



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Psychology**

**GRIT, CURIOSITY AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG ITES EMPLOYEES**

**KEY WORDS:** Grit, Curiosity, Job Performance, Task Performance, Contextual Performance, Counterproductive Work Behavior, ITES Employees

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**ABSTRACT**

In this correlational study, it is hypothesized that Grit and Curiosity are significantly correlated with Job Performance among Indian ITES employees. The three dimensions of job performance—Task Performance, Contextual Performance, and Counterproductive Work Behavior—are further hypothesized to be significantly correlated with grit and curiosity. Three self-report questionnaires are administered to 154 Indian employees of Information-Technology-Enabled Services to determine their levels of grit, curiosity, and job performance in various ITES companies of India. The correlation between grit, curiosity, and job performance is examined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Except for Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behavior, which indicates no significant correlation with each other, the findings generally support the idea that grit and curiosity are correlated with job performance and its dimensions under study. The correlation between grit, curiosity, and job performance has implications that are discussed in the study.

**INTRODUCTION**

Services that can be provided using the capabilities of IT are known as information technology-enabled services (ITES). In today's highly competitive marketplace employers consider their human resources as being one of their most important assets, and therefore, they must take steps and to understand the competency of their employees, if they are to meet their long-term goals. The most significant resource that each nation possesses is its skilled and effective human resources, regardless of the many natural resources owned by communities, who might lack the proficient employees and have no ability to utilize their facilities (Shekarkan, 1997). In this study, we are focusing on the characteristics- grit and curiosity of employees that determine their job performance.

Grit was proposed as a trait associated with conscientiousness that combines persistence of interests and perseverance in pursuing long-term objectives (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit is the ability to persevere through failure and hardships while making a significant effort toward overcoming obstacles. An employee with high grit keeps going even when disappointment or boredom tells others that it is time to shift direction and reduce losses. Great scientists, writers, artists, who excelled in their respective fields were triple blessed because they had "ability combined with zeal and with capacity for hard labor" (Galton, 1892). A self-report measure for evaluating Grit explores how ordinary daily behavior relates to accomplishing goals (e.g., "I am a hard worker" and "New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones") (Duckworth et al., 2007). In order to nurture grit's performance benefits, prior research suggests that intrinsic drive may be required. Intrinsic motivation involves "doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself rather than for some separable consequences" (Ryan et al., 2000).

Curiosity, or the "want to know," lies at the foundation of an intrinsic motivation (Kashdan et al., 2004). Curiosity is the desire for information to generate new perceptions and find solutions to issues, whether that information is about abstract concepts or concerning concrete circumstances. Active curiosity, is a necessity for the development of information since it drives the gathering of new knowledge and the quest of new stimulus (Ginsburg et al., 1988).

Curious people naturally value the process of discovery, learning, and thought (Mussel, 2010). Due to their inherent curiosity for learning and developing new skills, more inquisitive employees may seek out new perspectives and

solutions before the issue has reached a crisis level. Because they are great information seekers and more ready to learn through socialization on the job (Reio et al., 2000), new employees in organizations with high curiosity scores may adapt more quickly (Harrison et al., 2011). Research on the relationship connecting curiosity and job performance is particularly useful for vocational guidance or recruitment purposes because curiosity is a motivator that can be encouraged (Goodwin, 2014).

Job performance, is "multidimensional" and includes "behaviors or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organization in question" (McCloy et al., 1994). Job Performance has three major components that are conceptually appealing. The behavior related with maintaining and supporting an organization's technical core is referred to as task performance. It implies the simple conversion of a company's raw materials into the products and services it creates.

Task performance can be defined as the proficiency (i.e., competency) with which one performs central job tasks (Campbell, 1999).

Contextual performance refers to people's willingness to engage in unofficially regulated organisational activities, their perseverance in completing organisational tasks, and their ability to work effectively with others and maintain positive working relationships. This type of performance can increase the effectiveness of a group or organisation and have a greater impact on work performance (Crant, 1995).

Counterproductive work behaviors on the other hand pose a risk to the individual as well as the organisation and may affect job performance. Considerable research has discovered an association between counterproductive behaviours and job pressures, organisational justice (Fox et al., 2001), job stress, rudeness, and negative affectivity (Penney et al., 2005), personality, and job satisfaction.

Employees have different degrees of grit and curiosity innately present in them, which influence how well employees perform on the job in an organization. The impact of these characteristics on his or her employment is inevitable. Our awareness of curiosity and grit's function in enhancing job performance, as well as its promotion, would be strengthened by a full study of their significance in ITES job performance. Such information could help practitioners improve employee problem-solving abilities through training and overall

employee development.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The study is a quantitative research study that adopts a correlational research design to determine if there is a relationship between the variables under study.

**Sample**

The sample comprised of one hundred fifty-four Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) employees of India. The sample consisted of 98 male participants and 56 female participants. Participants were between the age of 20 to 55 years.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To determine the relationship between Grit and Job Performance among ITES employees
  - a. To determine the relationship between Grit and Task Performance
  - b. To determine the relationship between Grit and Contextual Performance
  - c. To determine the relationship between Grit and Counterproductive Work Behavior
2. To determine the relationship between Curiosity and Job Performance among ITES employees
  - a. To determine the relationship between Curiosity and Task Performance
  - b. To determine the relationship between Curiosity and Contextual Performance
  - c. To determine the relationship between Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behavior
3. To determine the relationship between Curiosity and Grit and Job performance among ITES employees.

**Hypotheses**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Job Performance among ITES employees

**H<sub>1,1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Task Performance among ITES employees

**H<sub>1,2</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Contextual Performance among ITES employees

**H<sub>1,3</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Counterproductive Work Behavior among ITES employees

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Job Performance among ITES employees

**H<sub>2,1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Task Performance among ITES employees

**H<sub>2,2</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Contextual Performance among ITES employees

**H<sub>2,3</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behavior among ITES employees

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between Grit and Curiosity among ITES Employees

**Tools of the Study**

Three measures were used in this study,

**1. The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans, 2015):** This is an 18-item scale developed by Linda Koopmans in the Netherlands to measure job performance with three sub dimensions: Task performance, Contextual performance, and Counterproductive work behavior. All items have a 5-point rating scale (0 = seldom to 4

= always for task and contextual performance; and 0 = never to 4 = often for counterproductive work behavior). The internal consistency of the IW PQ is good. Reliability of the scale is indicated by  $\alpha = .78$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ , and  $\alpha = .79$  for task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior dimensions, respectively. The construct validity of the IW PQ is acceptable. Two types of construct validity have been assessed, namely convergent and discriminative validity.

**2. Grit Scale (Duckworth, 2007):** This scale was developed by Angela Duckworth in 2007. The Grit Scale measures the extent to which individuals can maintain focus and interest, and persevere in obtaining long-term goals. It is 12 items, 5-point likert scale with Cronbach's alpha value: overall scale,  $\alpha = 0.85$ . Concurrent validity was established for the Scale. The Short Grit Scale, sometimes known as Grit-S, is an 8-item version of the 12-item Grit Scale that has also been adjusted for use with kids. Also available in other languages, Chinese and French are translations of the Grit Scale.

**3. Work Related Curiosity Scale (Mussel, 2012):** The Work-Related Curiosity Scale (WORCS) is a 10-item self-report measure developed by Patrick Mussel in 2012 that assesses curiosity in the workplace. Internal consistency reliability was found to be 0.85. The measure had an acceptable internal consistency, and expected construct validity. The scale was created in German and later translated into English.

**ANALYSIS AND DATA INTERPRETATION**

Data was collected from ITES employees of various information-technology based companies in India in the form of online questionnaires. The online questionnaire was segmented into three parts, each part consisting of a psychological measure out of the three measures used in the study. The participants thus responded to 40 compulsory questions in total. The online questionnaire was circulated in the form of Google forms. The collected data was further analysed using SPSS. Inferential statistics: Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for the interpretation of the collected data.

**Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the sample**

Baseline Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	98	63.6
Female	56	36.4

Note. N = 154. Participants were on average 25.8 years old (SD = 5.92)

From the above table we can infer that, the number of male participants who participated in the study was 98 out of 154 total participants, comprising of a percentage of 63.6. The number of female participants 56 out of 154, comprising of a percentage of 36.4. The average age of the participants who took part in the study was found to be 25.8 years with a standard deviation of 5.92.

**Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of Grit, Curiosity and Job Performance**

Variables	n	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Grit	154	3.39	0.49
Curiosity	154	5.80	0.99
Job Performance	154	2.07	0.74

Table 2 indicates that there were 154 ITES Employees. The mean score obtained for Grit was 3.39 with a standard deviation of 0.49. The mean score obtained for Curiosity was 5.80 with a standard deviation of 0.99. The mean score obtained for Job Performance was 2.07 with a standard deviation of 0.74.

**Table 3 shows the Descriptive Statistics and Correlation for Measured Variables**

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3
1.Grit	154	3.39	0.49	—		
2.Curiosity	154	5.80	0.99	0.261**	—	
3.Job Performance	154	2.07	0.74	0.304**	0.455* *	—

Note:\*\*p < .01.

Table 3 indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.304$ , which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a positive correlation at the 0.01 level.

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Job Performance among ITES employees, is therefore accepted. This result is consistent with the findings of previous study which showed that there is a significant relationship between Grit and Job Performance of Frontline Employees (Kim et al., 2019).

For variables Curiosity and Job Performance, the Pearson correlation coefficient was found to be  $r = 0.455$ , which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a positive correlation at the 0.01 level.

**H2:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Job Performance among ITES employees, is therefore accepted. This result is consistent with the findings of previous study which showed that there is a significant relationship between trait Curiosity and extra-role behaviors, Job Performance of employees of Telemarketing organizations (Harrison et al., 2011).

The correlation between Grit and Curiosity was found to be  $r = 0.261$ , which implies that the two variables are significantly positively correlated to each other at the 0.01 level.

**Ho:** There is no significant correlation between Grit and Curiosity among ITES Employees, is therefore, rejected. The correlation between the variables is however low.

**Table 4 shows the Correlation between Grit, Curiosity and Task Performance**

Variable	1	2	3
1. Grit	—		
2. Curiosity	0.261**	—	
3. Task Performance	0.503**	0.436**	—

Note:\*\*p < .01.

Table 4 indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient for the variables Grit and Task performance was  $r = 0.503$ , which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests a positive correlation at the 0.01 level.

**H1.1:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Task Performance among ITES employees, is therefore accepted. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the variables Curiosity and Task Performance was  $r = 0.436$ , which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

**H2.1:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Task Performance among ITES employees, is therefore accepted. Although there is no prior research done to investigate and support the relationship, a study was conducted on employees of Batticaloa Teaching Hospital, to determine the relationship between the Personality traits of employees and the Task Performance of the employees. The Personality traits were measured in terms of Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Openness to experience and Agreeableness. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between Personality Traits

and Task Performance of the employees (Delima VJ, 2020).

**Table 5 shows the Correlation between Grit, Curiosity and Contextual Performance**

Variable	1	2	3
1. Grit	—		
2. Curiosity	0.261**	—	
3. Contextual Performance	0.406**	0.517**	—

Note:\*\*p < .01.

Table 5 indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient for Grit and Contextual Performance was  $r = 0.406$ , which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that the variables Grit and Contextual Performance are positively correlated to each other at the 0.01 level.

**H1.2:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Contextual Performance among ITES employees, is therefore accepted.

The Pearson correlation coefficient for Curiosity and Contextual Performance was  $r = 0.517$ , which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a positive positively correlation at the 0.01 level.

**H2.2:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Contextual Performance among ITES employees, is therefore accepted. To further understand the relationship between grit and contextual performance as well as the relationship between curiosity and contextual performance, more studies must be conducted.

**Table 6 shows the Correlation between Grit, Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behaviour**

Variable	1	2	3
1. Grit	—		
2. Curiosity	0.261**	—	
3. Counterproductive Work Behaviour	-0.370**	-0.037	—

Note:\*\*p < .01.

Analysis of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation for variables Grit and Counterproductive Work Behaviour indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r = -0.370$ , which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that the variables Grit and Counterproductive Work Behaviour are negatively correlated to each other at the 0.01 level.

**H1.3:** There is a significant relationship between Grit and Counterproductive Work Behaviour among ITES employees, is therefore accepted. To support the results, in a study conducted to understand Job performance and Intrinsic Motivation, and family motivation, it was predicted that lower counterproductive work behaviors would prevail among employees with high family motivation because of job stability concerns. In the same study, it was found that, employees will relate their job to helping the people who matter to them most when family motivation is strong, which will increase the value of work (Vroom, 1964). This will give individuals the grit they need to work longer and harder for both economic and identity-related reasons (Rothbard et al., 2003).

Table 6 further indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient for Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behaviour was  $r = -0.037$ , which was not statistically significant at the 0.01 or 0.05 level. This indicates that the variables Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behaviour are not significantly correlated to each other.

**H2.3:** There is a significant relationship between Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behaviour among ITES employees, is therefore rejected.

The relationship between Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behavior among ITES professionals cannot be supported with prior research due to lack of studies. However, a study conducted on work performance in military organization concluded that the high frequency of counterproductive behaviors correlates with the difficulties in concentrating, remembering and decision-making (Eskreis et al., 2014). Therefore, there is a need of further research on the relationship between curiosity and counterproductive behaviour among working employees.

**CONCLUSION**

Grit is significantly positively correlated with Job Performance. There is a significant positive correlation of Grit with Task Performance and Contextual Performance. There is a significant negative correlation between Grit and Counterproductive Work Behavior. Curiosity is significantly positively correlated with Job Performance. There is a significant positive correlation of Curiosity with Task Performance and Contextual Performance. There is however no significant correlation obtained between Curiosity and Counterproductive Work Behavior.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The findings showed a strong relationship between grit, curiosity, and job performance. Recruiting and choosing are undoubtedly the key contributions. It is advised that assessments of grit and curiosity be used for recruitment and promotion for jobs like the one examined in the current research. Future research is required to investigate these correlations and the mechanisms that underlie them. Future studies could use a predictive analysis to determine how both grit and curiosity impact job performance.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study did not analyse a difference in results between the two genders: male and female, considered in the study. Further, the study was limited to employees of the ITES sector of India, and thus generalizing the results to all working employees would not be feasible. Another limitation to the study was the lack of prior research to support the findings of the study. Since the questionnaires were majorly self-reports measures, and the method of data collection was online, it is probable that the results could be modified by the participants. Future research can employ interview method, to get better and clearer responses from the employees.

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