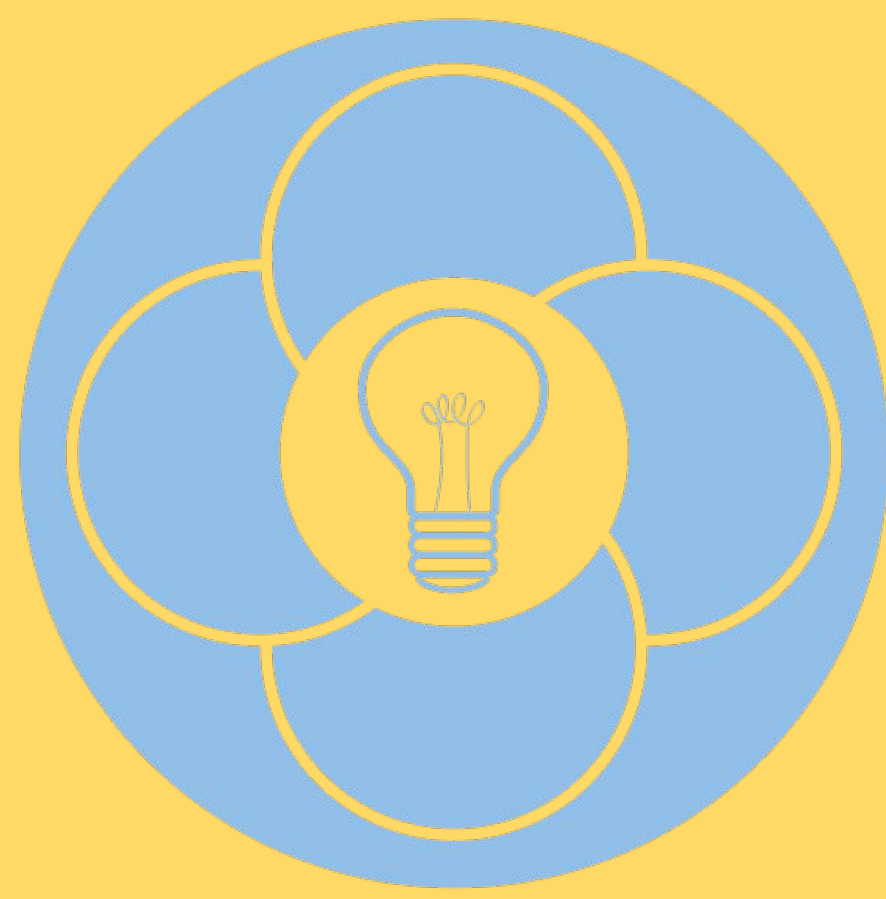
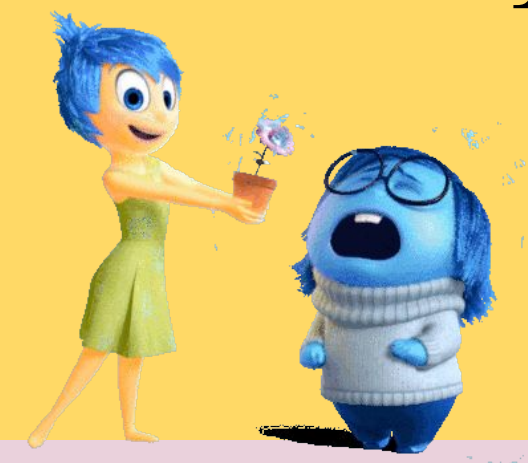




A Universal Shield?: Does gender moderate the relationship between grit and depression?

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INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology examines strengths and characteristics that promote human flourishing (Gable & Haidt, 2005). One construct that has received considerable attention is **GRIT**, defined as perseverance and passion toward long-term goals.

Research has shown that higher grit is associated with greater life satisfaction and self-esteem, individuals with lower grit report poorer mental health, and depression is negatively associated with grit. Some evidence suggests gender differences in grit and resilience.

Relatively little research has examined whether gender changes the relationship between grit and depression. This study investigates how gender may moderate the relationship between grit and depression.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does grit predict depressive symptoms?
2. Does gender predict depressive symptoms?
3. Does gender moderate the relationship between grit and depression?



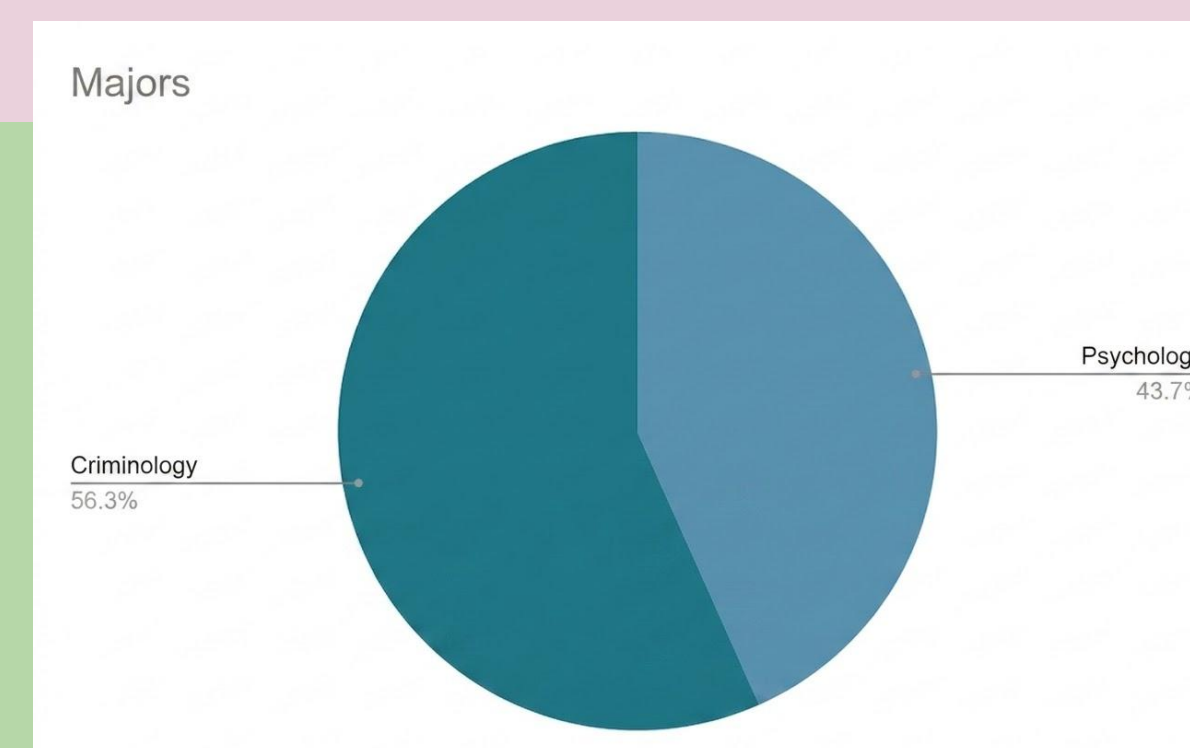
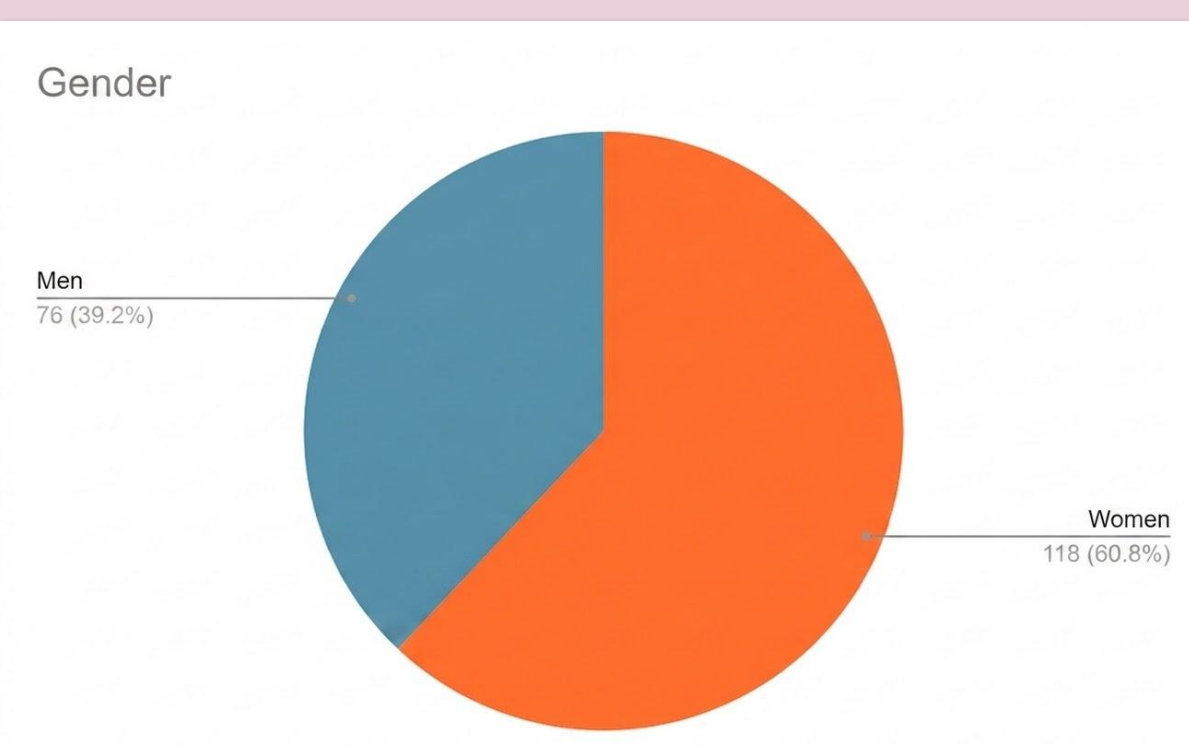
HYPOTHESES

1. Higher grit would be associated with lower depression.
2. Women would report higher depressive symptoms.
3. Gender would moderate the relationship between grit and depression, such that the association would differ between males and females.

METHOD

Participants and procedure:

Participants consisted of 194 first-year university students at ESERP (University of Vic, Central University of Catalonia, and the University of Barcelona). An online questionnaire was administered prior to a 15-week intervention period, and participants completed the same battery of questionnaires post-intervention period. For the purposes of this study, data were restricted to only pre-intervention responses. Age: $M = 20.05$, $SD = 3.35$, Range = 18–57



Measures:

Grit

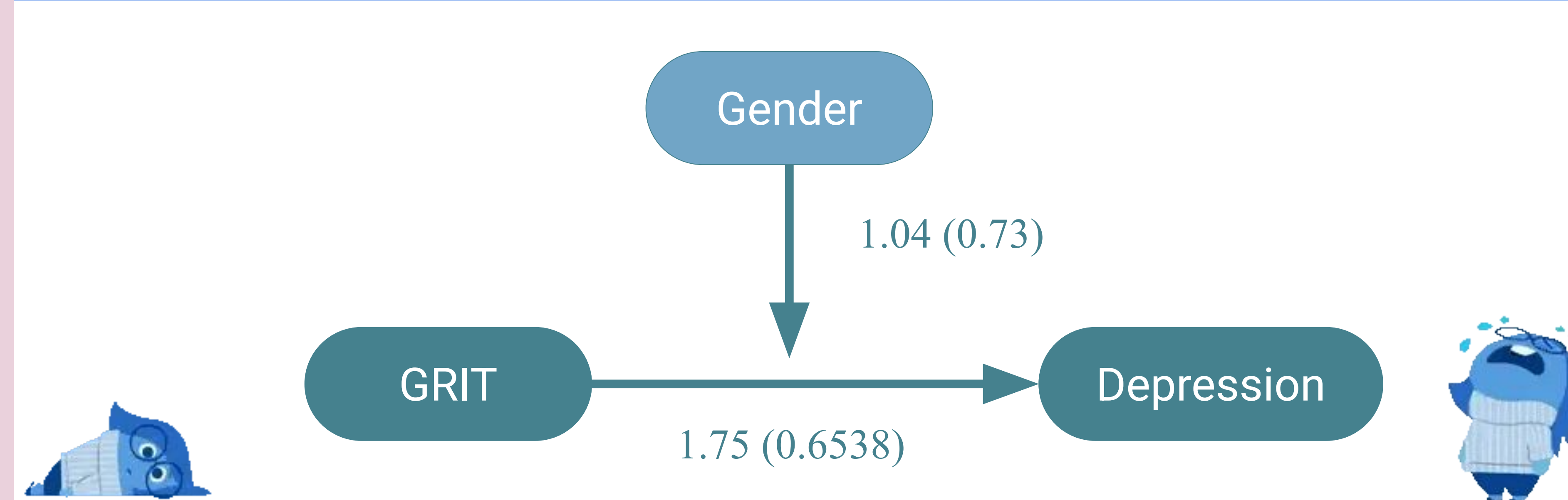
Short Grit Scale (Duckworth et al., 2007)

Measures perseverance and passion for long-term goals
Scores range 0–5 Higher scores indicate greater GRIT.

Depression

Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)
Scores range 0–60 Higher scores indicate more depressive symptoms.

A moderation analysis was conducted to determine if gender moderates the relationship between GRIT and depression using the PROCESS Macro in SPSS v. 29. GRIT was entered as the predictor. Depressive symptoms were entered as the outcome. Gender was entered as the moderator.



RESULTS

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 482) = 13.01$, $p < .001$, explaining 7.5% of the variance in depressive symptoms, $R^2 = .075$.

The effect of GRIT on depression (Path A) was not significant, $b = 1.75$, 95% CI [-5.92, 9.42], $t(482) = .45$, $p = .6538$

The hypothesized moderator of gender did not significantly predict depression (Path B), $b = -9.75$, 95% CI [-28.84, 9.33], $t(482) = -1.00$, $p = .3159$

The interaction between GRIT and Gender on Depression was not significant (Path C), $b = 1.04$, 95% CI [-4.94, 6.92], $t(482) = .35$, $p = .73$

The statistical moderation analysis revealed that while the overall regression model was significant—accounting for 7.5% of the variance in depressive symptoms—the core hypothesis was ultimately rejected because gender does not moderate the relationship between grit and depression.

This conclusion is driven by a non-significant interaction effect ($b = 1.04$, $p = .73$), meaning that the connection between a person's grit and their depressive symptoms does not vary, change, or depend on whether they are male or female. Furthermore, neither grit ($p = .6538$) nor gender ($p = .3159$) acted as significant individual predictors of depression within this model.

Broadly, positive psychology frameworks pioneered by Gable and Haidt (2005) suggest that assets like grit build overall life satisfaction and resilience.

- ✗ Gender did **not** moderate the relationship between grit and depressive symptoms.
- ✗ There was **no evidence** that the association between grit and depressive symptoms differed between males and females.

DISCUSSION

Contrary to expectations, gender did not significantly moderate the association between grit and depressive symptoms. Additionally, grit was not a significant predictor of depressive symptoms after accounting for gender and the interaction term.

In this sample, the association between grit and depressive symptoms was similar for males and females. Thus, the relationship between grit and depressive symptoms did not differ across gender in this sample.

Although the overall model was statistically significant, the interaction effect—the primary test of our hypothesis—was not significant, suggesting that gender does not influence the relationship between grit and depressive symptoms

Practically, these findings mean that grit affects depressive symptoms similarly across genders, and any attempt to use grit to predict or understand depression levels would look identical for both men and women in this sample. Additionally, because the overall model leaves 92.5% of the variance in depression unexplained, it means that other unmeasured variables—such as genetics, environment, or stress—play a much larger role in influencing depressive symptoms than either grit or gender.

LIMITATIONS

When studying if gender moderates the relationship between grit and depression, the study utilizes only 76 males compared to 118 females. This study uses 194 first year university students to show if there is a possible moderation. Second, third and fourth year students were not added.



References:



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