

A Correlational Analysis of Grit and Dimensions of Curiosity among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence marks a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, characterized by significant developmental changes. This study aimed to explore the relationship between Grit and dimensions of Curiosity among 100 young adults aged 18 to 25 from India. Using the Grit-S scale and Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale, significant correlations were found between Grit and sub-dimensions of Curiosity, including Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress Tolerance, Thrill Seeking, and Social Curiosity. The findings suggest that Grit and dimensions of Curiosity are positively correlated and Grit plays a crucial role in enhancing Curiosity, and both contribute to goal achievement among young adults. These results underscore the importance of fostering Grit and Curiosity in promoting resilience and proactive engagement in personal and academic pursuits.

Keywords: *Grit, Curiosity*

Grit is defined as a personality trait that involves persistence and a strong passion for achieving long-term goals. It includes working diligently to surmount obstacles and sustaining effort and interest over extended periods, even in the face of failures, difficulties, and stagnation in progress. Curiosity refers to the urge or desire to explore, observe, or acquire information, especially when the subject matter is new or intriguing (The American Psychological Association, 2019).

The Curiosity Drive Theory posits that curiosity arises from the desire to alleviate feelings of uncertainty or discomfort. When faced with unfamiliar or ambiguous situations, individuals are motivated to seek understanding and coherence in their thoughts. This theory suggests that curiosity drives exploratory behavior aimed at gathering information and knowledge about the unfamiliar, thereby restoring cognitive coherence. It distinguishes between primary and secondary drives of curiosity, attributing its emergence to both intrinsic needs and external stimuli. However, the theory does not account for curiosity in the absence of unfamiliar stimuli or situations (Litman, 2005).

Grit is considered as the tendency to sustain effort and interest toward long-term Goals. It is also defined as perseverance and passion for long-term Goals. Grit is how intensely at the

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moment one wants something or it is the ultimate concern about a Goal that gives meaning to it and organizes everything one does and it leads steadfast toward the Goal. Grit matters as much as talent and luck in the matter of long-term Goals and success (Duckworth, 2012), both positive affect and purpose commitment initially correlated with grit, only initial levels of purpose commitment predicted increased grit over a semester, suggesting that having a clear life direction may be more influential in fostering grit over time (Hill, Burrow, & Bronk, 2016).

Gritty is to have passion and perseverance about something, it does not necessarily mean getting engaged with equivalent passion and perseverance in all the possible pursuits. Focus on one thing means less focus on other things as it is within the limits of time and energy. Something which is pursued with the consistency of interest and effort means Gritty. Grit is more relevant to some Goals than other Goals as it predicts the achievement of Goals in a challenging and personal meaningful context. Grit is influenced by genes as well as by experience (Duckworth, 2012).

Grit refers to passion and perseverance; where passion is consistently remaining committed to long-term Goals for months and years, and perseverance is diligently working towards those Goals, despite obstacles and setbacks. Both tendencies have high achievers in intellectual and physical domains. Goal commitment and Goal striving correspond with passion and perseverance respectively; they are related and describe inclination towards the Goals. One must strive diligently to achieve a Goal and that boosts one devotion (Duckworth et al., 2021). Self-esteem and general learning strategies predicted consistency of interest, another component of grit. These findings suggest that grit among college students may evolve over their academic experiences, impacting their learning and achievement outcomes (Weisskirch, 2018).

Grit is found to be correlated with well-being; it was discovered that a Grittier person is more likely to have a balanced healthy emotional life. It is said that effort and talent lead to skills and when these skills are combined with the effort it generates achievements. Effort makes skill productive and builds skill. Interest is a desire to learn things, attempt novelty, explore the world, look for diversity and innovation, and acquire Goals in life through a fundamental drive. Grit is dependent on a specific type of hope. Hope is referred to have a better tomorrow than today. It carries this belief that our future can be improved by our efforts. The feeling of having a better tomorrow is different from choosing a better tomorrow and performing for it. The attribute to being a Gritty individual is due to perseverance and not due to chance (Duckworth, 2016), a positive relationship between grit and psychological well-being, with dimensions of grit predicting aspects of well-being significantly. This suggests that faculty members who exhibit grit may experience enhanced well-being through meaningful engagement in their work (Kumari & Tiwari, 2023).

Focusing on four specific ways that can help individuals to grow their Grit; where the first two steps talk about developing a fascination with a particular ability and improving the circumstantiality with this ability. The next step is to recall the purpose because a higher level of Grit is correlated with a higher level of purpose, and the final step is to acquire a growth mindset. Grit is more important than talent, as everyone has the potential to improve their perseverance to become a Gritty person. One needs to start being confident in acting rather than thinking about the incongruities (Duckworth, 2016), Grit, self-efficacy, and curiosity scores did not vary based on first-generation status or physician parent/relative status. However, intolerance of uncertainty scores differed by physician relatives and

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parents, with higher grit and self-efficacy associated with lower intolerance of uncertainty. Having a physician in the family was protective against higher intolerance of uncertainty (Jones, McCalla, & Beverly, 2023).

A study proposes a model integrating grit's psychological resources in nursing, emphasizing goal achievement amid COVID-19 uncertainty. It identifies sixteen attributes to strengthen grit, aiming to enhance nursing practice and professional development amidst demanding healthcare environments (Schimschal, Visentin, Kornhaber, & Cleary, 2022). The study identified common elements among Mental Toughness, Ego Resiliency (Optimal Regulation subscale), and Self-efficacy, grit, loading significantly on a unified factor termed Non-Cognitive Adaptive Resourcefulness (NCAR). This suggests these constructs contribute synergistically to resilience and effectiveness, supporting further research into NCAR's implications (Denovan, Dangnall, & Drinkwater, 2023). Psychological network analysis highlighted direct and equally strong connections between L2 grit and readiness for online learning dimensions, with a weaker link to autonomy. The results suggest practical implications for enhancing L2 grit in remote and hybrid language learning environments (Paradowski & Jelinska, 2023).

Curiosity is a potential psychological strength; it is about seeking experiences and information through self-directed behavior. Researchers say that according to theorists Curiosity is critical to achievement and human Learning; whereas empiricists say that the contribution of Curiosity towards the attainment of knowledge is highly independent of cognitive abilities (Kashdan et al., 2020). Curiosity is distinguished between the experiences of Curiosity which differ in emotional valence. The dimensions are Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress Tolerance, Thrill Seeking, Covert Social Curiosity, and Overt Social Curiosity. In the presence of Joyous Exploration, an individual feels a love for Learning, develops a fascination with places, activities, and things, and in return senses a high level of well-being. In deprivation Sensitivity, annoyance and discomfort are experienced until the information gap is resolved (Kashdan et al., 2020).

The degree of Curiosity depends on two cognitive judgments; individuals need to understand that the event is seeking attention and is interesting. Curiosity is initiated when a person notices the potential of the event. Curiosity will only be generated to explore the potentiality of a situation when a person is confident enough and believes that they can cope with the distress which comes with exploration. State Curiosity is when a person is curious at the moment and believes that a situation has coping and novelty potential. Trait Curiosity is when people are highly curious and endorse coping and novelty potential with highly intensified frequency (Kashdan et al., 2020).

Stress Tolerance is the tendency to manage the stress which arises while confronting something new. Some might even go further to the extent where one willingly takes risks in financial, social, and legal issues to gain new experiences. Thrill-seeking is where the events are intrinsically desirable, and the arousal is not reduced (Kashdan et al., 2020). The most effective way to gain information is to communicate and observe with other people, by doing so one gets access to unique philosophies, perspectives, skill sets, wisdom, and strengths. Recent studies say that observing people gain information is different than being curious about their thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Kashdan et al., 2020).

Overt social Curiosity is when one shows interest in other people's thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. Social Curiosity is acquired by talking to other people, such as socializing,

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planning future social gatherings, observing how people behave in social situations, and knowing people's preferences and interests. It is a normal inclination towards exploring the social life of people around us. Individual differences are found such as how much one acquires or desires unique and novel information about specific people. Covert Social is how indirectly through secretive or superstitious ways details about other people are acquired. It is the search for downward social comparison which functions to regulate self-esteem, it also explains the negative aspect of gossip. There always will be individual differences despite the strategies people use to learn about their social life (Kashdan et al., 2020).

Zyl et al., (2022) conducted research that studied the validity and reliability of the Grit scale and compared it across different nations such as the United States of America, Europe, and Hong Kong. This study mainly investigated the factorial validity, concurrent validity, and reliability of the Grit scale. The findings suggest that the scale holds strong reliability. The concurrent validity was established as there was a direct and positive correlation between task Performance and the three factors of Grit. Furthermore, it concluded that people from the United States of America showed higher levels of perseverance, and people from Hong Kong showed a lower level of perseverance and overall, Grit than people from Europe (van Zyl et al., 2022), findings showed that openness and agreeableness predicted climbing performance. Additionally, grit significantly predicted performance beyond the Five-Factor Model traits, indicating its distinct influence in high-risk sports like climbing, contrary to its often-assumed overlap with conscientiousness (Ionel, Ion, & Petra, 2023).

Billy et al., (2020) studied and found that the control task results in fluctuations in emotional experience and are partially explained by personality traits that are associated with disengagement and engagement (Curiosity, Grit, and boredom) rather than invoking a neutral state. A positive correlation was established between post-task boredom and external boredom proneness. Challenge/determination and joy were positively correlated with the Feeling of interest dimension in Curiosity and internal boredom proneness, whereas a negative correlation was established between joy and feeling of deprivation dimension of Curiosity. It was concluded that there is a positive correlation between interest and Grit (Sung et al., 2020), Curiosity, specifically thrill-seeking and deprivation sensitivity, emerged as stronger predictors of creative achievement across art and science domains compared to grit. These findings underscore the importance of curiosity over a narrow focus on consistency of interests in fostering creative success (Lin, Ivcevic, Kashdan, & Kaufman, 2024).

Grit and Curiosity are the two predictive characteristics of Career Decision Self Efficacy (CDSE), which can be described as dynamic qualities that manifest into a psychological state of arousal or tension. A positive correlation was found between Grit and Curiosity with the Career Decision Self Efficacy of students. An individual is prompted by these two characteristics for taking the initiative towards sorting out a state of tension that is related to career or unmet personal Goals, hence they experience a high level of confidence related to career decision-making (Vela et al., 2018), Character strengths such as Curiosity, Grit, gratitude, hope, and forgiveness were taken into consideration for determining the strength which would provide information on self-compassion. Results suggest that a positive association was established between self-compassion and all the variables of character strengths. Self-compassion which is affected by character strengths is comparable between similar-aged adults in both community-based and college settings (Booker & Perlin, 2021). Adaptability related primarily to wellbeing and emotions, perseverance to cognitive and behavioral aspects of learning, and curiosity acted as a bridge between emotional and

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behavioral factors. These findings highlight the critical role of these soft skills in shaping successful learning outcomes (Feraco, Sella, Meneghetti, & Cona, 2023).

Employee Performance is affected by independent behaviour. Employee Performance was significantly affected by Curiosity, where the direct effect path test results were not affected and were rejected for Goal achievement. It was found that employee Performance affects independent behaviour through Curiosity based on the indirect test results.

Curiosity mediated the independent behaviour of the employee's Performance, based on the comparison of indirect and direct effect values (Suma & Budi, 2021). In national standardized test Performance in the role of epistemic Curiosity, it was observed that Curiosity showed a direct relationship with all-over matriculation Performance (Tang & Salmela-Aro, 2021). The intervention enhanced growth Creativity Mindset (CM) and CSE, emphasizing the importance of fostering growth-oriented mindsets in educational games to promote creativity and self-efficacy among elementary school students (Yeh, Ting, & Chiang, 2023).

Akbag and Ummet (2017) observed that females showed higher levels of subjective well-being than male participants. It was concluded that satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), gender, and Grit act as meaningful predictors of subjective well-being in young adults. It is predicted that subjective well-being is stronger than gender and Grit, higher the basic psychological needs satisfaction, and higher the subjective well-being of young adults. A positive and significant correlation was found between Grit tendency and the three basic needs (Akbag & Ummet, 2017). The variables of the Curiosity scale: Gender, Age, and Level of Welfare showed significant differences. A positive correlation was found between course-leisure conflict scores and Curiosity variables. The course-leisure conflicts of participants were affected by the Curiosity level of the participants, and some of the variables differed in terms of course-leisure conflict and Curiosity level (ER et al., 2021).

Objective

To assess the relationship between Grit (Perseverance of Effort and Consistency of Interest) and various dimensions of Curiosity, including Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress Tolerance, Thrill Seeking, Covert Social Curiosity, and Overt Social Curiosity.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Grit (Perseverance of Effort and Consistency of Interest) and the various dimensions of Curiosity, including Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress Tolerance, Thrill Seeking, Covert Social Curiosity, and Overt Social Curiosity.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The present study was conducted among 100 young adults (aged 18–25 years) from India. Participants were selected using simple random sampling to ensure representation across gender, socio-economic status, and educational background. The sample comprised both male and female participants, with the majority being undergraduate or postgraduate students. Inclusion criteria required participants to be within the specified age range and willing to provide informed consent. Exclusion criteria included individuals with diagnosed psychiatric disorders or unwillingness to participate.

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Instruments

Two measures were used in this study,

1. **Grit Scale- 12 items (Duckworth et al., 2007):** The 12- point Grit Scale was developed and validated by Angela Duckworth et al. (2007) to assess Grit and the associate sub-constructs of Perseverance of Effort (PE) and Consistency of Interest (CI) for “adolescents and adults pursuing Goals in a variety of domains”. The 12-point has six items related to PE and CI. The CI and PE subscales are scores from items (2,3,5,7,8,11) and (1,4,6,9,10,12) respectively. Subscale scores are based on a 1-5 Likert scale. The total of the points for the 12 items is added together and divided by 12. A score of 5 represents the highest level of grit (i.e., extremely gritty), while a score of 1 indicates the lowest level of grit (i.e., not at all gritty).
2. **Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale Revised (5 DCR) (Kashdan et al., 2020):** Todd B. Kashdan (2020) developed The Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale-Revised (5 DCR) to assess the Curiosity of an individual through dimensions that are Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress tolerance, Thrill Seeking, Covert Social Curiosity, and Overt Social Curiosity. The 24-item scale has four items each for every dimension. The scores are based on a 1-7 Likert Scale. The average item for each dimension is computed and analysed separately (scores are reversed for Stress Tolerance items). A score of 7 is a maximum score (i.e., Completely describes me), while 1 is the lowest score (i.e., Does not describe me at all).

Procedure

Participants between the ages of 18 and 25 were invited to take part in the study. Before starting the main data collection, a pilot study with ten participants was conducted to ensure that the questionnaires were clear, understandable, and practical. Each participant received both verbal and written explanations about the study, including its purpose and assurances of confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they began. Permission to use the Grit-12 scale (Duckworth et al., 2007) and the Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale Revised – 5DCR (Kashdan et al., 2020) was obtained from the respective authors in advance. Participants then completed a set of assessments, which included a Demographic Performa, the Grit-12 scale, and the 5DCR scale. Each session lasted around 25 minutes and followed a consistent, standardized procedure.

A socio-economic and demographic (SED) questionnaire was also administered to collect relevant background information in an organized manner. Self-administered structured questionnaires were chosen as they allowed participants to respond confidentially and efficiently. The questionnaires were completed in a paper-pencil format under the supervision of the researcher, providing support whenever needed. Data from 100 participants were recorded and later analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS to generate meaningful insights.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data from a sample of 100 participants were recorded in an MS Excel 2019 spreadsheet and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0.1.1. A cross-sectional descriptive analysis was conducted on eligible participants, applying descriptive statistics to both discrete and continuous data. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum were derived from continuous data, while relative frequencies were calculated for discrete data. Inferential statistics, including the Pearson correlation test, were employed to examine the relationship between Grit and Curiosity.

RESULTS

Table 1. Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of demographic proforma variables of all the participants (N=100).

Variables	Categories (frequency, percentage) (f, %)	Mean (M)	SD
Gender	Male (38, 38%), Female (62, 62%)	1.62	0.48
Age (years)	18 (4, 4%), 19 (8, 8%), 20 (7, 7%), 21 (16, 16%), 22 (41, 41%), 23 (15, 15%), 24 (5, 5%), 25 (4, 4%)	21.67	1.55
Education	Bachelors (19, 19%), Masters (80, 80%), PhD (1, 1%)	1.82	0.41
Family	Nuclear (77, 77%), Joint (22, 22%), Extended (1, 1%)	1.24	0.45
Socio-Economic	Middle (92, 92%), Upper (8, 8%)	2.08	0.27
Residence	Hostel (57, 57%), Paying Guest (21, 21%), Local (22, 22%)	1.65	0.82

Table 1. summarizes the demographic details of the 100 participants. The sample included more females (62%) than males (38%). The average age was about 22 years, with most participants falling in the 21–22 age range. In terms of education, the majority were pursuing a master’s degree (80%), while fewer were bachelor’s (19%) or Ph.D. students (1%). Most participants came from nuclear families (77%) and reported belonging to the middle socio-economic group (92%). Regarding residence, more than half lived in hostels (57%), followed by locals (22%) and paying guests (21%).

Table 2. Mean and Standard deviation of the variables Grit, and Curiosity.

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Grit	38.63	6.35
Curiosity	114.19	14.42

Table 2. presents the mean and standard deviation values for four variables: Grit and Curiosity. The mean score for Grit is 38.63 with a standard deviation of 6.35. Curiosity has a mean score of 114.19 and a standard deviation of 14.42. These statistics provide a snapshot of the central tendency and variability within each variable, offering insights into their distribution and measurement characteristics in the study sample.

Table 3. Inferential statistical analysis of Pearson’s correlation shows the relationship between Grit and Curiosity.

Variables	Grit (r)	p-value
Curiosity	0.330**	< 0.001

Note. $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 3. indicates a significant positive relationship between Grit and Curiosity ($r = 0.330$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting that an increase in Curiosity is associated with an increase in Grit.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed a moderate, significant positive correlation between Grit and Curiosity ($r = 0.330$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that young adults who demonstrate higher perseverance of effort and consistency of interest also tend to score higher on various dimensions of Curiosity, including joyous exploration, deprivation sensitivity, stress tolerance, thrill seeking, covert social curiosity, and overt social curiosity. This suggests a meaningful interplay between determination and the desire to explore, learn, and engage with new experiences, particularly during this dynamic stage of life.

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As a result, the hypothesis is rejected. These results highlight that Grit and Curiosity may reinforce each other in young adults, with individuals who persist in their goals potentially more motivated to seek knowledge, embrace challenges, and engage socially and intellectually. While the study's correlational design does not allow for causal conclusions, the findings emphasize the importance of nurturing both traits in educational, professional, and personal development contexts. Future research could examine how specific facets of Grit relate to different dimensions of Curiosity in young adults to gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of this relationship.

Studies in line with the findings shows that there is a positive correlation between interest aspect of Curiosity and Grit (Sung et al., 2020), a correlation was found between Grit and Curiosity with the Career Decision Self Efficacy of students, concludes that an individual is prompted by these two characteristics for taking the initiative towards sorting out a state of tension that is related to career or unmet personal Goals, hence they experience a high level of confidence related to career decision-making (Vela et al., 2018), the potential of forgiveness and hope was enhanced by establishing relationship between character strengths: Grit, Curiosity, and Gratitude which are positively correlated with each other and self-compassion. The study investigated links between curiosity, gratitude, and life satisfaction in undergraduate students from a southeastern college, finding positive correlations between gratitude and curiosity, as well as gratitude and life satisfaction (Biber & Brandenburg, 2021). Grit positively influenced life satisfaction both directly and indirectly through its mediation by curiosity. This suggests that fostering traits like grit and curiosity could enhance overall well-being by promoting perseverance towards long-term goals and a proactive approach to learning and exploration (Maryam, Padhy, Pandey, & Hasna, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicated a significant association between Grit (Perseverance of effort and Consistency in interest) and various dimensions of Curiosity (Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress tolerance, Thrill Seeking, Covert Social Curiosity, and Overt Social Curiosity). These results suggest that Grit plays a pivotal role in enhancing Curiosity. Furthermore, both Grit and Curiosity were found to facilitate goal achievement among young adults, highlighting their combined importance in personal and academic pursuits. This underscores the potential benefits of cultivating Grit and Curiosity to foster resilience and proactive engagement in achieving long-term objectives.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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