



Grit and the Unyielding Entrepreneur: The Effect of Sustained Interest and Effort on New Venture Initiation

Introduction

Grit is defined as, “perseverance and passion for long term goals” (Duckworth et al., 2007, pp. 1087-1088). Duckworth and her colleagues describe grit as the tortoise in the race between the tortoise and the hare in Aesop’s fables. The hare is often sidetracked during the race or taking rests, whereas the tortoise keeps steadily plodding towards the finish line not getting distracted nor discouraged.

Grit is not related to natural talent. In fact, people with natural talent often are less gritty because they didn’t have to work as hard or experience as many hardships as people who weren’t born with the natural ability (Duckworth et al., 2007, pp. 1098).

Grit has been studied in relation to marriage (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014), Spelling Bee advancement, West Point summer camp and, SAT scores (Alyala & Manzano, 2014).

Our research centers around the relationship between Grit and Entrepreneurial Intent.



Methods

PARTICIPANTS

- 555 undergraduate students enrolled at a Midwestern university in the United States
- ♀ = 160, ♂ = 360, other = 2, missing = 33
- Age $M = 22$, $SD = 4.78$
- Freshmen = 3, Sophomore = 95, Junior = 195, Senior = 214, other = 17, missing = 31
- White = 81%, Asian = 7%, Black = 3%, Hispanic = 2%, Indigenous = 2%, other = 5%

PROCEDURES

- Students were sent an email containing a hyperlink to an online survey.

MEASURES

- **Entrepreneurial Intent**
 - » Thompson (2009)
 - » 10 items, $\alpha = .77$
 - » Sample Item: “Thinking of yourself, how true or untrue is it that you intend to set up a company in the future.” (1 = *Very untrue*, 6 = *Very true*)
- **Grit**
 - » Duckworth et al. (2007)
 - » 12 items, $\alpha = .82$
 - » Sample Item: “I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.” (1 = *Not at all like me*, 5 = *Just like me*)
- **Big 5 Personality Traits**
 - » Rammstedt & John (2007)
 - » 10 items
 - » Sample Items: “I see myself as someone who...” (1 = *Disagree strongly*, 5 = *Agree strongly*)

Extraversion

“... is reserved.” (reverse coded)

Agreeableness

“... tends to find fault.” (reverse coded)

Conscientiousness

“... does a thorough job.”

Neuroticism

“... gets nervous easily”

Openness to Experience

“... has an active imagination.”

Results

CORRELATIONS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	—								
2. # of Bus Classes	.19	—							
3. Extraversion			—						
4. Agreeableness	.15			—					
5. Conscientious	.10		.16		—				
6. Neuroticism			-.15	-.18	-.25	—			
7. Openness			-.57				—		
8. Grit	.14		.24	.49	-.33			—	
9. Entr Intent	.17			.12	-.09	.22	.16		—

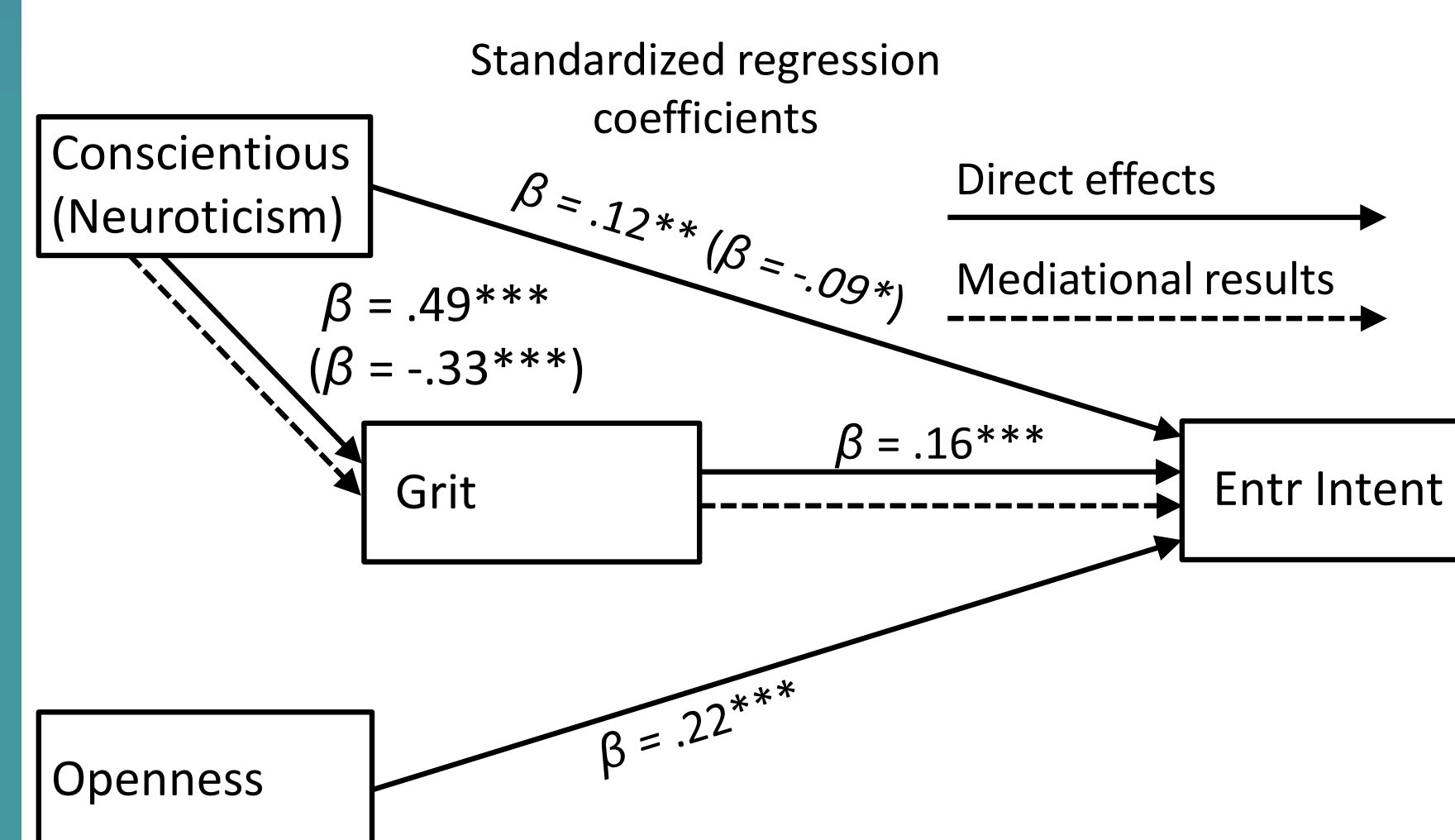
Note. All correlations significant at the 0.01 level.

T-TESTS

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables: Have you taken a business course at university?					
	Yes		No		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Extraversion	2.96	0.74	2.86	0.78	1.24	.215
Agreeableness	3.57	0.69	3.53	0.65	0.49	.628
Conscientious	3.70	0.71	3.58	0.76	1.39	.164
Neuroticism	2.83	0.77	2.73	0.82	1.13	.258
Openness	3.35	0.81	3.30	0.85	0.49	.624
Grit	3.51	0.53	3.50	0.52	0.07	.948
Entr Intent	3.46	0.97	3.11	0.94	3.18	.002

Note. $n = 555$, df may vary because incomplete responses were addressed using pairwise deletion.

MEDIATIONAL ANALYSES



Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Discussion



References

Ayala, J. C., & Manzano, G. (2014). The resilience of the entrepreneur. Influence on the success of the business. A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 42, 126-135.

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, 92(6), 1087-1101.

Eskreis-Winkler, L., Duckworth, A., Shulman, E., & Beal, S. (2014). The grit effect: predicting retention in the military, the workplace, school and marriage. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5(36), 1-12.

Rammstedt, B., & John, O. P. (2007). Measuring personality in one minute or less: A 10 item short version of the Big Five Inventory in English and German. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41(1), 203-212.

Thompson, E. R. (2009). Individual Entrepreneurial Intent: Construct Clarification and Development of an Internationally Reliable Metric. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(3), 669-694.