

Exploring Grit and Resilience among Young Adults

Sanchi Dhupar^{1*}, Prerna Goyal², Sanya Taneja³

ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed at exploring grit and resilience among young adults. For the purpose, a sample of 60 participants belonging to the age group of 18-25 years was taken. The participants were divided into two groups: high and low on the basis of scores obtained by them with respect to the construct of grit. Each group was assessed for their grit and resilience, quantitatively with the help of Short Grit Scale by Duckworth and Quinn (2009) and The Brief Resilience Scale by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher and Bernard (2008). The results of the study indicated that there was a significant level of correlation between the levels of grit and resilience among young adults ($r = .269, p < .05$). However, there was an insignificant impact of grit on resilience.

Keywords: *Grit, Resilience, Young Adults*

It is seen that being gritty is very tough as it involves perseverance and consistency of efforts. The challenges that come through with it and fighting those with resiliency are what make a person strong for the future. And for some individuals, maintaining grit over a prolonged period could be overwhelming, which in turn could result in stress and this might affect the person's ability to bounce back from such a situation. Hence, it would be interesting to explore the relationship between grit and resilience and also explore the effect that grit has on resilience.

Grit: Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews and Kelly (2007) described grit as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. More recently, it has been defined as the "tendency to sustain interest in an effort toward very long-term goals". Grit has also been described in terms of perseverance by other scholars (Eskreis-Winkler, Shulman, Beal & Duckworth, 2014). Grit has also been stated as "a passionate commitment to a single mission and an unwavering dedication to achieve that mission" (Tough, 2013). When pursuing long term goals, one has to be focused and clear minded about the ability to develop strategies to pursue these goals. The individual should be hopeful and should be interested in the goals which he/she is trying to attain. If there are failures or disappointments one should not be disheartened or give up. The quality of a gritty person is to keep on working no matter what comes in their way. As Duckworth et al. (2007) highlights, 'grit entails working strenuously toward challenges,

¹Counseling Psychologist, Delhi, India

²Counseling Psychologist, Delhi, India

³Psychologist, Delhi, India

*Corresponding Author

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maintaining effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress’.

So, it could be inferred that definitions of grit overall focuses on long-term persistence and maintenance of motivation during adversity (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). However, this trait may also evoke acute stress response to task performance challenges.

Correlates of Grit: It has been seen that grit correlates with cognitive and self-regulative processes that may confer resilience including positive control beliefs (Goodman, Disabato, Kashdan, & Machell, 2017); self-efficacy (Muenks, Yang, & Wigfield, 2018); self-control (Duckworth & Gross, 2014); processes supporting self-regulated learning including adaptive meta-cognitive strategies for planning, monitoring and regulating the learning process (Wolters & Hussain, 2015). And, grit is also related with academic productivity, engagement, motivation, achievement and performance (Hodge, Wright, & Bennett, 2017; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014; Pate et al., 2017; Kelly, Matthews & Bartone, 2014); amount of hours spent in studying (Cross, 2014) and learning strategies (Weisskirch, 2018).

It has been found out that there is a strong association that grit has with certain psychological outcomes, reinforcing the notion that grit is strongly related to well-being; happiness; satisfaction and a sense of belonging (Singh & Jha, 2008; Bowman, Hill, Denson, & Bronkema, 2015). Also, previous studies have linked grit with self-esteem (Weisskirch, 2018); a growth mindset (Duckworth et al., 2007; Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015); pursuing engagement and pleasure in life (Von Culin, Tsukayama & Duckworth, 2014); a higher mental health (Sharkey et al., 2018); emotional stability during stressful or negative life events (Blalock, Young, Kleiman, 2015); and a sense of meaning in life (Von Culin et al., 2014). It has also been seen that grit is associated with positive attitudes despite setbacks and failure (Lucas, Gratch, Cheng, & Marsella, 2015), and with low levels of ruminative processes (White et al., 2017).

Grit has also been negatively correlated with stress and symptoms of depression (Goodman et al., 2017; Sharkey et al., 2017; Kannangara et al., 2018); lower levels of brooding and reflective rumination (White et al, 2017).

Resilience: Resilience is described as the ability to bounce back from stressful situations. The root for English word “resilience” is that the word “resile,” which suggests “to bounce or spring back” from re- “back” + salire- “to jump, leap” (Agnes, 2010). It has also been defined as resistance to illness, adaptation, and thriving, the ability to bounce back or recover from stress is closest to its original meaning (Smith et al. 2008). According to Wagnild and Young (1993), resilience connotes ‘emotional stamina’. It has also been said that it is the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium and to have a stable physical and psychological functioning. It has also been studied that broaden-and-build theory by Frederickson (1998) indicates that positive emotions enhance one’s thought repertoires and widening the coping mechanisms of an individual. Hence, coping and resilience go hand in hand, as coping encompasses skills responsive to stress and resilience in applying these skills to work.

Correlates of Resilience: Resilience showed significant correlation with positive mental health indicators, such as life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Haddadi & Besharat, 2010; Vitale, 2010; Satıcı, 2016; Tomyň & Weinberg, 2016). Anyan and Hjemdal (2016) indicated that resilience partially mediated the connection between stress, and symptoms of

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hysteria, and depression (Goldstein et al., 2013). According to many empirical studies, resilience is negatively correlated with indicators of mental ill-being, like depression, anxiety and negative emotions (Hu, Zhang & Wang, 2015)

A number of studies have tried to investigate the relationship between Grit and Resilience: Little research has examined the relation between grit and resilience as separate constructs. As it's suggested that resilience is a component of grit (Duckworth et al., 2007, Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). However, there are a couple of studies where these two variables have been studied as independent constructs.

For instance, Meyer et al. (2019) found that the inspection of the inter-factor correlations suggested that although resilience and grit scales are distinct, they have a tendency to correlate well. Notably, the relation between resilience and the persistent effort component of grit was found to be moderate. And, correlation was higher for the relation between the consistent interest component of grit and resilience among nursing students.

In another study, Gupta and Sudesh (2019) found that correlation analysis indicated that grit and self-regulation share a positive relationship with resilience among college football players.

In contrast, Hardeman (2016) found a negative correlation between resilience and grit and highlighted that higher levels of grit were significantly related with lower levels of resilience. Hardeman (2016) believed that this might be because grit is most frequently used as a predictor of achievement whereas resilience as a construct is much less goal oriented.

These findings appear to be counter-intuitive, leaving future research with the necessity to explore these constructs more closely. Therefore, it's essential to truly examine the relationship between grit and resilience as two separate constructs that are seemingly related.

Since, from the above presented review it's clear that there are only a couple of studies which have focused on the relationship between grit and resilience. And, since all of these studies attempted to study the correlation between the two variables, the main limitation of such studies is that the cause-and-effect relationship is difficult to be established in such cases. Hence, the present study attempts to bridge this gap as it aims to explore the correlation between the two variables and explore the impact of grit on resilience among young adults. For the purpose, the data was collected from 60 young adults, in order to understand whether or not grit has an impact on the resilience of the participants. And, based on the thrust of the present study, if a significant impact of grit is found on the ability of resilience, certain interventions could be formulated to enhance the levels of grit so that the ability to bounce back could in turn be enhanced.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is aimed at exploring the relationship between grit and resilience among young adults.

Participants: A sample of 60 participants belonging to the age-group of 18-25 years was taken. The participants belonged to the areas of Delhi and NCR.

Instruments: The following tools were used:

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- The Short Grit Scale.** Duckworth and Quinn’s (2009) 12-item Short Grit Scale was used to assess participants' level of grit. This scale includes two dimensions: perseverance of effort (e.g., “Setbacks don’t discourage me”) and consistency of interest (e.g., “My interests change from year to year”, reverse coded). It uses a 5-point Likert scale. To obtain a total score for each participant, the degree of endorsement to each statement will be added up and then divided by 12. The maximum score that one can maintain on this scale is 5, indicating that the person is extremely gritty, and the lowest score on this scale is 1, indicating that she/he is not at all gritty. The Grit Scale shows a consistent validity and has a Cronbach Alpha reliability score of 0.85.
- The Brief Resilience Scale.** The BRS (Smith et al., 2008) is a 6-item measure of resilience, focusing on the ability to recover from stress and adversity. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). A higher BRS mean score indicates high resilience amongst the respondents. BRS is a single factor scale. Half of the items are reversed scored to avoid social desirability response bias (Cronbach, 1950). The results for each sample revealed a one-factor solution accounting for 55– 67% of the variance (Samples 1–4 = 61%, 61%, 57%, 67%, respectively). The loadings ranged from .68-.91. Internal consistency was good, with Cronbach’s alpha ranging from .80–.91(Samples 1–4 = .84, .87, .80, .91, respectively).

Analysis

Data was collected and scored and descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean scores and standard deviation scores, along with Pearson correlation and t-test which will help us to investigate the relationship between grit and resilience.

RESULTS

Table 1: Showing correlation scores for levels of resilience and grit among young adults:

		Grit
Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.269**
	Significance	.037
	N	60

Note. ** $p < .05$.

Table 2: Showing Mean scores along with t-test for Grit and Resilience among young adults:

	Grit	N	Mean	t	Significance	Cohen’s d
Resilience	Low	35	3.0991	1.560	.124	0.4
	High	25	3.2996			

DISCUSSION

The present study was aimed at exploring the relationship between grit and resilience among young adults.

The sample consisted of 60 participants belonging to the age-group of 18-25 years. The participants were divided into two groups high and low on the basis of the scores obtained by them on the construct of grit. This study evaluated the participants on grit and resilience with the help of the 12 item short grit scale by Duckworth and Quinn (2009) and The Brief Resilience Scale by Smith et al. (2008).

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Duckworth and Quinn (2009) highlighted that grit overall focuses on long-term persistence and maintenance of motivation during adversity. It includes two dimensions: perseverance of effort and consistency of interest. So, a high level of grit indicates greater levels of endurance of efforts and uniformity of interest.

Smith et al. (2008) defined resilience as the resistance to illness, adaptation, and thriving. And, it was highlighted that the ability to bounce back or recover from stress is closest to its original meaning. So, a higher resilience is indicative of greater chances of the ability to bounce back from stressful situations.

Table 1, reveals that there is a significant positive correlation between levels of resilience and grit ($r = .269, p < .05$) among young adults. The findings of the present study are in with the previous literature, for instance, Gupta and Sudesh (2019) found that the correlation analysis indicated that grit shares a positive relationship with resilience among college football players. Also, Meyer et al. (2019) found that the inspection of the inter-factor correlations suggested that resilience and grit have a tendency to correlate well. Notably, they found out that relation between resilience and the persistent effort component of grit was found to be moderate. And, correlation was higher for the relation between the consistent interest component of grit and resilience among nursing students.

However, these findings appear contradictory to some other previous literature. For instance, Hardeman (2016) found a negative correlation between the two variables which showed that higher levels of grit were significantly associated with lower levels of resilience.

Table 2, reveals that there is no impact of grit on resilience ($t_{(58,1)} = 1.560, p > .05$). As, there is no significant level of difference found on the construct of resilience between the two groups divided on the basis of high and low grit scores obtained by the participants. Also, the effect size is calculated with the help of Cohen's d formula and it came out to be $d = 0.4$ and since the value of the effect size of Cohen's d is lower than 0.7, this is indicative of a lower effect size, which in turn indicates that there is less practicality value of the data due to smaller sample size.

Therefore, it can be concluded that these findings appear to be counter intuitive, leaving future research with the need to explore these constructs more closely, probably catering to a wider sample. So, it is essential to truly examine the relationship between grit and resilience as two separate constructs as they appear to be seemingly related.

CONCLUSION

Thus, from the present study it can be concluded that there was a significant positive correlation found between the constructs of grit and resilience. Although, there was an insignificant impact of grit on resilience. This indicates that perseverance of interest and consistency of effort components are positively correlated with the ability of being able to bounce from stressful situations. Nevertheless, these components don't seem to have a significant effect on this ability. However, in order for the results to be generalized to the larger population we need to take into consideration a larger sample size. Also, keeping in mind the present study, it would be interesting to replicate the results across diverse generations.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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