

Self-Control and Grit in Thesis Achievement among Final-Year Students: A Study at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra

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Abstract:

This study aims to determine the role of self-control and grit among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra. The research employs a quantitative approach with a sample of 100 final-year students who are working on their theses or journal articles. Data collection involved the use of two scales: a self-control scale encompassing behavioral control, cognitive control, and decision-making control and a grit scale covering aspects of interest consistency and perseverance. We performed data analysis using simple regression. The findings reveal that self-control significantly and positively affects grit, with a significance value ranging from 0.01 to 0.05. Self-control contributes 11.2% to grit, indicating that the ability to control oneself influences the level of perseverance and consistency among students. The main contribution of this study is to provide insights into how self-control can enhance grit in final-year students, supporting them in achieving academic goals more consistently and diligently.

Keywords: final year, grit, self-control, students, thesis.

INTRODUCTION

Students are individuals who are pursuing higher education (Hagger & Hamilton, 2019). Typically, students are given between 4 to 7 years to complete their studies and obtain a bachelor's degree (Munthe & Saragi, 2023). According to the Indonesian Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Regulation No. 44 of 2015, the maximum duration for completing a bachelor's degree (S1/D4) is seven years, equivalent to 14 semesters (Azizah, 2015). In the final stages of their studies, students are expected to complete a thesis or scientific article to fulfill their academic requirements. The process of completing a thesis or scientific article often presents various challenges. These challenges include difficulties with guidance, trouble meeting with lecturers, and pressure from family and social environments, who frequently inquire about the graduation timeline (Munthe & Saragi, 2023). Therefore, students need strong perseverance and tenacity to meet these academic demands.

Grit, generally, refers to an individual's perseverance or persistence in pursuing specific goals (Postigo et al., 2021). Duckworth defines grit as a combination of perseverance and passion (Vazsonyi et al., 2019). This concept allows individuals to remain focused on their interests and make consistent efforts over a long period. According to Duckworth and Gross (2020), grit helps individuals achieve their desired goals, especially when facing failures. Individuals with grit tend to avoid frustration and continue to advance to correct their failures (Yuliana, 2019). In this context, failure does not serve as a reason to retreat but as a motivation to work harder (Agustin & Permatasari,

2020). Duckworth also notes that several factors affect the level of grit, including education, age, thoroughness, self-discipline, strategies, growth mindset, and self-control (Tamba & Wicaksono, 2023).

Meanwhile, self-control is an individual's ability to resist and manage certain impulses. Tangney and Baumeister (2004) define self-control as the capacity to resist desires and regulate behavior. Chaplin (as cited in Putri & Prasetyaningrum, 2018) defines self-control as an individual's belief in acting in a particular way and the capacity to control such behavior. Averill (as cited in Supriati et al., 2022) identifies three aspects of self-control: behavioral control, cognitive control, and decision-making control.

Final-year students working on their theses need strong grit and self-control because they often face significant pressures, demands, and temptations from various sources, both internal and external. These pressures can come from family, society, or peer invitations that might distract them from their final project. To tackle these challenges, students need to develop grit and self-restraint to stay focused on completing their tasks. Students with high levels of grit and self-control manage and complete their academic work more effectively. Conversely, students with low self-control are more likely to experience difficulties and delays in finishing their assignments (Zamarro et al., 2020).

Several previous studies have shown various results regarding the relationship between self-control and grit among students. Research by Oktarina and Adelina (2020) found a significant effect of self-control on grit among students involved in committee work, with simple linear regression analysis showing an R^2 value of 48.4%, $\beta=0.696$, and $p=0.000$. Additionally, Astrella et al. (2023) used a quantitative method and found a strong correlation between self-control and grit, with an r value of 0.776, indicating a significant effect of self-control on grit among students, with an r^2 value of 0.602. Research by Justine and Theresia (2019) showed a moderate relationship between grit and self-control among medical students, with an R -value of $0.531 < 0.01$, which is significant and positively affects grit, indicating that an increase follows an increase in grit in self-control. Furthermore, Astrella et al. (2023) also found that self-discipline and self-control simultaneously influence grit, with a contribution of 62.7%, based on multiple regression analysis. Zamarro et al. (2020) highlighted that students with high levels of grit and self-control can tolerate frustration and demonstrate better academic outcomes, as well as the ability to continue higher education.

Although there are similarities in the focus of previous research, there are also significant differences, such as the research subjects and analytical techniques used. This study focuses on final-year students from the 2020 cohort at State Islamic University of North Sumatra and employs different analytical techniques from previous studies. Therefore, this research is important as it can provide new findings and contribute information on how self-control and grit can help students manage emotions, control desires, and persevere in achieving goals, particularly in completing their theses. This study aims to delve deeper into how grit and self-control affect final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan, a topic that researchers have not extensively explored.

The study aims to explore and analyze the role of grit and self-control among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. It focuses on understanding how grit and self-control affect students' ability to complete their final assignments, particularly their theses. The primary objective of this study is to identify the factors contributing to academic success in dealing with the pressures and challenges associated with thesis completion. Additionally, the study aims to provide in-depth insights into the relationship between grit and self-control and the interaction between these two variables in the academic context of final-year students.

Based on these research objectives, the main hypothesis proposed is that there is a significant positive effect of grit and self-control on the ability of final-year students to complete their theses at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. In other words, the higher the level of grit and self-control among students, the greater their likelihood of completing their final assignments. Furthermore, an additional hypothesis states that there is a significant difference in the impact of grit and self-control on thesis completion between students with high levels of grit and self-control compared to those with low levels. Students who exhibit high levels of grit and self-control are expected to achieve better academic results and manage challenges and pressures more effectively during the thesis completion process.

METHOD

In this study, we use self-control (X) as the independent variable and grit (Y) as the dependent variable. The research method employed is a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2014) aimed at examining the role of self-control in grit among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. The study population includes active students from the 2020 cohort at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication. We conducted sampling using probability sampling, selecting a sample size of 100 respondents through random sampling. We carried out the research from March to May 2024 at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

The primary data source for this study is students who are currently completing their theses or journal articles at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication. We collected data by distributing an online questionnaire via the link <https://forms.gle/KWxqF6sWiVPcxVry7>. The questionnaire used is an adaptation of previous research instruments (Oktarina & Adelina, 2020) and utilizes a Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of two scales: a self-control scale with 15 items and a grit scale with 20 items. We designed the questionnaire to measure self-control and grit among final-year students with both favorable and unfavorable questions.

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire have been tested, with the self-control scale showing 12 valid items out of 15 and a reliability index of 0.938. The grit scale showed 17 valid items out of 20, with a reliability index of 0.936. These results indicate that both scales are reliable for this study. Data analysis was conducted using normality tests and simple regression, processed with SPSS version 25, to determine the extent of the influence of self-control on grit among final-year students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study aims to determine the influence of self-control and grit on the academic performance of final-year students. As an initial step, it is crucial to understand the theoretical concepts of these two variables. According to Duckworth (cited in Astrella et al., 2023), grit is a personality trait that combines passion and perseverance. Grit is the way an individual can achieve long-term goals by overcoming obstacles and challenges and is one method for assessing whether someone can maintain the effort to persist through life's challenges (Ibtihajmawati & Primanita, 2024).

Self-control, according to Duckworth and Steinberg (cited in Antoinette et al., 2019), is an individual's ability to voluntarily regulate attention, emotions, and behavior to cope with distractions that conflict with their goals. Self-control involves actions that align with clear objectives, even when there are more appealing options (Antoinette et al., 2019). Self-control is crucial for helping students stay focused on their academic goals, avoid distractions, and manage their time effectively.

The general characteristics of the students involved in this research include 100 final-year students from the 2020 cohort across various study programs at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra. All respondents participated in completing the questionnaire designed to assess their self-control and grit.

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	%
Male	27	27%
Female	73	73%
Total	100	100%

Based on Table 1, the characteristics of the respondents in this study by gender show that the majority are female, with 73 respondents (73%), followed by male respondents with 27 (27%).

Table 2: Characteristics of Respondents by Study Program

Study Program	Number of Respondents	%
Islamic Guidance and Counseling	41	41%
Islamic Communication and Broadcasting	22	22%
Da'wah Management	17	17%
Islamic Community Development	20	20%
Total	100	100%

According to Table 2, the characteristics of respondents by study program indicate that the study is dominated by respondents from the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BPI) program, with 41 respondents (41%), followed by the Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (KPI) program with 22 respondents (22%), the Islamic Community Development program with 20 respondents (20%), and the Da'wah Management (MD) program with 17 respondents (17%).

After establishing the characteristics of the respondents, we analyzed the collected data. You can see the results of the data testing in the following tables.

Table 3: Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		100
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.00543309
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.080
	Positive	.080
	Negative	-.070
Test Statistic		.080
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.114 ^c

Based on Table 3, the results of the normality test conducted using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicate that the variables grit and self-control show a normal data distribution. The significance value of 0.114, which exceeds 0.05, indicates that the data in this study are normally distributed.

Table 4: Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.334a	.112	.103	4.026

Based on the coefficient of determination test shown in the table above, the R Square value is 0.112, which translates to 11.2% (0.112 x 100%). This result indicates that the variable self-control contributes 11.2% to grit. The remaining 88.8% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Table 5: Simple Regression Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
1				
(Constant)	35.074	5.157		6.802
Self Control	.398	.113	.334	3.508

Based on the simple regression test in the table above, self-control has a positive and significant effect on grit, as indicated by the significance value of 0.01 (0.01 < 0.05). The findings show that self-control influences grit among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra. According to the table, the simple regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = 35.074 + 0.398 X$$

Discussion

Based on the research findings, there is a positive relationship between self-control and grit among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. Examining how self-control relates to grit among final-year students is crucial because the two variables interrelate and cannot be separated from one another. Both self-control and grit are essential in explaining success across various aspects of an individual's life. They are interconnected, although there are differences between them (Justine & Theresia, 2019). Duckworth (2020) states that, in the context of education, grit is a significant predictor of individual educational success. With grit, final-year students tend to be more persistent in completing their final projects. Grit drives individuals to continue striving toward their goals without being distracted by interruptions (Muhibbin & Wulandari, 2021). Potential obstacles to achieving goals can be more easily overcome thanks to the presence of grit.

This study aims to explore the role of self-control in relation to grit among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra Medan, who are working on their final projects, such as journal articles and theses. According to the correlation test results, self-control and grit have a positive correlation. This finding suggests that higher levels of self-control are associated with increased levels of grit among students. This finding indicates that the ability to self-regulate and long-term perseverance support and reinforce each other.

Previous research by Oktarina and Adelina (2020) aligns with the framework of Duckworth and Gross (2014), showing that self-control has a significant impact on grit ($R^2 = 0.484$; $\beta = 0.696$; $p = 0.000$). Self-control can determine the level of grit among students participating in student activities. High self-control helps students resist internal impulses that could disrupt their studies and the completion of organizational tasks.

This study focuses on how self-control influences grit among final-year students concerning their perseverance and enthusiasm in completing their studies through working on theses or journal articles. The results of the simple regression test show that the constant value is 35.074, indicating that if there is no self-control (X), the predicted grit value is 35.074, with a coefficient value of 0.398. The regression equation can be used to predict the level of grit among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra Medan, working on journal articles or theses. The positive regression coefficient with a significance value of 0.01 (<0.05) shows that self-control (X) plays a significant role in grit (Y). If self-control is high, grit will be high; conversely, if self-control is low, grit will also be low.

The findings indicate that students with high self-control also tend to have high grit, suggesting that self-control and perseverance support and complement each other over the long term. Self-control helps students develop and maintain consistent study habits and motivation to achieve their academic goals (Werner et al., 2019). Thus, the positive and significant influence between self-control and grit demonstrates that these two variables synergize to achieve academic success for final-year students, particularly at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

Based on the respondent characteristics by gender, the results also show that there is no significant difference in self-control and grit between male and female students. Both female and male students exhibit comparable levels of self-control and grit. Additionally, this study finds that gender does not affect the ability to self-regulate or the perseverance required to achieve long-term academic goals. Both groups can develop plans for academic success. Strategies used by final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, include setting achievable goals, creating and adhering to schedules, managing time effectively, taking breaks, focusing, and maintaining a positive outlook in the face of failure.

These strategies align with previous research that demonstrates the importance of effective time management to ensure tasks are coordinated and completed within the set timeframe (Mutiara, 2023). Effective time management enables students to establish clear schedules, classify tasks for easier management, and avoid procrastination. Consequently, students can work consistently and systematically toward completing their final projects.

The aspect of interest consistency and perseverance among final-year students shows that they remain committed to their final projects and strive to graduate on time despite facing various obstacles, such as time constraints or difficulties in completing research and assignments. On the other hand, self-control encompasses students' ability to schedule effectively and manage emotions and self-regulation in challenging situations.

However, self-control cannot be separated from this. Although grit plays a crucial role in achieving goals for individuals, without self-control, one cannot significantly enhance grit, especially for final-year students. Self-control enables individuals to resist temptations and obstacles, make decisions according to their desires, and navigate various considerations (Pranitasari et al., 2023).

When someone has good self-control, they can regulate and suppress stimuli that trigger emotions, allowing the individual to avoid distractions that might hinder goal achievement (Fachrozie et al., 2021). Emotions such as disappointment can lead a person to give up, making self-control necessary to maintain composure in challenging situations and sustain grit to reach desired goals. Disappointment can cause a decline in performance, which may, in turn, lead students to abandon their final projects (Rizki & Pasaribu, 2021). Students often experience this decline due to uncertainty about the outcome of revisions made during guidance sessions and the emergence of laziness, which contributes to their failure to complete their final projects.

The research conducted on final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, shows that they work diligently on their final projects despite facing internal or external challenges. Specifically, self-control over laziness and emotions helps individuals complete their final projects and achieve their goal of graduating on time. Individuals with high self-control but low grit can effectively manage their temper, limit internet use, and control their eating habits but may change jobs annually (Boerma & Neill, 2020; Zamorro et al., 2020). Setting goals helps final-year students remain persistent and diligent (grit) while managing themselves (self-control) to keep their emotions and feelings calm in any situation (Ramos Salazar & Meador, 2023).

The results from the simple regression test show an r^2 value of 0.112, indicating that self-control influences grit by 11.2%. This finding means that other factors, which were not examined in this study, account for 88.8% of the variation in grit. According to Duckworth (2019), two factors affect grit: internal and external factors. Internal factors include interest, practice, goals, and expectations. External factors include upbringing, environment, and culture (Luh et al., 2017; Mora et al., 2023; Tualeka & Tsalitsah, 2023).

As Duckworth (2020) demonstrates, internal and external factors significantly shape students' character. Duckworth's research suggests that increasing perseverance and long-term enthusiasm requires not only self-control but also consideration of goals, interests, environmental support, and cultural principles that support these traits.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates a positive relationship between self-control and grit among final-year students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. The findings highlight the importance of self-control in supporting grit, which is a key factor in completing final projects such as theses or journal articles. Unlike previous studies that often focus on the relationship between self-control and other aspects of academic performance or behavior, this research provides specific insights into how self-control affects grit in the context of completing final assignments. This finding indicates that increasing self-control not only enhances students' ability to overcome distractions but also supports their perseverance in completing demanding academic tasks.

This study adds value by introducing a new perspective in the research on self-control and grit, particularly among final-year students. By employing simple regression methods to analyze the relationship between self-control and grit, this research empirically demonstrates that self-control has a significant impact on students' levels of grit. Furthermore, this study identifies that factors such as time management and consistency in facing challenges play a crucial role in supporting academic success. This concept expands our understanding of how self-control strategies can directly influence perseverance and success in completing final academic tasks.

Although this study provides valuable insights, there are some limitations to consider. One limitation is that self-control accounts for only 11.2% of the variance in grit within the regression model, while 88.8% is influenced by other factors not examined in this research. Additional internal and external factors, such as interest, practice, upbringing, environment, and culture, may also play a role in shaping grit. Therefore, future research should explore additional factors that may influence the relationship between self-control and grit. Moreover, future studies could broaden the scope by including various disciplines or student populations from different faculties to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how self-control and grit interact within a wider academic context.

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