

Studying Spirituality in the context of Grit and Resilience of College-going Young Adults

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Abstract: Resilience is bouncing back from any adversities that an individual may face in life, coming back stronger from that hardship and moving on to create a more meaningful life. Grit refers to the determination that an individual demonstrates in pursuing his long term goals. For an individual to demonstrate high grit and resilience, he should have a positive orientation in life with deep values and meaning through which they achieve meaning in life. It can be assumed that if the level of spirituality would be low, low grit as well as low resilience would also be observed. The paper aims to study the levels of spirituality, grit and resilience in college-going young adults and the existing relationship of spirituality with resilience and grit. Data was collected from college-going young adults and analyzed with the help of correlation. It was observed that resilience and spirituality have a significant positive correlation, also that grit and spirituality have a significant positive correlation.

Key Words: Resilience, grit, spirituality, young adults.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Spirituality is a personal belief which acts as a sieve through which a person perceives and experiences the world. It influences how he lives, how he reacts to stressful situations, how well and how quickly he recovers from emotional strain. It gives a sense of significance to life and may or may not include belief in a higher divine power. People with a spiritual orientation may view a variety of life's areas as sacred and, thus, seek help when they feel that their physical and emotional well-being is threatened.

People with spiritual inclinations live with the belief of purpose and glean hope from that belief even in adverse circumstances. Spiritual striving, aspiring to reach the sacred as a goal of life, has been found to correlate highest with well-being compared to other forms of striving (Wong, 1998; Mascaro, 2006). Spiritual striving can improve a sense of self and relationships and creates a connection to the transcendent.

People with a meaning mindset have been observed to demonstrate higher levels of positive affect and satisfaction with life (Chamberlain & Zika, 1992; King et al., 2006). A spiritual orientation has been associated with better mental health, can help increase self esteem, find meaning in life, improve family and special relationships, decrease drug and alcohol abuse and lead to less sexual promiscuity. Each person has an innate self-righting tendency' - a capacity for resilience – and this capacity is connected to one's true spiritual nature. Howell (2013) asserts spiritual people to be optimistic, compassionate, having higher self esteem, self-actualized and take time to reflect on their activities associating positive emotions with small pleasure.

Death of a loved one. A life changing illness. A crippling accident. Loss of job. Change of city. Change of school. An unexpected blow in personal life. Everybody faces some situation in his or her life that can cause heartache. These events may not be life-threatening but do cause emotional trauma which affects one's own life as well as that of those around him, associated with him.

Every individual reacts differently to a situation, every individual may react differently to similar situations at different times also. Many react to the smallest events in their life with uncertainty and heightened emotionality, whereas some others can be perceived to be responding marvellously in the face of a disaster of epic proportions. Why? What helps these individuals to deal with the stress efficiently and move on with their lives? What helps them to deal with the situation is resilience, an on-going process which helps them adapt well to adversity in life.

Resiliency can be understood as that process through which people overcome harsh conditions while creating a meaningful life for the self and for those around him. The word 'resilience' originates from the Latin word 'resilire' which literally translates to 'spring back'. Resilience, thus, can be understood to refer to an individual adapting his self to the various adversities in life, developing skills to deal with them efficiently, getting back up on one's feet after facing an adversity and moving on in life with renewed zeal.

Resilience was earlier thought to be a construct possessed by only a special few. As understanding and knowledge of the construct increased, it was comprehended that it is not something possessed by a special few; rather it is something possessed by many. Being resilient does not mean that this individual does not experience distress or face difficulty in his life. Instead, it indicates that the focus of this individual is more towards getting up and reaching

his goal rather than sitting and weeping over the milk spilt. Sadness, emotional pain is present in each individual who has experienced pain of any sort but what puts the resilient apart is the behaviour, the thoughts and the actions that motivate them to move past this disaster.

Grit has been defined as the ability to persevere for one's long term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). Previous researches have also suggested that success can be achieved only by those who have that innate ability (Gottfredson, 1997). According to Eisenberger (1992), perseverance is the ability of an individual to endure in the face of difficulties, risks and failures, which is conceptually similar to resilience as both involve overcoming adversity in some form. Duckworth et al. (2007) suggested that when other factors such as competitiveness, social status, etc are kept constant, grit is a strong predictor of success.

Various studies report a positive association between spirituality and aspects of psychological well-being and flourishing (Fabricatore, et al. 2000; Falb and Pargament, 2014; Rye et al. 2013). Personal spirituality (perceived as independent from religious beliefs and practices) has also been linked to satisfaction with life in adolescents, young adults (Marques et al. 2013; Kelley and Miller, 2007) and older adults (Cowlshaw et al. 2013; Lee et al. 2012; Piedmont 2009). In a sample of young college-going adults, spirituality and forgiveness also demonstrated a positive relationship (Powers et al. 2007). Spirituality was also found to correlate positively with other positive traits such as forgiveness, gratitude and empathy in a sample of older adults as reported by (Hardy et al., 2014; McCullough et al., 2002).

Wong et al. (2006) conducted a review of 20 studies to establish a link between spirituality and mental health and reported that 90% of the studies demonstrated a positive correlation between the two variables. This alliance was strongest among late adolescents and young adults. Spiritual well-being is also found to associate negatively to life stress and positively to psychological well-being and happiness in an adult sample (Rowold, 2011).

Researches (Dowling et al. 2004; Koenig 2009; Tuck and Anderson 2014) also report a positive relationship between spirituality and various aspects of psychological resiliencies. Gnanaprakash (2013) and Rahmawati (2014) have established a direct association between spiritual engagement and resilience shown against life stressors in a sample of healthy emerging adults.

Barton & Miller (2015) conducted an investigation to assess the relationship between spirituality and various positive traits such as forgiveness, gratitude, meaning, optimism, and grit. 83% of adolescents and young adults and 71 % of older adults were found to demonstrate an overlap in the level of personal spirituality and level of positive psychology traits.

A positive orientation towards life is expected when an individual demonstrates high grit and resilience. Being gritty and resilient would entail the individual searching for the meaning of his life, having set goals, unrelenting in achieving them in spite of any and all hindrances that may come in the way. It is expected that individuals who show high grit and resilience would also show high spirituality as such individuals also demonstrate a continuous striving towards perfection and diligence for his work.

Above mentioned researches have established a positive relationship between spirituality and various positive traits; however these researches are very few. Furthermore, studies establishing the relationship of spirituality with grit and resilience were found to be equally sparse. The researchers wish to assess the levels of spirituality, resilience and grit in young adults as well as establish the relationship of spirituality with grit and resilience.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the level of spirituality, resilience and grit of young adults.
- To study the relationship between spirituality and resilience.
- To study the relationship between spirituality and grit.

3. HYPOTHESES:

- There will be positive correlation between spirituality and resilience of young adults.
- There will be a positive correlation between spirituality and grit of young adults.

4. SAMPLE:

The sample consisted of 75 college-going young adults belonging to Bhopal city. The respondents belonged to upper middle socio-economic status and of the undergraduate level. Though the sample was not segregated on the basis of gender, randomly selected 32 females and 28 males participated in the study with an age range of 18 years to 23 years with a mean age of 20.4 years.

5. TOOLS:

- **Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Inventory (SISRI-24):** It was developed by King (2008). The scale consists of 24 items selected from an original 42 item pool designed to assess the level of spiritual intelligence in adult males and females. The respondents answer the items of the inventory on a five-point rating scale which indicated agreement of the subject as to how applicable was the situation described in the item. High

score on the scale indicates higher levels of spiritual intelligence. The range of scores on the scale varies from 0 to 96. The split-half reliability was found to be 0.91 and test-retest reliability was reported to be 0.89. The scale has been validated against various psychological measures and has been reported to portray significant construct, divergent and convergent validity (King, 2008).

- **Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC):** It has been developed by Connor & Davidson (2008) to assess the level of resilience of adults. The CD-RISC contains 25 items, all of which carry a 5-point range of responses: not true at all, rarely true, sometimes true, often true, and true nearly all of the time. The scale is rated based on the experiences of the subject over the past month. The total score ranges from 0–100, with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. Alpha reliability was observed as for factor 1, $\alpha=0.80$, factor 2, $\alpha=0.75$, factor 3, $\alpha=0.74$, factor 4, $\alpha=0.69$, and overall $\alpha=0.89$ in the present study.
- **Short Grit Scale:** The Grit Scale is constructed and standardized by Duckworth et al. (2007) and is designed to measure grit by assessing individuals on perseverance of efforts and consistency of interest. The original scale consisted of 27 items and was reduced to 17 items. The 17-item version was employed for the study. The response alternatives range on a 5-point Likert scale from 'not like me at all' to 'very much like me at all'. The scores range from 0 to 85 with high score indicating high levels of grit. The scale reports high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) ranging between 0.77 and 0.85 (Duckworth et al., 2007).

6. PROCEDURE:

A correlational research design was employed for which college going young adults of undergraduate level of a coeducational college of Bhopal city were approached and their cooperation was solicited. The questionnaires were administered in small groups of 6-8 subjects. While collecting the questionnaires back, it was ensured that all responses were marked and the subject had not missed out marking a response to any item. The obtained data was treated with the help of Pearson's Product Moment method of calculating the correlation coefficient through SPSS.

7. RESULTS:

The aim of the research was to assess the level of spirituality, resilience and grit of young college going adults as well as a preliminary attempt to establish the relationship of spirituality with grit and resilience. The following table presents the descriptive statistics for scores on spirituality, grit and resilience scales. Observing the mean scores, it can be understood that the sample presents with average to above average levels of the three variables.

Table 1 showing the descriptive statistics for scores on the SISRI – 24, Short Grit Scale and CD-RISC

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Spirituality	75	41.00	90.00	64.4933	11.00660
Grit	75	40.00	80.00	60.1333	9.36401
Resilience	75	45.00	94.00	68.6533	11.43193

To test the two hypotheses formulated, correlation was calculated through the Pearson Product Moment Method. The first hypothesis tested states that there will be a positive correlation between spirituality and resilience of young adults. The coefficient of correlation was found to be 0.69, hence the hypothesis is accepted. Table 2 presents the correlation coefficient of spirituality and resilience.

Table 2 showing the correlation coefficients of mean spirituality and resilience scores

		Spirituality	Resilience
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	1	.686**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	75	75

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The second hypothesis tested states that there will be a positive correlation between spirituality and grit of young adults. The correlation coefficient was found to be 0.64 which led to the second hypothesis being accepted. The correlation coefficient between mean spirituality and grit scores is shown in table 3.

Table 3 showing the correlation coefficients of mean spirituality and grit scores

		Spirituality	Grit
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	1	.642**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	75	75

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

8. DISCUSSION:

Today's youth is much more action-oriented and vocal; they stand up for what they believe in. The older generations used to follow the group-think diligently; they were guided by the values of their elders. Their decision making was majorly influenced by their elders; deferring to what the family or the society dictated as they did not have much autonomy, the reason why many traditional practices continued in the society for such a long time in spite of the educational prowess of the society.

However, the urban youth today does not let group-think prevail in all that they do: contrary to belief, it is not that they do not follow traditions and customs of the society; it is more that they do not let themselves be tied by traditions and are willing to move beyond the restricted ideologies and explore ideologies other than their own. The youth is more open-minded about embracing non-conventional issues and stand up for their own belief/attitudes/perceptions. In fact, they are seen to be so taken with their non-conventional thinking pattern, that many a times voicing an opinion contrary to theirs becomes an offence against them. To the extent that easily offended personality type is now being recognized by various psychologists.

There is a vast majority of the young population which is aware of the logical as well as illogical traditions of the society and voice their concern for the continued practice of the illogical ones. They have established a sense of meaning to their life which is not fixated just towards their own self but also focuses on the society. Many instances of the youth with six-figure monthly packages leaving their cushy foreign jobs and returning back to their fold, to give back to the society which is responsible for making them what they are, are coming to light (Katoch, 2017; OfficeChai, 2015; Pareek, 2014). Today's youth is going through a transit period; feeling their way through the differences between religiosity and spirituality pinned with the hope that they will bring about the necessary social reforms. They are being exposed to an abundance of stimuli and it is yet to be seen as to which end of the continuum they will move towards.

The generation

The same generation has had to start preparing for competitive exams 4-5 years ahead. For example, students of class VII and VIII start preparing for the IIT-JEE exam to be conducted after class XII. This is an exhibit of true grittiness where students pursue their goal of getting through the IIT-JEE exam for nearly 5-6 years relentlessly, many a times when it is not even their own goal. Rising unemployment and degrees becoming increasingly easy to obtain, the young adults have to strive harder to achieve their goals. Many youngsters have to taken to job-hopping to reach their goal in a much shorter time period, risk being something the current generation thrives on. The elder generation was rooted in stability – no matter if the salary was not good enough, institutional loyalty remained topmost. However, the present generation does not think along the same patterns. Their own goals remain most important for them; till the organisation is able to satisfy them, they continue with the organization; but any lucrative offer, and they are ready to move on.

Going hand in hand with being gritty comes being resilient also. An individual can't be resilient, if he is not gritty. Till he exhibits perseverance for his goals, he will not continue to strive for his goals in spite of obstacles. The minute any small obstacle arises, an individual who does not possess grit, will simply give up the goal and move on to the next, more easily achievable goal. If an individual does not show tenacity to achieve the goals he has set, he would not be able to face any hindrances head on and still forge ahead; he would not be able to decipher meaning from the experiences he is having and learn from those experiences.

The young population faces many more crises as compared to those faced by their elder counterparts during their youth. With the advent of the era of information technology, they are presented with various sources of information which present conflicting pieces of information at best. They are required to sift through all this information and take in that piece of information that is correct, helping them in the process of moving past obstacles (in the form of various bits of information) and developing resilience.

This innate ability of a human being to learn is essential for him to protect his self from outside influences also. Each individual strives to protect his 'ego' from any threat, whether it be from outside influences or from within the individual. The resilience that an individual demonstrates serves as a defense mechanism helping the ego 'bounce back' from the difficulties encountered. If the self is not able to deal with this situation, it results in various forms of psychopathological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, obsessive behavior, etc.

Very few studies have been reported investigating the relationship of grit and resilience with spirituality, in-depth research on a much larger sample would be required to establish the true nature of the relationship between the variables. Furthermore, the cause and effect relationship needs to be explored to help comprehend the nature of the relationship better so that targeting development of these traits at a young age can lead to a more contented and sorted out young population.

9. CONCLUSION:

Spirituality may help in reinforcing an individual's resilience and grit by helping him draw positive meaning from his experiences, promoting a sense of coherence and hope promoting a sense of meaning, well-being, self-acceptance and social support. However, spirituality can also decrease resilience and grit if it is associated with an external locus of control which may lead to a sense of dejection leading an individual to believe that lack of social support is due to his perceived shortcomings and fatalistic views of the self and of the world.

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