

# **Spirituality, Grit, and Resilience: A Study of Strength-Based Coping in Young Indian Adults**

<sup>1</sup>Anjali J. Nair & <sup>2</sup>Venkatram Narendra Puppala

Author emails:

<sup>1</sup>anjali.nair@cmr.edu.in

<sup>2</sup>venkatram.n@cmr.edu.in

Author Affiliations:

*School of Liberal Studies, CMR University*

Bangalore, India

## **Abstract**

With an increase in emotional pressures and academic demands, the psychological imbalance of young Indian adults is being intensified. The interrelationships among three psychological strengths of spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience were examined among 18- to 25-year-old individuals. Employing a quantitative correlational type of research, standardized measures were used-SPWB, Grit-S, and BRS. The data were collected online via Google Forms from a purposive sample of 100 young adults of India. Correlation analysis was done to understand the association between variables. Results revealed weak and statistically non-significant correlations among all three constructs, hinting that these traits could be independent of each other. The results thus provide an outline for strength-based youth developmental interventions within the culturally sensitive Indian context.

**Keywords:** *Spiritual well-being, grit, resilience, positive psychology, young adults, strength-based coping*

## **1. Introduction**

Emerging adulthood, usually set between the ages of 18 and 25, a broad developmental category,

is marked with heightened psychological, social, and emotional transitions; the process involves searching for identity, proceeding with tertiary education or employment, establishing long-term relationships, and gradually assuming full adult responsibilities. Moreover, these transitions-and the modifications thereof-in the Indian context are beset with certain unique sociocultural expectations, familial obligations, and academic pressures. Hence, as young individuals walk the tight rope amidst these multidimensional challenges, there arises an acute need to develop a sturdy internal coping mechanism.

Generally, mainstream psychology focused on tracking deficits and disorders. Yet, the shift to positive psychology has redirected interest toward human strengths and resources that facilitate flourishing, even under adversity. According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), positive psychology has been around for the fostering of well-being through the promotion of optimism, hope, grit, and meaning. Against this paradigm, our present study considers three cardinal psychological strengths- spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience among Indian youth and evaluates these in relation to adaptive functioning.

Spiritual well-being has, throughout time, been synonymous with the sacred; yet, they consider well-being spiritually, which is principally understood as the human experience of meaning, purpose, and connection. It encompasses both existential well-being (an individual's sense of purpose and fulfillment in life) and religious well-being (faith-based connectedness to a higher power), conceptualized by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982). Spirituality is intimately related in India to everyday life and customs; hence, in times of uncertainty, spiritual well-being may rather be promoted as a profound coping mechanism.

Grit, introduced by Duckworth et al. (2007), is passion and persistence for long-term goals. It is not just being hard-working; it is about working with persistence through obstacles for many years without losing motivation. According to many Western studies, grittiness has been found to predict success far beyond talent and intelligence. But its application and relevance in Indian societies, which are collectivistic and high-context, remain unexplored.

From Masten (2001) and Smith et al. (2008), one can understand that resilience implies the capacity to bounce back from bad experiences and the ability to adapt positively through major trauma or great stress. Resilient persons are those who maintain mental health when confronted with adverse life events, through the use of internal psychological strengths and external social support. The very competitive, fast pace of change throws Indian students and young professionals into an environment in which resilience may just be a question of survival for mental wellness and academic accomplishments.

While there has been some individual examination of these strengths previously, spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience working side by side have seldom been subjected to scientific investigation, specifically with regard to Indian youths. Since India is a collectivist culture where family, society, and spiritual values strongly influence one's development, it is imperative to comprehend how these strengths either compete against or complement each other in coping and adaptation.

Thus, the strength-based approach considers this investigation of relationships among spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience, with the hopes of filling a gap in the literature and contributing to culturally contextualized interventions that promote psychological resilience and long-term goal pursuit in young adults.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Jafari et al. (2010) had observed an effect of spiritual health and life satisfaction among 1,380 university students in Iran. Spiritual well-being was found to be an enduring predictor of general contentment and optimism, a finding that seemingly further validates your framework that relates spirituality to long-term adaptive virtues.

Yuen (2007) carried out a study with 100 university students in Hong Kong and found that spiritual well-being was related to self-acceptance, clarity of personal goals, and psychological flexibility. These and other factors so identified by Yuen partially correspond to grit and resilience

and are thus of some meaningful conceptual overlap with your integrated model.

Gupta & Sudhanshu (2019) examined grit and academic performance in 150 undergraduate students in India, revealing students with higher grit scores consistently showing better time management, lesser exam anxiety, and stronger goal orientation. This Indian-based study holds high relevance to your population and validates grit use as a psychological strength.

Tomaszek & Muchacka-Cymerman (2020) had studied the moderating role of grit on emotional distress during exam periods in a population of 234 Polish university students. The research found that individuals who were high in grit were less emotionally reactive and showed endurance when put under pressure. This supports the overlap between grit and emotional resilience.

Li, Eschenauer, & Persaud (2010) surveyed a sample of 160 American college students and yielded results supporting that students with high resilience levels adjust better to university life and experience less feelings of isolation. This directly supports your concentration on Indian college students undergoing similar transitions.

Rajkumar (2020) explored psychological resilience in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic on a sample of 230 Indian participants. The results indicated that resilience moderated the effect of anxiety and loss of social connection, further emphasizing the importance of such in times of crisis-thus very relevant to the student cohorts in question now.

## **2.1 Research Gaps**

Prior Western research extensively has studied grit, spirituality, and resilience so these questions would flourish, but few have studied their interrelationship in culturally embedded loci such as India. Also, the majority of past studies have dealt with these constructs singularly. The current study seeks to:

- Explore how spiritual orientation carries with it perseverance and adaptability.
- See if resilience is strengthened by spiritual well-being and grit.
- Consider this interaction among Indian youth in a culturally relevant,

strengths-based perspective.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between spiritual well-being and grit in young adults?  
What is the relationship between spiritual well-being and resilience in young adults?
2. What is the relationship between grit and resilience in young adults?
3. Are there any significant relationships between grit, resilience, and spiritual well-being?

#### **3.2 Objectives**

1. To explore the relationship between spiritual well-being and grit among young adults.
2. To explore the relationship between spiritual well-being and resilience among young adults.
3. To explore the relationship between grit and resilience among young adults.
4. To study the interrelationship between all three variables: spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience.

#### **3.3. Hypothesis**

H1: Spiritually well-being is significantly positively correlated with grit.

H2: Spiritually well-being is significantly positively correlated with resilience.

H3: Grit is significantly positively correlated with resilience.

H4: There exists an interrelationship between spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience.

#### **3.4 Research Design**

A descriptive and correlational design was employed. Quantitative methods enable the checking of psychological variables and their interrelations. The Pearson correlation was mainly used due to

instances of continuous variables and to find the strengths and directions of relations between the variables.

### **3.5 Participants**

It was a 100-sample study, where participants were aged 18-25 and were recruited by means of convenience sampling through online platforms. Participation was voluntary and anonymous under protocols of informed consent.

### **3.6 Tools Used**

Three standardized psychological tests were used to extract quantitative data in line with the study's objectives and research questions. Each was chosen due to its psychometric soundness and clinical relevance in assessing one strength-based psychological construct in young adults-spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience. The tools were described as follows:

#### **1. Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS):**

The SWBS, developed initially by Paloutzian and Ellison in 1982, is a 20-item instrument measuring the spiritual health of two central dimensions: religious well-being (a person's relationship with a higher power) and existential well-being (life meaning and a sense of purposeful existence). In each statement about 1 to 6, a respondent chooses an option of the 6-point Likert scale: 1 for "strongly disagree" and 6 for "strongly agree". The total score received from an individual ranges from 20 to 120. Higher scores are given for higher spiritual well-being. Sample items include, "I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in" and "I believe there is some real purpose for my life." This scale stood to examine whether those who reported a deeper spiritual orientation would have strong internal mechanisms like grit and resilience to cope.

#### **2. Short Grit Scale (Grit-S):**

An 8-item instrument, the Short Grit Scale, or Grit-S, created by Duckworth and Quinn (2009),

measures 2 components of grit-perseverance of effort and consistency of interest through time. The range on a Likert scale of 5 points is such that 1 denotes "not at all like me," and 5 states, "very much like me." Total scores range from 8 to 40: higher scores indicate greater amounts of grit. Item statements included "I am a hard worker" and "I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete" (reverse-scored). The core objective of this instrument for the Indian young adults was to assess how perseverance and motivation permeate their lives and whether it relates with spiritual grounding and resilience.

### **3. The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS):**

Smith et al. (2008) carried out the development of the BRS in measuring resilience as the ability to bounce back from stress. The brief resilience scale thus contains six items. All the items are rated on a Likert scale of 5, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The average of the item responses gives an overall score; higher scores are indicative of greater resilience. Items include sentiments such as "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times" and "I have a hard time making it through stressful events" (the latter being a reverse score). The scale measured very well the independent variables of adaptability concerning adversity and how these relate to self-perception of spirituality and long-term goal pursuit.

The ensemble of these instruments gave a complete quantitative picture of strength-based coping abilities in young Indian adults, enabling a correlational study about how spiritual meaning, perseverance, and emotional recovery may independently or together support psychological well-being.

### **4. Results**

The attainment of elucidating interrelations between spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience amongst youth falling within the age bracket of 18-25 has been accentuated in this research. Measurements and tests were administered at length with proper standardization. An inferential and descriptive analysis was pursued using SPSS with the objective of looking for general trends and associations between variables. Parametric Pearson correlation was set out to test null

hypotheses and to address questions that laid stated research directions.

**Table 1:** *Descriptive Statistics*

Variable		Mean Standard Deviation (SD) Interpretation
Spiritual Well-Being	69.32	8.06 Moderate spiritual well-being
Grit	2.93	0.47 Moderate grit levels

Resilience 2.96 0.57 Moderate resilience levels

Descriptive statistics illustrate the mean levels of spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience reported amongst study participants. The mean score on the Spiritual-Well Being Scale (SWBS) was 69.32 (SD=8.06), which suggested moderate levels of religious and existential well-being in this sample. Scores on grit given by the Short Grit Scale indicated an average score of 2.93 (SD=0.47), which suggests a moderate tendency for perseverance and sustained interest toward long-term goals. Average resilience scores on the BRS and ability to bounce back from great challenges and adversities were given as 2.96 (SD=0.57).

The outline shows that existence is reported at levels of average strength or above strength for the three pillars considered paramount toward adaptive functioning in emerging adulthood.

**Table 2:** *Correlation Analysis*

Pearson correlation showed non-significant results across all variable pairs:

Variable Pair	Correlation Coefficient p-value (r)	Significance
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Spiritual Well-Being & Grit	0.054 .593	Not significant
Spiritual Well-Being & Resilience	0.084 .407	Not significant
Grit & Resilience	0.125 .217	Not significant

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationship between psychological variables. The results indicated weak and non-significant correlations:

These results suggest that spiritual strength, perseverance, and emotional recovery are really separate entities in this sample, contrary to those that consider them interlinked in a strength-based coping model. Unlike many Western studies done before, where these traits were found interconnected, an alternate explanation may lie in the Indian cultural perspective, such as socio-religious norms or academic stressors, that inhibits these traits from working in a synergistic manner.

**Table3:** *Gender Comparison*

Variable	Gender	Observation
Spiritual Well-Being	Female	Slightly higher reported scores
Grit	Male	Marginally higher reported scores
Resilience	Male	Marginally higher reported scores

While t-tests and the like were not run to explore gender differences, the results were examined descriptively. Women reported slightly higher levels of spiritual well-being, perhaps implying

some gender differences in the expression of spirituality or socialization processes. Males scored slightly higher in grit and resilience, which could be culturally conditioned expectations for toughness or performance under pressure.

These trends, although not tested statistically, give some points of consideration to existing or future gender based interventions or analyses within strength-based psychology.

#### **4 Discussion**

The study sought to find out how young adults view spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience in relation to one another. A hundred subjects between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five participated in this study. From the key findings, it was revealed that the participants, in general, exhibited moderate levels of spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience based upon the descriptive statistics. The mean scores for spiritual well-being ( $M = 69.32$ ), grit ( $M = 2.93$ ), and resilience ( $M = 2.96$ ) gave rather balanced distributions without much extremes of variation.

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis revealed that irrespective of the variables, none of the correlations among the three were statistically significant. The correlation between spiritual well-being and grit ( $r = .054$ ,  $p = .593$ ), spiritual well-being and resilience ( $r = .084$ ,  $p = .407$ ), and grit and resilience ( $r = .125$ ,  $p = .217$ ) all were weak and non-significant. These results suggest that, in this sample, while these three psycho strengths are important on their own, they do not seem to have a very strong interdependent relationship with one another.

Gender-wise, independent samples t-test threw up mean score differences of a slight nature. Females tend to score somewhat higher on spiritual well-being, while males scored just a little higher on grit and resilience. However, unaccompanied with any test of significance run without a report here, no conclusive statement can be made on any gender-related difference.

Normality testing with the Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that spiritual well-being and grit conform to normality, whereas resilience deviates just a bit from normality ( $p = .032$ ). Nevertheless, given

the qualifying number of cases in the sample ( $N = 100$ ) one may proceed with parametric testing under the Central Limit Theorem.

#### **4.1: Hypothesis discussion**

No proposed hypothesis was found corroborated upon reaching into actual computations of Pearson product moment correlation test results. All correlation results among the three voluntary variables of interest-spiritual well-being, grit, and resilience-were weak and non-significant.

The absence of significant relationships between the variables denotes that these constructs may be more independent within this study's particular population of young adults. This outcome stands in contrast to past studies, most of which report at least moderate associations among positive psychological variables. For example, it has been observed that higher levels of spiritual well being tend to associate positively with both personal resilience and the long term orientation for goals (grit), thereby implicating an intertwined dynamic. Nevertheless, such findings may not hold across all cultural developmental settings.

In the Indian young adult context, various cultural, familial, academic, and religious influences are asserted to contribute to the development of each trait. Spiritual well being could then be nurtured through prevalent traditional and communal practices, while grit and resilience might be more based on educational experiences, personality differences, or social support systems. Apart from that, the lack of correlation could imply an independent evolution of each construct where different life relevant experiences at this crucial developmental stage interact with these psychological constructs.

Another probable reason for these findings could be the findings of moderate variation in the scores of the spirituality and resilience scales, meaning that participants could become heterogeneous in the experience and expression of these traits. Spiritually, beliefs might therefore act subliminally as a background factor rather than as a direct psychological mechanism affected by grit or resilience.

The results of the present study open the floor for a wider discourse on the cultural specificity of psychological constructs and call for additional studies exploring the pathways of expression and development of spirituality, grit, and resilience in the life of Indian youth.

The research instigated the study of the nexus between spiritual well being, grit, and resilience in a sample of young Indian adults. The findings opposed those postulated by the extant literature, in that there is no significant correlation between the three variables, thus implying that these psychological constructs might work independently in this demographic group.

The descriptive statistics confirmed that participants reported moderate levels of each trait, indicating that while these strengths are present, they do not necessarily reinforce or depend upon each other. Gender wise group summaries suggested some differences in the means, but in the absence of statistical testing, no conclusive gender effects could be established.

The results prompt a reassessment of understanding and building on these constructs, especially across divergent cultural backgrounds. It is important to consider that Indian youth may develop spiritual beliefs, grit, and emotional recovery mechanisms in disparate areas of life, such as family values, education systems, or community influences, rather than combining in the form of one whole psychological profile.

This lack of any significant correlation may seem inconclusive at first; on the contrary, the value thereof lies in questioning the assumed automatic working together of positive psychological traits, and requiring further context focused studies. This, in a way, contributes towards a more nuanced and culturally grounded comprehension of psychological functioning in young adults."

In conclusion, the research highlights the necessity to view spirituality, grit, and resilience as separate dimensions of mental strength, and to foster contextually relevant interventions and research regarding variability in cultures and across individuals. This study can thus be regarded

as a stepping stone for further expansion of positive psychology frameworks aimed at reflecting the realities lived by Indian youth.

### **5: Implications and Limitations**

Although no statistically significant relationships were proven among spiritual well being, grit, and resilience, this research remains fertile in implications for education, counseling, and youth development. The findings imply that these three constructs may act as independent strengths in young Indian adults. Accordingly, in education, a consideration of spiritual well being, grit, and resilience as three separate developmental goals could be undertaken as opposed to two of these having been the same. Similarly, counseling and youth programs should formulate bespoke interventions that assist the growth of each capacity. For instance, the creation of grit may entail its set of exercises that focus on goal setting and perseverance. These would be separate from those aimed at building resilience through emotional regulation techniques or ones defending spiritual well being through reflective or faith based paths. Additionally, the study brings to light cultural context as an element of psychological development. In India, spirituality is routinely inculcated through community activities or rituals, which may find fewer routes towards actual behavior type results, viz. grit or resilience, i.e., emotional recovery. This foregrounds the much needed culture centered interventions that take into account multiple avenues through which strengths find expression in young adults diverse or variant.

The study, however, faces a few limitations. Using a convenience sample may give way to sample bias affecting the representativeness of the findings. The 100 subjects technically provided a sufficient sample size; however, the court of public opinion nowadays in regard to extrapolating these results to a larger youth population informs otherwise for India. Social desirability bias may have crept in with self report measures; that is, the respondents may have portrayed themselves favorably, instead of giving an honest and accurate account. Another drawback of the study was that it discounted contextual factors that may have been of consequence to the findings, such as socioeconomic status, religious orientation, academic background, or regional diversity. As a cross

sectional study, it lacked an ability either to draw causal inferences or discuss change in the construct across the time interval. Such constraints, however, may very well be addressed through conducting future longitudinal or mixed method studies, thereby yielding stronger insights on how these strengths change and interplay across different phases of life and sociocultural scenarios.

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