

## Grit and Locus of Control in Repeaters of Competitive Exams

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to determine grit and locus of control in repeaters of competitive exams. Grit is perseverance towards a long term goal whereas locus of control describes an individual's belief about the degree of control. Competitive exams are high-stakes tests, and passing them requires perseverance, resolve, and tenacity. This study tries to investigate the psychological elements that repeat test takers should consider in order to succeed. Understanding these elements could aid in the development of more practical strategies by individuals and educators. A sample of 105 participants (N= 70 female, N =35 males) were selected for the purposive sampling technique. Two questionnaires were used for the study: the 12 Item GRIT Scale developed by Angela Duckworth and Locus Of Control developed by Rotter consisting of 29 items. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation was used to study the data. The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between grit and locus of control. It was found that there is a negative correlation between grit and locus of control.

**Keywords:** *Grit, Locus of control, Repeaters of competitive exams*

Cognitive factors like grit and locus of control have been studied on various populations along with different variables. The concept of grit has become increasingly popular in the fields of personal development and education. Grit and its positive outcomes have been widely studied in the field of psychology. Grit has been connected to a variety of favourable consequences, such as academic performance, professional achievement, and general wellness. According to Duckworth (2007), grit is characterised by passion, perseverance, and a long-term goal-oriented mindset. These traits allow individuals to persist in the face of challenges, setbacks, and failures while maintaining a sense of direction and purpose. Locus of control is another important psychological concept that describes an individual's belief about the degree of control they have over their life events (Rotter, 1966). Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they have a high degree of control over what happens to them, while those with an external locus of control tend to believe that external factors play a larger role in shaping their life outcomes. In the current study, focus is on the repeaters of various competitive exams like NEET, NET, SLET, UPSC exams and various other competitive exams attempted in India. This study aims to investigate the relationship between two psychological traits, grit and locus of control, and their impact on individuals who are repeaters of competitive exams.

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Duckworth et al. (2007) posit that success in college and later life cannot be solely attributed to intellectual strength. They argue that personality traits such as perseverance, which they refer to as "trait-like perseverance," may also play a crucial role. To assess perseverance, Duckworth and colleagues developed the Grit Scale and Short Grit Scale (Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), self-report questionnaires designed to gauge behaviours associated with setting and pursuing goals and achieving objectives. The authors contend that success is contingent not only on a learner's aptitude but also on a combination of cognitive aptitude, character attributes such as grit, and deliberate practice. Hogan and Wong (2013) assert that gritty individuals persist longer and work harder, and are more likely to consciously engage in activities that enhance their performance or success. According to Duckworth et al. (2007), post-college graduates exhibit greater grit than other groups, while more educated individuals have greater tenacity. This suggests that persistence and diligence are critical factors for success, given that older individuals possess more life experience, endurance, and tenacity towards long-term goals. Duckworth and colleagues (2007) discovered that grit, a construct that signifies perseverance and passion for long-term goals, is linked to academic and professional achievement, regardless of one's IQ. While traditionally associated with traits necessary for military service and athletic success, grit is now being employed in academic settings, specifically in gauging how well students handle adversity and disappointment (Kitzrow, 2009; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014).

Various studies have explored the concept of locus of control and its impact on individuals' lives. Judge et al. (1997) identified four characteristics integral to the central notion of self-evaluation, including the locus of control. Rotter (1966) suggested that individuals with an internal locus of control exhibit a stronger drive to pursue their career goals in life. Findley and Cooper (1983) defined locus of control as an individual's perception of the degree of control they have over the occurrences in their life. Many studies have found that females exhibit a higher external locus of control than males (McGinnies et al., 1974; Zaidi & Mohsin, 2013), while younger people have less control over managing their lives (Ozmete, 2007).

Recent studies have examined the relationship between locus of control and other factors such as grit, positive thinking abilities, and academic stress. Çelik and Sariçam (2018) found that positive thinking abilities, internal academic locus of control, and external academic locus of control accounted for 50% of the variance in grit. Quing and Bauding (2021) reported that both grit and internal locus of control were negatively associated with academic stress. Furthermore, Lin et al. (2023) investigated the impact of depression and anger rumination on suicidality, as well as the moderating effects of grit and locus of control.

Other studies have examined the relationship between grit and academic success. Bazalais et al. (2016) found that prior academic performance was a significant predictor of college performance and success in the gateway physics course, while grit was not found to be a reliable indicator of academic success or course success. Devisakti and Ramayah (2021) reported that grit positively influences students' self-perceived performance and self-efficacy among postgraduate students using an e-learning platform. April et al. (2012) reported that individuals with a balanced locus of control expectancy achieved the highest level of happiness, which has significant implications for promoting happiness and well-being.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Objective***

To explore the relationship between GRIT and Locus of control in repeaters of competitive exams.

### ***Hypothesis***

**H0.1:** there is no significant relationship between GRIT and Locus of Control in repeaters of competitive exams.

### ***Research Design***

Correlational Design was used to find the relationship between GRIT and Locus of Control among repeaters in competitive exams.

### ***Sampling methods***

The population of the study were repeaters of competitive exams in India. A sample of 105 was selected for the study through convenience snowball technique. Purposive sampling was used to collect the data. Among them 70 were female and 35 were males. 65.7% attempted the competitive exam at least once and were preparing for the second time. 34.3% attempted the competitive exam more than once and were still reappearing. Among the participants 5 were repeaters of AFCAT exam, 1 KPTCL exam repeater, 32 UPSC, 35 NEET repeaters. There was 1 KAS, 2 SSC, 8 GATE repeaters, 1 KPSC, 9 JEE repeaters, 9 NET and 2 CAT repeaters.

### ***Inclusion criteria***

- Must have attempted any competitive exams of India at least once
- Must be reattempting the exams.

### ***Exclusion criteria***

- People who are not reappearing for the competitive exam.

### ***Operational Definition***

#### **Grit:**

Trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals.  
(Duckworth et al., 2007)

#### **Locus of Control:**

An individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life.  
(Rotter, 1966) 12 Item GRIT Scale by Angela Duckworth

The grit was assessed with the help of a 12-item scale developed by Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly. The 12 items of the grit scale were rated on a 5 point Likert scale and have a reverse scoring as well. High score indicates high score indicates extremely gritty and low score indicates not at all gritty. The grit scale possesses good reliability as the calculated value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.724. (Duckworth and Quinn. ,2009)

#### **Locus of Control by Rotter**

The Locus of Control Scale (LCS) is a 29-item questionnaire that measures an individual's level of internal-external control, in other words, the degree to which the individual interprets events as being a result of their own actions or external factors. The LCS is a forced choice questionnaire in that respondents must select a response choice that provides a

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specific answer to each item. For each item, the respondent must select the statement they agree with the most from an 'a' or 'b' option. High scores indicate external locus of control and low scores indicate internal locus of control. The split half reliability of the scale is between 0.65 and 0.79. Estimates for reliability via the split half method correlated by Spearman Brown formula are equal to 0.73 and test-retest samples six weeks apart are equal to 0.67. The test reported good discriminant validity. (Rotter, J. B.,1966).

### Data Collection

105 people were selected. Sample was obtained through purposive sampling. The questionnaire measuring GRIT and Locus of control along with self-prepared socio-demographic questions were administered via web based survey.

### Statistical Technique

The data obtained from 105 people repeating their competitive exams was processed in Microsoft Excel and the statistical analysis was done using IBM SPSS Statistics 21. The normality of the variables were examined. Pearson correlation was used for this study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The current study aims to assess the relationship between GRIT and Locus of control and also to assess the existence of an impact of GRIT on locus of control in repeaters of competitive exams.

**Table 1: Table 1 shows the correlation between GRIT and Locus of control in repeaters of competitive exams.**

Variables	n	M	SD	r	p
GRIT	105	3.235	0.550	-.352**	0.00
LOC	105	11.86	3.203	-.352**	0.00

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

*Note: \*\*p < 0.01*

Table1 shows the results from Pearson correlation. The mean value for GRIT is 3.235 with a SD value of 0.5502 with a pearson correlation coefficient “r” value of -0.352. The mean value of Locus of control is 11.86 with a SD value of 3.203 with a pearson correlation coefficient “r” value of -0.352. Therefore, p value is statistically significant indicating a significant negative correlation between grit and locus of control. Hence the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between GRIT and Locus of control is rejected.

## DISCUSSION

In the current study, results show that there is a negative correlation between grit and locus of control indicating that individuals with higher levels of GRIT have a more internal locus of control, and those with lower levels of GRIT have a more external locus of control. Çelik and Sariçam (2018) found a significant positive association between positive thinking abilities, internal academic locus of control, and grit. Furthermore, the study revealed that locus of control was a significant predictor of grit. These findings suggest that individuals with a more internal locus of control are more likely to have higher levels of grit. Similarly, Quing and Bauding (2021) reported a positive correlation between grit and internal locus of

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control, which suggests that individuals who believe they can control their outcomes are more likely to have higher levels of grit. This finding supports the current result that individuals with higher levels of grit have a more internal locus of control. However, in the study conducted by Lin and colleagues (2023) did not find a significant relationship between grit and locus of control in the context of suicidality. Instead, they found that grit and locus of control, along with depression and anger rumination, were more useful for distinguishing individuals with a history of suicidal ideation or attempts.

### CONCLUSION

This quantitative research study aimed to investigate the relationship between grit, locus of control in repeaters of competitive exams. The results of this research showed that there is a negative correlation between grit and locus of control in repeaters of competitive exams. This suggests that individuals who exhibit higher levels of grit tend to have an internal locus of control, which may contribute to their success in competitive exams.

This study has important implications for educators, students, and researchers in the field of academics. It highlights the importance of developing grit and an internal locus of control among students, particularly those who are giving multiple attempts for various competitive exams. It also provides insight into the factors that may contribute to success in competitive exams, which can be used to inform interventions and programs aimed at improving academic outcomes.

Overall, this study can help in further research on grit and locus of control in academic settings and highlights the importance of these factors in predicting academic performance. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms underlying the relationship between grit, locus of control, and academic performance and to determine interventions aimed at promoting these constructs among students.

### Limitations

The participants only belonged to two genders i.e., male and female. Delimitation of the study is that the sample belonged only from Karnataka. The study also excluded competitive exams written overseas by the Indian population. For future research, age related differences might be included. Specific competitive exam related differences with the same variables might be studied.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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