

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND GRIT AMONG CRIMINALS AND NON- CRIMINALS

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to assess and compare the pro-social behavior and grit among criminals and non criminals. Convicted criminal inmates from a jail situated at New Delhi, India were taken as population for criminals and non-criminals were also taken from the same region of New Delhi. From the selected population of criminals and non-criminals, two samples of 50 criminals and 50 non-criminals were taken by using purposive sampling technique. Selected subjects were tested for their tendencies of pro-social behavior and Grit by using questionnaire method. Collected data was analyzed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics. Finding of research revealed that there was positive but insignificant relationship between the psychosocial tendencies of Pro-social Behavior and Grit among criminals and non-criminals.

Key Words: Pro-social Behavior, Grit, Criminals and Non-Criminals.

INTRODUCTION

In an age, where violent, heinous acts are dominant than ever and morality is not heard of, a lot of havoc stems as a result of this. Morality is basically a system of ideas of right and wrong conduct in relation to conformity and non-conformity to the rules set by the society. Moral thinking and moral development is the product of socialization. It is key to the psycho-philosophical faculty of the human mind that enables an individual to take right moral decisions. The underdeveloped cognitive ability to resist the temptation of indulging in a criminal activity is the backbone of the mindset of minors. Criminal offenders are often impulsive and lack self-control. Some theorists have conjectured criminal behavior as a major failure of appropriate moral development and reasoning (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990). Thus the present study explores such tendencies among criminals as well as non-criminals.

PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

According to a Chinese proverb "If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody."

Pro-Social Behavior is elucidated as an unpaid behavior intended to benefit others. It also includes a wide range of actions such as helping, sharing or providing comfort to other people. It is predominantly evident in young children but its incidence and expression changes along with the age. Batson (1998) defined pro-social behavior as an array of actions anticipated to profit one or more people other than oneself behaviors such as helping, reassuring, sharing. Many pro-social acts are not altruistic. For example, if you wish to work for a charity in order to impress someone, friends or for any sort of job opportunities, then it is not acting altruistically in the pure sense. From the most dauntless act of altruism to the most helpful act that is manifested entirely by self-interest is the scale for the measurement of Pro-Social Behavior. The term Pro-Social Behavior is described as a behavior performed by an individual intended to benefit others by helping, cooperating, reassuring, comforting, defending, donating to charity and showing concern (Gross, 2010). The degree of this behavior is dependent on several situational factors as explained in social psychology.

It is relevant to interactions among individuals and groups with close ties and also to the quality of close interpersonal relationships. Societies and Charities depend on people helping one another. Pro-social behavior has benefits for the benefactor. For example, children high on this dimension tend to be better appreciated and liked by peers, and adults who engage in helping activities and have a better psychological health overall.

Research on this behavior has not only addressed the antecedents and consequences of these actions, but also different motivations underlying such behavior. Pro-social behavior that is not performed for social rewards or any sort of

material (e.g. approval, etc) but is typically based on the authentic concern for another person, is usually labeled as “Altruism”.

According to this principle, people are more likely to help strangers if they interpret that helping strangers would yield them with some kind of favor from the stranger sometime in the future. Trivers (1983) stated that reciprocal helping evolves in species or *Homo sapiens* if certain conditions are met.

GRIT

According to the Cambridge dictionary, “Grit is defined as courage and determination despite difficulty”. Thus Grit is the passion and perseverance for long-term goals (Angela Lee Duckworth, 2009). It is the outlook of not giving up on something. It gives us the staying power to push through trials and tribulations and stay dedicated to the root cause.

According to a proverb: “Fire is the test of Gold and Adversity is the test of Man.” (Seneca the Younger). Grit is basically defined as the quality in an individual that allows him/her to move on in the face of a challenge. When a person meets up with a metaphorical “brick wall”, he either climbs it or blasts a hole through it. A person with this quality of perseverance, resilience, and passion will not be stopped on their way to victory. Basically, it has been found that grit is the key to student success (Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance, 2009).

Also, it is an attitude of persisting one single idea, ideal or a discipline, rules to achieve success despite facing hurdles, obstacles in life. Failures and shortcomings are part and parcel of life. The only undying quality imbibed by a person who is high on the dimension of grit is the quality of perseverance. Eventually, grit leads to oodles of success. If a person imbibes perseverance and persistence despite discouragements, impossibilities, he/she is bound to encounter success. Perseverance means failing 99 times and achieving success the 100th time. Abraham Lincoln was driven by grit to fight for the freedom of the slaves. A lot of blood was shed, also many battles were lost. But finally, rebels supporting Lincoln won. So grit is not just a show of trying. It also displays the courage and the potential to achieve any great thing in life. Oodles of courage are needed to give up on temptations and expectations and to stick to a disciplined routine. Thus, if a person inculcates such quality of grit, will always lead a fruitful life.

Angela Duckworth rightly described that talent and success are either unrelated or inversely related to each other (Duckworth, 2009). It’s all about staying true towards your long-term goals even when the life gets a lot messy and even its not convenient to pursue that long-term goal.

Determination is another factor essential for grit and is the grit that gets you through a journey. It is the force of will to do all the little details just like the big ones. It is just like trying everything and then adding new things to obtain desirable results. It is moving through and finding a way when there’s no way out. It involves tapping on to the available resources and pushing past the previous limits in order to take the lead. If the procedure of moving forward towards long-term goals are just not clear enough then determination is the key to the next phase, through steps of learning, growing, building up, one process and one step at a time. Determination along with the combination of discipline, grit, focus, patience and stamina can propel towards great rewards and success.

According to Peter Clough, who is a leading researcher on mental toughness, mentally tough individuals tend to be outgoing and sociable, low on anxiety and are competitive with a high sense of self-belief and an unshakeable faith as they control their own destiny (Clough et al, 2002). Toughness and Grit are equally consistent with each other. Mental Toughness is built through small wins. It is basically an abstract quality tied with concrete actions. Athletes are high on this dimension. They don’t let short-term profits, negative feedback, or hectic schedules prevent them from continuing the march towards their vision. They have a clear goal that they work for each and every single day. Thus, mental toughness and grit follow a pattern of consistency (Clough et al, 2002).

Thus this research was rightfully conducted to look at the psychosocial dimensions of Pro-Social behavior and Grit among criminal and non-criminal population. 50 inmates from a New Delhi Jail were interviewed and were asked to fill the questionnaires. A very similar criterion was used for non-criminal population. The age criteria was 18 and above. The results were analyzed using various non parametric statistics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study explores the psychosocial dimensions of Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among Criminals and Non-Criminals. A comprehensive survey has been conducted to know the latest status of available knowledge.

A study conducted by Pulkkinen et al (1995) titled as “Aggressive and Non-Prosocial Behavior as precursors of criminality” among 196 males and 173 females suggested that a group of convicted men had been high on aggression and low on pro-social behavior than those who were not convicted. The convicted men were further divided into 3 groups: juvenile delinquents, adolescent criminals, and adult criminals. Juvenile delinquents had been more aggressive than adolescent delinquents. Among the convicts, recidivists were more aggressive and lower in pro-social behavior

and also, criminal women were lower in pro-social behavior and higher in bullying-type of aggression than non-criminal women.

A study titled "Self-Efficacy Beliefs as Determinants of Pro-social Behavior conducive to Life Satisfaction across ages" by Steca et al (2005) suggested that interpersonal self-efficacy directly affected pro-social behavior which in turn directly influenced the life satisfaction across four age groups, a higher influence for the oldest group as compared to the other groups.

Another two study titled "Organizational commitment and psychological attachment: The effects of compliance, identification, and internalization on pro-social behavior" conducted by involving university employees and business students by Reilly et al (1986). Study found out that internalization and identification were negatively related to turnover, whereas pro-social behavior is positively associated. Internalization was also predictive of financial donations to a fund-raising campaign.

In a review based study Altruism and Pro-social Behavior by Batson et al (2003), revealed that there was no association between Pro-Social Behavior and Altruism. This research raised the possibility of multiplicity of social motives, like; altruism, collectivism and egoism. Research has also raised the questions that, how these motives can increase for pro-social behavior.

A review based study titled "Social exclusion decreases Pro-Social Behavior" by Baumeister et al (2007) investigated that in 7 experiments, the authors manipulated social exclusion by telling people that they would end up alone later in life or that other participants had rejected them. Social exclusion caused a substantial reduction in pro-social behavior. The results did not vary by a cost to the self or by the recipient of the help, and results remained significant when the experimenter was unaware of the condition. The implication is that rejection temporarily interferes with emotional responses, thereby impairing the capacity for empathic understanding of others, and as a result, any inclination to help or cooperate with them is undermined.

A study conducted by Harrison (2006) titled "True Grit: An Innovative Program for Elderly Inmates" designed by Northern Nevada Correctional Center to enhance elderly inmates (1) physical health through recreational and physical therapy activities; (2) mental health, through group, individual, and self-help therapies; and (3) spiritual health through unique programming coordinated with the prison chaplain and volunteers. Preliminary analysis indicated that the number of infirmary visits for program participants had decreased along with the use of psychotropic and psychoactive medication. Participants had reported elevated feelings of well-being and reduced fear of dying alone in prison. Future plans for the program included the provision of mental health assessments.

A study conducted on 604 undergraduates titled "Grit and Perseverance in Suicidal Behavior and Non-Suicidal Self Injury" by Selby et al (2014) collected data online via self-report and analyzed it using hierarchical multiple regression concluded that persistence facilitates suicidal behavior. Higher levels of perseverance and grit predicted more frequent suicidal attempts.

ANOTHER STUDY TITLED "INVESTIGATING GRIT AND ITS RELATIONS WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT" BY HUSSAIN ET AL (2014) INVESTIGATED GRIT AND ITS RELATION WITH STUDENT'S SELF-REGULATED LEARNING (SRL) AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ON ETHNICALLY DIVERSE SAMPLE OF 213 COLLEGE STUDENTS INDICATED THAT ONE ASPECT OF GRIT, PERSEVERANCE OF EFFORT WAS A CONSISTENT AND ADAPTIVE PREDICTOR FOR ALL INDICATORS OF SRL AND THE SECOND ASPECT OF GRIT I.E. CONSISTENCY OF EFFORT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LATTER TWO FACETS OF SRL AND ALSO, GRIT IS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVED ACADEMIC OUTCOMES.

Need for study

After doing the comprehensive literature review, it is clear that not much research has been conducted to study these variables in a combination. So there is a gap in knowledge that exists. So conducting this research in this area has been justified. Criminals are supposed to exhibit all the anti-social traits. It has been supported by various studies also. But none of the researches done explores the positive side of the incarcerated population. So the present study was done to investigate the positive traits like Pro-Social Behavior, and Grit among the incarcerated population and non-offenders.

Objectives

- 1) To know the status of pro-social behavior among criminals and non-criminals.
- 2) To find out the relationship between Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among Criminals and Non-Criminals.
- 3) To compare criminals and non criminals on these psychosocial dimensions i.e. pro-social behavior and grit.

Hypotheses

- 1) There will be no significant relationship between Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among Criminals and Non-Criminals.

- 2) There will be no significant difference between criminals and non criminals on the basis of these psychosocial dimensions i.e. pro-social behavior and grit.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Non-experimental design was used to conduct this study. Two samples of criminals and non-criminals, each having 50 subjects were taken from the selected population as per criteria mentioned in the sample design. The samples of the subjects were tested and compared for Pro-social Behavior and Girt. Then the collected data was analyzed by using inferential statistics to find out the relationship between the two among the both criminals and non-criminals. Findings of both the descriptive and inferential statistics were compared with respect to the criminals and non-criminals.

Sample Design

Purposive sampling was used and the sample size comprised of 50 male Criminals from a jail situated at New Delhi Jail and 50 male Non-criminals from the same geographical region of New Delhi were taken. The age range for the subjects of both the groups was 18 and above. Among criminals, the majority were convicted on the grounds of murder and rape charges. The non criminals came from diverse backgrounds such as employees and students etc.

Method of data collection

Questionnaire method was used for data collection and for this purpose two scales were used. Details of these tests are as under:

Helping Attitude Scale (HAS): It has been given by Nickell (1998). A 20-item measure of respondents’ beliefs, feelings, and behaviors associated with helping. Each item is answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Scoring: Items 1, 5, 8, 11, 18, and 19 are reverse scored. The scores for each item are summed up to form an overall score, ranging from 20 to 100. According to the author, a 60 is a neutral score.

Reliability and Validity: The internal consistency for the 25 items (Cronbach’s Alpha) was .869. Overall, a statistically significant, test-retest correlation was found, $r(56) = .837, p < .001$. As expected, the HAS was positively correlated with the SRA, $r(114) = .403, p < .001$ and this was the construct validity of the scale.

Short Grit Scale: Scale is developed by Duckworth et al (2009). This scale is basically used for assessing how passionate and perseverant a person is about himself/herself.

Scoring: Add up all the points and divide by 8. The maximum score on this scale is 5 (extremely gritty), and the lowest score on this scale is 1 (not at all gritty).

Reliability and Validity: the resulting eight items Grit-S displayed acceptable internal Consistency, with alphas ranging from .73 to .83 across the four samples. This test also provides predictive validity, consensual validity and test – retest stability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among Criminals.

VARIABLES	N	RANGE	MIN. SCORE	MAX. SCORE	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	VARIANCE
PRO-SOCIAL	50	51.00	46.00	97.00	79.1200	11.75366	138.149
GRIT	50	3.55	1.50	5.00	3.6826	.68962	.476

Table 1 is showing descriptive statistics for the psychological dimensions of pro-social behavior and girt among criminals. The mean score value for Pro-social was 79.1200, standard deviation 11.75366 and variance 138.149. The minimum and maximum score values for pro-social behavior were 46.00 and 97.00 respectively. Mean score value for the second variable, Grit, was 3.6826, standard deviation .68962 and variance .476. The minimum and maximum values for girt were 1.50 and 5.00.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among Non Criminals.

VARIABLES	N	RANGE	MIN. SCORE	MAX. SCORE	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	VARIANCE
PRO-SOCIAL	50	47.00	52.00	99.00	74.9200	11.21377	125.749
GRIT	50	2.75	2.12	4.87	3.4126	.59746	.357

Table 2 is showing descriptive statistics for the psychological dimensions of pro-social behavior and grit among non-criminals. The mean score value for Pro-social was 74.9200, standard deviation 11.21377 and variance 125.749. The minimum and maximum score values for pro-social behavior were 52.00 and 99.00 respectively with range 47.00. Mean score value for the second variable, Grit, was 3.4126, standard deviation .59746 and variance .357. The minimum and maximum values for grit were 2.75 and 2.12 and range was 2.75.

Table 3: Correlation For Pro-Social Behavior And Grit Among Criminals

			PROSOCIAL	GRIT
SPEARMAN'S RHO	PROSOCIAL	COR. COEFFICIENT	1.00	.439**
		SIG. (2-TAILED)		.001
		N	50	50
SPEARMAN'S RHO	GRIT	COR. COEFFICIENT	.439**	1.00
		SIG. (2-TAILED)	.001	
		N	50	50

** Correlation is significant at 0.001 level (2-tailed)

The correlation coefficients for Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among criminals are .439. Through spearman correlation it is evident that correlation is significant at 0.001 level. The relationship between Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among criminals is highly significant and positive. This means alternative hypothesis has been accepted.

Table 4: Correlation For Pro-Social Behavior And Grit Among Non-Criminals

			PROSOCIAL	GRIT
SPEARMAN'S RHO	PRO-SOCIAL	COR. COEFFICIENT	1.000	.562**
		SIG. (2-TAILED)		.001
		N	50	50
SPEARMAN'S RHO	GRIT	COR. COEFFICIENT	.562**	1.000
		SIG. (2-TAILED)	.001	
		N	50	50

** Correlation is significant at 0.001 level (2-tailed)

The correlation coefficients for Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among non- criminals are .562. Through spearman correlation it is evident that correlation is significant at 0.001 level. The relationship between Pro-Social Behavior and Grit among non criminals is highly significant and positive. The null hypothesis has been rejected.

Table 5: Mann Whitney “U” Test Ranks

	GROUPS	N	MEAN RANK	SUM OF RANKS
PRO-SOCIAL	1	50	55.93	2796.50
	2	50	45.07	2253.50
	TOTAL	100		
GRIT	1	50	57.37	2868.50
	2	50	43.63	2181.50
	TOTAL	100		

For the dimension of Pro-Social Behavior, the mean rank for group 1 i.e. CRIMINALS is 55.93 and the sum of ranks is 2796.50. For group 2 i.e. NON-CRIMINALS, the mean rank is 45.07 and sum of ranks is 2253.50. Thus the mean rank and sum of ranks is higher for group 1 i.e. CRIMINALS

Lastly, for the dimension of Grit, the mean rank for the group 1 i.e. CRIMINALS is 57.37 and the sum of ranks is 2868.50. For group 2 i.e. Non-criminals, the mean rank is 43.63 and the sum of ranks is 2181.50. Thus the mean rank and sum of ranks is higher for group 1 i.e. Criminals

Table 6: Test Statistics

	PRO-SOCIAL	GRIT
MANN-WHITNEY U	978.500	906.500
WILCOXON W	2.254E3	2.182E3
Z	-1.873	-2.373
ASYMP SIG. (2-TAILED)	.061	.018

a) Grouping Variables: GROUPS

The results of Mann Whitney ‘U’ Test for Pro-Social Behavior is 978.500 and for Grit are 906.500. The Wilcoxon score for Pro-Social Behavior was 2.254E3 and 2.182E3 was the score for Grit.

Thus, it is clear from the rank table and test statistics table that the comparison of both the groups is non-significant for the psychosocial dimensions i.e. pro-social behavior and grit. It came out higher for Criminals as compared to the non criminals. Thus it means that null hypothesis is accepted for the same.

The present study was conducted to explore the psychosocial dimensions of pro-social behavior and grit among criminals and non criminals. The data was collected through purposive sampling. Two tools were used for the current research – Helping Attitude Scale (1998), Short Grit Scale (2009). Also, there is a highly significant relationship between pro-social behavior and grit, among criminals and non criminals. This relationship is positive for both the dimensions. For example, if pro-social behavior increases then grit also increases by the same length and so on. Yet this study revealed that there is no significant difference in both the groups on the basis of these variables. A study was conducted by Harrison (2006) titled as “True Grit: An Innovative Program for Elderly Inmates” designed by Northern Nevada Correctional Center to enhance elderly inmates (1) physical health through recreational and physical therapy activities; (2) mental health, through group, individual, and self-help therapies; and (3) spiritual health through unique

programming coordinated with the prison chaplain and volunteers. Preliminary analysis indicated that the number of infirmary visits for program participants had decreased along with the use of psychotropic and psychoactive medication. Participants had reported elevated feelings of well-being and reduced fear of dying alone in prison. Future plans for the program included the provision of mental health assessments. Therefore, no such study has been conducted using these two positive dimensions like Pro-Social Behavior and Grit in an Indian setting.

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