher echelon and secondly, to be able to resolve the imbalance of work hours [68].

In regards to the appropriate time for negotiation, I-deals can be bargained before (ex-ante) or after (ex-post) employment [63]. Negotiations before employment are offered based on qualifications and marketability of the prospective employee. Widely, these I-deals are ascribed to circumstances, (e.g., professionals). Employers tend to grant individuals with high knowledge and skill their desired employment terms to attract the employee. In contrast, negotiation completed by incumbent employees is based on an existing employer-employee relationship history. Though market dynamics, particularly monetary ones, may affect ex-post I-deals, there are possibilities that ex-post I-deals are attributed based on relationship. Ex-post I-deals, in other words, are more likely to express details about the intensity and height of the transactional connection between the employee and the employer [63]. As a result, this study is concentrating on ex-post I-deals, which are negotiated in four dimensions. They are when (schedule flexibility), where (location flexibility), why (financial incentives), and what (task and work responsibilities) individuals undertake at work [69].

Moreover, Ref. [70] found that the development of I-deals is positively related to subjective and objective measures of career success. In fact, Ref. [71] laid emphasis on the importance of favorable working conditions and social support, such that women can combine work and family roles. However, Ref. [51] argues that employers who have put in place flexible work conditions and policies to ensure a balance between work and life, as well as create pipelines which identify, develop, and promote women, have made major steps in retaining and enabling the rising of women into senior leadership roles. Therefore, Ref. [72] found that it is important for any healthy workplace to have their resilience plans based on the continuous development of adaptable and long-term personnel capacities. Thus, this study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 4. *I-deals are positively related to (4a) happiness, (4b) psychological wellbeing, (4c) career success, (4d) work engagement, and (4e) emotional wellbeing.*

3.3. Glass Ceiling and Subjective Career Success

According to [61], corporate women are dissatisfied with the current corporate norm and insufficient opportunities to secure a fulfilling job, citing “cultural norm” and “women-home maker” as the main barriers to their advancement. However, Ref. [73] noted that, even though women hold executive capacities in practically all spheres of life, it cannot be boldly stated that the glass ceiling has been broken in India since the dominance of society is still male. As a result, women are burdened with more domestic responsibilities, such as caring for their husbands, children, and in-laws, than they are with career growth, due to obstacles i.e., difference in culture, intimidation, gender prejudice, and a men’s club culture [74]. Therefore, leaders who are females are on a regular basis confronted with prejudice in their workplace compared with their male counterpart, which may result to an ethical issue when organizations start to evaluate the performance based on their personality or prejudice rather than their actual performance [75].

The Career Pathways Survey (CPS) [20] is an instrument of many factors, which quantitatively measures four sets of beliefs about glass ceilings: denial, resilience, acceptance and resignation. The CPS makes provisions for scores for four groups of beliefs about glass ceilings, and studies prove that these beliefs are notably associated with women’s career success [20] and can be further explained with the optimism and pessimism theory. As such, employees who are optimistic (denial and resilience), will see beyond the obstacles organizational culture is presenting to them and pursue happiness, satisfaction, physical and emotional well-being in their job and, therefore, be more determined to achieve success in their chosen career. However, employees who are pessimistic (acceptance and resignation), will not see the need or justification to confront the barriers or discrimination preventing them from reaching their set goals, and thereby put a halt to the pursuit of their career.

Denial is an optimistic belief of women about the glass ceiling, whereby believing that the problems women encounter when moving towards the top position in management

is not totally different from that of men [20]. Resilience is a positive attitude women have toward their career advancement, since they believe that even in the presence of obstacles they can fight for their right to promotion and career advancement [20]. Resignation is a negative perception of women's experiences with the glass ceiling, in which they believe they face more difficulties than males in progressing up the corporate ladder, and that there are numerous overwhelming reasons why it is difficult for them to break through [20]. Acceptance is another negative view of women's job advancement, in which they accept the glass ceiling due to family obligations [20]. As a result, the researchers hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5. *Glass ceiling is positively related to (5a) happiness, (5b) psychological wellbeing, (5c) career success, (5d) work engagement, and (5e) emotional wellbeing.*

3.4. The Mediating Role of I-Deals and Glass Ceiling

In I-deals negotiation, the two parties differ in choices, and individual negotiation makes it possible for a win-win situation whereby both parties receive a win situation [76]. Thus, I-deals are unique and not the same as giving a preferential treatment to an employee as a result of or unethical conduct, since I-deals are beneficial to both employees and employers [77]. Lastly, negotiation of I-deals can be in four different forms. While some employees may just negotiate on one aspect of it, others may negotiate on all the four aspects. Opportunities to increase employees' capacity and pursuit of professional development are thus the heart of these I-deals [78], such as personalized training or a new role that are approved for an individual but not for others. As a result, the rule of SET theory (reciprocity) is being fulfilled; the employees and the employers have a collaborating (win-win) situation. The literature on I-deals claims that development of I-deals has a good impact on people's careers [78]. However, Ref. [79] opined that it is of utmost importance to investigate if employees intentionally engage or undertake difficult and challenging tasks just to receive the attention of their direct supervisor, since I-deals are just being granted to employees who are highly talented.

Organizational barriers propelled institutions beyond a primary reliance on individual's work interaction as a result of impediment which individual acted upon [80]. For example, a form of structural norm has emerged in many corporate organizations as a result of widespread gender stereotyping, which deepens the double standard in terms of administrative policy and procedures, promoting the glass ceiling. In terms of individual barriers, women's self-esteem, self-efficacy, assertiveness, emotional stability, sense of perceived control, optimism, and predisposition for social relationships have all been demonstrated in varying degrees due to the aforementioned factors [81]. It is worth noting that women frequently must deal with the challenges of the various roles they play in the family and at work, and that they frequently must sacrifice a great deal, prioritizing family demands over work life, which slows down their career advancement [81]. The "gentleman's club," which is also promoted by the glass ceiling, poses a greater risk for women, given that their participation in the labor market is unequal in favor of their male counterparts, and the few women who are employed and have the necessary qualifications and experience represent a small segment of those in managerial positions [82]. Consequently, based on the optimism and pessimism theory, it is believed that employees' desires for career success can be lifted or diminished despite their level of grit. Therefore, the study proposes that:

Hypothesis 6. *I-deals mediates the relationship between grit and (6a) happiness, (6b) psychological wellbeing, (6c) career success, (6d) work engagement, and (6e) emotional wellbeing.*

Hypothesis 7. *The glass ceiling mediates the relationship between grit and (7a) happiness, (7b) psychological wellbeing, (7c) career success, (7d) work engagement, and (7e) emotional wellbeing.*

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Participants

For this study, participants were security personnel drawn from five different security outlets, both public and private sector, in Oyo state, Nigeria. Using the online google form, data were collected from 221 participants.

Since participants were selected based on their willingness to take part and their availability, convenient sampling method was employed for this study.

4.2. Measures

The following measures were adapted for the study:

In measuring grit, measures from [1] were adopted and it was measured with two core dimensions: consistence of interest and perseverance of effort, each having six questions and the response scale for both were five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me).

I-deals was measured adopting scale from [69] and it was identified with four core dimensions. Six questions were used to measure task and work responsibility, three items to measure schedule flexibility, two items to measure location flexibility, and five items were used to measure financial incentives. All the core dimensions were responded to on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Denial, resilience, resignation, and acceptance were the four main dimensions used to measure career pathway developed by [20]. Each of the questions were responded to on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). They had 10, 11, 10, and 7 items, respectively.

Subjective career success was measured using happiness and was adopted from [83] having four questions on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (not very happy person) to 7 (a very happy person). UWES-9 was used to measure the work engagement [84]. The nine questions were responded to on a six-point Likert scale (0-never to 6-always). Emotion and psychological wellbeing were measure on a five-point Likert scale of 1 (not all the time) to 5 (all the time) and was adopted from [85] with each having three items each. And finally, career satisfaction was measured using five items with five-point Likert scale adopted from [86].

4.3. Data Analysis

The study made use of the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for the analyses. SmartPLS 3 [87] was used to assess the psychometric properties of the measurement model and to test the structural mode using a two-step approach [88]. This structural equation modeling technique has several benefits [89] that have led to its increased use in management research [90–92]. This strategy was adopted since the path model includes three formative constructs [93] and PLS-SEM provides an opportunity to explore relationships among variables and identify the existing pathways among the variables. As such, it is regarded as an appropriate tool for building the statistical model as well as prediction [94]. Further, PLS-SEM has greater statistical power and converges quickly handling much larger and complex models. The study examined and represented the results using the recommendations suggested by [90,95].

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

All the 221 respondents for this study were females; 29.9% of them were single, 8.1% were divorced, and 62% were married. A total of 12.7% of the respondents were between 18–27 years of age, 37.1% were between 28–37 years of age, 33.9% were between the age of 38 and 47, 14.9% were 48–57 years of age. and just 1.4% of them were 58 years of age and above. Out of the 221 respondents, 1.4% of them had just the primary school certificate, 6.3% were secondary school graduates, and 61.1% were university graduates, while just 31.2% were either master's degree holders or PhD degree holders. The number of years worked in

their various organizations varied: 8.6% worked for about 1–5 years, 43% worked between 6–10 years, 29% worked for 11–15 years, 14.5% worked for 16–20 years, and 4.5% worked more than 20 years. About 33.9% of the respondents had no child, 28.5% had between 1–2 children, 29.4% had 3–4 children, and 8.1% had 5–6 children.

5.2. Measurement Model Analysis

While PLS-SEM may not offer the same goodness of fit metrics as covariance-based SEM, it did necessitate the establishment of reliability and validity before testing hypotheses. Average variance extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity (Table 1) were used to achieve this. As a result, the questionnaire psychometric qualities were evaluated by examining its reliability and validity.

Table 1. Construct reliability and Validity.

	C. Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
GC	0.903	0.926	0.904	0.707
Grit	0.954	0.958	0.954	0.775
HAPPI	0.752	0.83	0.788	0.566
I-DEALS	0.963	0.965	0.963	0.867
PSY	0.747	0.762	0.754	0.508
SATIS	0.959	0.96	0.959	0.823
WENG	0.941	0.942	0.941	0.668

Internal consistency was measured using the composite reliability scores and cronbach alpha [81]. Both scores were higher than the required threshold of 0.7, respectively [96,97]. The indicator reliability was assessed using factor loading. The construct emotion with three items and loadings less than 0.5 were removed. The loadings were clearly more than 0.5 when looking at the figures in Table 2. As a result, it may be argued that the model meets the requirement for reliability.

Table 2. Factor loadings.

	GC	Grit	HAPPI	I-DEALS	PSY	SATIS	WENG
G1		0.864					
G2		0.883					
G3		0.946					
G4		0.832					
G5		0.980					
G6		0.759					
ACCES	0.828						
DE	1.028						
RES	0.680						
RIS	0.789						
LOC				0.891			
SFLEX				0.902			
TWR				0.993			
FINA				0.933			
HAPP1			0.804				
HAPP2			0.887				
HAPP4			0.513				
PSY1					0.759		
PSY2					0.753		
PSY3					0.618		

Table 2. Cont.

	GC	Grit	HAPPI	I-DEALS	PSY	SATIS	WENG
SA1						0.859	
SA2						0.954	
SA3						0.876	
SA4						0.919	
SA5						0.925	
WE1							0.829
WE2							0.823
WE3							0.818
WE4							0.809
WE5							0.870
WE6							0.766
WE7							0.812
WE8							0.809

The discriminant validity was also tested through the Fornell-Larcker criterion [98]. The square root of each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) should be bigger than its association with other constructs. Table 3 revealed that the square root of AVE, as demonstrated along the diagonal of each latent variable, was higher than the correlation with the other latent variable, indicating that the discriminant validity was confirmed. Second, as proposed by [90] all elements reliably loaded into their respective constructs. Finally, as indicated in Table 3, all the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) values were less than 0.90 [99], indicating that this criterion was met. Discriminant validity was not a concern in general. All correlations are significant at $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, correlation and HTMT ratio.

	M	SD	GC	Grit	HAPPI	I-DEALS	PSY	SATIS	WENG
1. GC	4.316	0.896	0.841	0.333	0.233	0.600	0.321	0.278	0.079
2. Grit	13.221	3.276	0.334	0.880	0.117	0.257	0.271	0.248	0.079
3. HAPPI	4.738	1.624	−0.063	−0.080	0.752	0.259	0.367	0.377	0.704
4. I-DEALS	2.227	1.104	0.605	0.261	0.147	0.931	0.413	0.423	0.124
6. PSY	2.441	0.923	0.324	0.268	−0.345	0.399	0.713	0.129	0.339
7. SATIS	2.791	1.271	0.278	0.249	0.390	0.422	0.075	0.907	0.450
8. WENG	2.441	0.923	−0.021	−0.016	0.678	0.122	−0.340	0.451	0.817

Note: diagonal values in bold are square root of the AVEs; above the diagonal in italics are the HTMT ratio; M—mean, SD = standard deviation, GC = glass ceiling, PSY = psychological wellbeing; WENG = work engagement.

The study avoided possible response bias by not asking participants for any sensitive or personal information that could lead them to believe their identity had been revealed. The study used a procedural and statistical remedy to address the issue of common method bias (CMB), as advised by [100]. First, participants were promised that their replies would be used in an anonymous and confidential manner. Harman's single factor test has been challenged by certain researchers [101] for being inconsistent in producing accurate conclusions and lacking sensitivity in discovering common method variance in data. In this regard, Kock and colleague [102,103] suggested a full collinearity test for PLS-SEM as a comprehensive technique for generating all the model's latent constructs' variance inflation factors (VIFs). Collinearity (or multicollinearity) was typically thought of as a (predictor-predictor) phenomena in which two or more predictors measure the same underlying—or a component of such—construct, referred to as 'vertical' collinearity by Kock and colleagues. The 'lateral' collinearity [102,103] was a predictor-criterion phenomena involving at least one predictor and a criterion variable that can affect multivariate analyses findings in general, and PLS-SEM results. When predictor(s) and criterion variables are collected from the same source, the effect of lateral collinearity may arise from social desirability and/or consistency inclinations, as well as a refusal to divulge sensitive information [100]. In this

situation, the coefficient of association between the predictor and criterion variables would be artificially high and statistically significant, leading to erroneous conclusions. As a result, Kock and colleague proposed testing such collinearity by creating VIFs for all the model's latent variables; the presence of a VIF exceeding a 3.3 threshold would indicate pathological collinearity, and thus that the model could be polluted by common method bias [102]. All VIFs in this investigation were below the suggested edge, indicating that CMB was unlikely to represent a challenge to the proposed model. Previous empirical research [104,105] used a similar approach to assess the risk of common method bias.

5.3. Structural Model

The Consistent Partial Least Square (PLSc) algorithm was used to find the beta coefficients for direct paths, the effect size of exogenous structures, and the coefficients of determination for the structural model and hypotheses testing (R2). The study used a 95 percent confidence interval (CI) bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap with 5000 resamples to acquire the t-statistics and the corresponding *p*-value. The cross-validated redundancy index was used to calculate predictive relevance (Q2). As may be seen in Table 4, the Rsquare of GC, HAPPI, IDEAL, PSY, SATISFY, and WENG were, respectively, 0.111, 0.100, 0.068, 0.198, 0.207, and 0.078. The effect size (*f*²) of all the variables were small. Furthermore, the model exhibited predictive validity since all Q2 values were greater than 0, except for happy, which was less than 0 and indicated a lack of predictive relevance [88].

Table 4. Structural model results.

Construct	R2	Adj. R2	F2	Q2	VIF
GC	0.111	0.107	0.125	0.088	1.713
GRIT	-	-	-	-	1.140
HAPPI	0.100	0.083	0.005–0.058	−0.016	-
I-DEALS	0.068	0.064	0.073	0.048	1.592
PSY	0.198	0.183	0.003–0.075	0.040	-
SATISFY	0.207	0.192	0.000–0.116	0.042	-
WENG	0.078	0.061	0.000–0.028	0.025	-

5.4. Direct and Indirect Effect

The results of the study, as displayed in Table 5 below, shows that Hypothesis 1, which predicted that grit is positively related to subjective career success (1a) happiness, (1b) psychological wellbeing, (1c) career satisfaction and (1d) work engagement, is not all being supported. The result showed that grit had a negative, positive and negative but non-significant relationship with happiness, psychological wellbeing, and work engagement, respectively, with their path coefficient $\beta = (-0.069, 0.153, -0.005)$ and *p* vales = ($p \geq 0.05$), thereby not supporting H1a, b, and d. Grit was positively and significantly related to career satisfaction with path coefficient $\beta = 0.158$ ($p \leq 0.05$), as such H1c is being supported.

The results showed that grit has a positive significant relationship with I-deals ($\beta = 0.261$, $p \leq 0.05$), and glass ceiling ($\beta = 0.334$, $p \leq 0.05$), thereby supporting H2 and H3.

The result showed that I-deals have a positive significant relationship with happiness, with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.289$ ($p \leq 0.05$), supporting H4a, and the relationship between I-deals and psychological wellbeing is positive and significant with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.31$ ($p \leq 0.05$), supporting H4b. I-deals were positively and significantly related to career satisfaction with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.382$ ($p \leq 0.05$), as such H4c is supported, and the relationship between I-deals and work engagement was positively and significantly related with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.202$ ($p \leq .05$), thereby supporting H4d.

The result showed that GC has a negative non-significant relationship with happiness, with a path coefficient of $\beta = -0.176$ ($p \geq 0.05$), not supporting H5a, however, the relationship between GC and psychological wellbeing is positive but non-significant with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.069$ ($p \geq 0.05$), not supporting H5b. GC was positively but not significantly related to career satisfaction with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.012$ ($p \geq 0.05$), as

such H5c is not supported, while the relationship between GC and work engagement was negatively and non-significantly related with a path coefficient of $\beta = -0.095$ ($p \geq 0.05$), thereby not supporting H5d.

Hypothesis 6 was developed to test the mediation effect of I-deals between the relationship of grit and the core dimensions of subjective career. According to the analysis, if the 95 percent confidence interval (CI) does not include zero, it is assumed that mediation has occurred. As such, H6a, H6b, H6c, and H6d were supported.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that GC may mediate the relationship between grit and core dimensions of subjective career success. GC did not mediate the relationship between grit and happiness since the indirect effect straddled zero between the LLCI and the ULCI, as such H7a, H7b, H7c, and H7d were not supported.

Table 5. Shows the summary of the hypotheses testing.

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Value	Decision
Direct effect			
H1a: Grit has a positive relationship with happiness	−0.069	0.911	Not supported
H1b: Grit has a positive relationship with psychological wellbeing	0.153	1.746	Not supported
H1c: Grit has a positive relationship with career satisfaction	0.158	2.110	Supported
H1d: Grit has a positive relationship with work engagement	−0.005	0.069	Not supported
H2: Grit has a positive relationship with I-deals	0.261	3.716	Supported
H3: Grit has a positive relationship with the glass ceiling	0.334	6.045	Supported
H4a: I-deals has a positive relationship with happiness	0.289	3.363	Supported
H4b: I-deals has a positive relationship with psychological wellbeing	0.310	2.743	Supported
H4c: I-deals has a positive relationship with career satisfaction	0.382	4.339	Supported
H4d: I-deals has a positive relationship with work engagement	0.202	2.602	Supported
H5a: GC has a positive relationship with happiness	−0.176	1.835	Not supported
H5b: GC has a positive relationship with psychological wellbeing	0.069	0.563	Not supported
H5c: GC has a positive relationship with career satisfaction	0.012	0.151	Not supported
H5d: GC has a positive relationship with work engagement	−0.095	0.969	Not supported
Indirect effect			
H6a: I-deals mediate the relationship between grit and happiness	0.026	0.145	Supported
H6b: I-deals mediate the relationship between grit and PW	0.023	0.185	Supported
H6c: I-deals mediate the relationship between grit and CS	0.043	0.177	Supported
H6d: I-deals mediate the relationship between grit and WENG	0.012	0.110	Supported
H7a: GC mediate the relationship between grit and happiness	−0.141	0.001	Not supported
H7b: GC mediate the relationship between grit and PW	−0.060	0.107	Not supported
H7c: GC mediate the relationship between grit and CS	−0.050	0.059	Not supported
H7d: GC mediate the relationship between grit and WENG	−0.113	0.026	Not supported

6. Discussion

The study proposed that the relationship between employees' grit and subjective career success is mediated by I-deals and the glass ceiling. The construct grit has been recommended as a trait-like disposition, which can be used to brighten important subjective career results among individuals. Studies have shown that the employees who display high levels of grit (perseverance of effort and consistent of interest) are more likely to achieve career success. The findings of this study reveal that employees with high level of grit will be quite satisfied in his/her career. However, the study does not reveal that grit has any positive impact on happiness, psychological wellbeing, and work engagement. This is consistent with previous research [45,106,107]. This also is in accordance with [108] who opined that better use of skill is most common among employees with high levels of grit since they are not destabilized by any discouragement they may encounter in their place of work, and they are more determined to achieve a long-term goal. In addendum, Ref. [91] also found that personality traits, like grit, have been associated with gaining societal and economical yields

Furthermore, the result of the study indicates that grit is related with I-deals, which means that employees who display various level of grit will be able to negotiate the terms

surrounding the working conditions, which is in line with previous research [109]. The result also reviewed that the extent to which employee display his/her level of grit will determine their perception about glass ceiling. That is, if they persevere and are consistent in their pursuit of success, they will be in denial and resist any form of obstacle on their way to success. However, if they are not persistent and consistent, there is much tendency they may accept all the obstacles and resign from their job due to not being psychologically fit.

The study proposed that I-deals are related with all the core dimensions of subjective career success. The result reviews that when one is given the opportunity to arrange his/her working conditions, they are happy, psychologically fit, satisfied with their job and finally, work dedicated. However, the result of this study does not in any way indicate that the glass ceiling has any impact on subjective career success. As such, in the Nigerian security sector, women's perception of the glass ceiling does not relate with how successful they are in their job. Therefore, either being optimistic or pessimistic does not determine how satisfied or dedicated one will be to his/her work. This result is not consistent with previous research [21,110].

The study proposed that an individual who has high level of grit and is permitted to arrange his/her working conditions, will be subjectively successful in his/her career. The findings from the study supported this hypothesis meaning that if one is consistent in her effort and persistent in her interest and is also granted the opportunity to work on his or her conditions, will be successful in his or her carrier. Alternatively, the result from the study does not support the hypothesis that stated that an individual who has high level of grit and has an optimistic or pessimistic opinion about the glass ceiling will be successful or not. As such, the glass ceiling does not mediate the relationship between grit and subjective career success. High level of grit in an individual is sufficient to mold an individual into the behavior and attitude that will help in accomplishing his/her career goal [111]. Therefore, grit might be a sufficient resource needed to achieve subjective career success without necessarily being an optimistic or pessimistic individual.

6.1. Theoretical Contribution

This study adds to the theoretical literature on the glass ceiling and subjective career paths. The current study contributes to a better understanding of the core mechanisms behind women's personality features, perceptions of the glass ceiling, and subjective career success. To the best of the knowledge of the researcher, there are but a few studies that have tested the career pathway survey in the Nigerian context, and as proposed by [32], that studies should focus on women's personality traits [21], their perception of the glass ceiling, and career success, this study adds to the literature in the following ways:

Primarily, this study was able to infer that personality trait (grit) is related with how women perceive the existence of the glass ceiling (personal resource) in their organization, which is justifying [26], that people's personalities and beliefs shape their attitudes regarding something. This also is consistent with [28], who opined that personality traits can lead to optimism and pessimism [29,30]. This result can be explained with optimism and pessimism theory. Secondly, the analysis of this study revealed that grit (personality trait) and I-deals (job resource) can lead to a subjective career success. These findings are consistent with and can be interpreted considering social exchange theory. The results indicate that one mechanism, by which this erosion of the social exchange relationship occurs, is through seeking and successfully achieving negotiated I-Deals with one's employer. An employee with a high level of grit will be able to develop a successful career [63,112]. Therefore, employees who display various level of grit and consent to negotiate his/her working conditions will produce a mutual benefit for themselves and the organization.

6.2. Practical Implication

This investigation highlights the significance of job resources in facilitating subjective career success of an employee with a high level of grit. Thus, HR practitioners need to develop strategies and put into implementation the use of negotiated work schedules.

It is obvious that when employees are granted either or all of task work responsibility, schedule flexibility, location flexibility, and financial incentives they will find fulfillment in their career. When this arrangement is implemented, all employees should be given the opportunity to benefit from it, so as not to demotivate those that will be exempted. Furthermore, HR practitioners should help each employee to discover their personality as woman through regular training and to help them develop good communication skills. In addendum, the HR practitioners could incorporate in their recruitment process a training to help women understand and identify their perception about the glass ceiling. Furthermore, employees with a high level of grit should use the negotiation of I-deals as a chance to work out the conditions surrounding their work with their employer in order to restore the balance of social exchange relationship in organization [109]. Paying more attention to elderly workers who would like to negotiate their terms of working should be of utmost importance to the HR since it will be less costly for the organization and brings about a win-win situation in an employee-employer relationship [113].

6.3. Limitation of the Study and Future Research Avenues

Despite the procedural correction, the method employed in this study may still create a bias of common methods since it is a self-report. Data was collected in just one state in Nigeria out of the whole 36 states of the federal capital territory, which makes the result of this study not to be generalized.

This research could lead to several new research directions. To start with, interested researchers in replicating this study could consider differentiating the perception of men and women regarding the glass ceiling. Testing the two dimensions of grit and the four dimensions of the glass ceiling differently on the core dimensions of subjective career success will help to understand better which one has a higher impact. Grit can also be tested on negative outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion and work burnout [109]. Future researchers could examine if there would be any significant difference among the private and the public sector of security forces. Furthermore, future studies could combine the qualitative and the quantitative methods for a better understanding of this topic. This study could also be replicated in other sectors of the economy i.e., banks, higher institutions, and construction companies to determine if the perception of women and glass ceiling has any different effects. The result of this study reviews those perceptions of the glass ceiling do not contribute to subjective career success, and other studies could test other personality traits with subjective and objective career success.

7. Conclusions

This study shed light on the impact of grit, I-deals, and the glass ceiling in the context of subjective career success. This study provides significant advances to the understanding of these variables in addendum to the existing literature.

Studies have shown that the employees who display high levels of grit (perseverance of effort and consistent of interest) are more likely to achieve career success. The findings of this study reveal that employees with a high level of grit will be quite satisfied in his/her career. Furthermore, the result reviews that when one is given the opportunity to arrange his/her working conditions, they are happy, psychologically fit, satisfied with their job and finally, work dedicated. Therefore, employee who display various level of grit and consent to negotiate his/her working conditions will produce a mutual benefit for themselves and the organization. Furthermore, employees' personality will be responsible for their perception or their belief of glass ceiling, which will go a long way in determining how successful they will be in their chosen career. Therefore, female employees are encouraged to develop themselves by attending seminars and conferences that can help them discover their hidden self.

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