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## INTRODUCTION

- Academic faculty in the health sciences face many professional challenges due to the competing demands of teaching, scholarship, and clinical duties. Successful achievement of these ongoing professional expectations requires the capacity to persevere when stress levels rise. The ability to manage challenging workloads and endure stress requires resilience,<sup>1</sup> while the ability to sustain interest and effort towards professional goals demands grit.<sup>2</sup>
- The purpose of the study was to analyze differences in faculty resilience and grit as impacted by perceived stress and intrinsic personality traits, and determine how character strengths can mediate these effects.

## KERN INSTITUTE TRIPLE AIM

- Character strengths were used as predictor variables for faculty resilience and grit as well as a mediator variable for the impact of perceived stress on resilience/grit.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Twenty faculty were interviewed at a midwestern medical college for approximately thirty minutes about sources of stress that impacted their levels of resilience and grit.
- Self-reported surveys, which included the RS-25 Resilience Scale, Short Grit Scale (Grit-S), Perceived Stress Survey, Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), and the Five-Factor Personality Inventory (IPIP-5-50).
- Survey data analyzed via bivariate correlations and stepwise multivariate linear regression with IBM® SPSS® 24.0. This study was approved by the institutional IRB.

## RESULTS



Fig. 1: Faculty Reported Sources of Stress

- Compelling literature created a need for 20 short MCW faculty interviews which yielded sources of stress [Fig 1]:

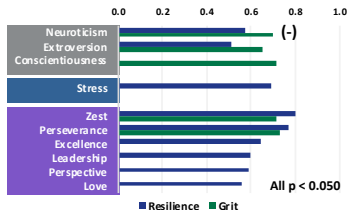


Fig. 2: Significant Correlations of Resilience and Grit

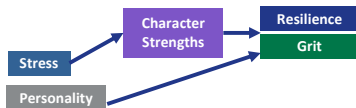


Fig. 3: Mediator Model of Stress, Character Strengths, Resilience and Grit

- Character strengths mediated the effects of stress (but not personality) on resilience and grit [Fig 3].
  - The relation of stress and grit was mediated by the character strength of perseverance.
  - The relation of stress and resilience was mediated by the character strength of zest.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

- During the initial interviews about resilience with faculty, faculty spoke considerably longer than we anticipated. We were curious why people who are so busy would speak for 30 to 60 minutes about the external stressors in their lives.
- The five members of the research team had worked on the committee to develop a faculty teaching academy and therefore were able to make connections and collaborate on this study.
- Faculty will be informed of the value created by knowing that character strengths such as perseverance and zest can be used to mediate the adverse effects of stress on resilience and grit. The results of this study have been accepted for presentation at the 2019 Association of American Medical Colleges and 2019 International Association of Medical Science Educators annual conferences.

## DISCUSSION

- The external stressors on faculty resilience and grit are mediated (compensated) by character strengths, in particular perseverance and zest.
- Intrinsic qualities of faculty traits of personality would impact resilience and grit, in particular conscientiousness, extroversion, and neuroticism. However, personality could not be mediated by any character strengths.
- Personality effects on other psychological outcomes such as empathy have been mediated by emotional intelligence, so perhaps that might be examined for resilience and grit in subsequent analysis.

1. American Psychological Association (2016). The Road to Resilience. Retrieved online from: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>  
 2. Duckworth AL, Peterson C, Matthews MD, Kelly DR. Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long Term Goals. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 2007;92:1087-1101.