



## LANGUAGE ATTITUDE AND L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF-SYSTEM: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF L2 GRIT

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### Abstract:

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the level of language attitude and L2 motivational self-system as mediated by L2 grit among College of Teacher Education (CTE) students at the University of Mindanao, Davao City, Philippines. This quantitative study utilized the descriptive-correlational design and stratified random sampling as its method. This study gathered a total of 313 respondents across year levels. The validated adapted questionnaires were used in gathering the data, with mean, standard deviation, Pearson r correlation, and mediation analysis as the statistical tools. Results revealed that the levels of language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, and L2 grit were all high. Also, the findings showed a significant relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system, language attitude and L2 grit, and L2 motivational self-system and L2 grit. Mediation analysis further revealed that L2 grit partially mediated the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system, showing that learners' persistence and sustained effort have an essential role in improving their motivation in language acquisition. These findings suggest that language learning should not only encourage positive learner attitudes but also promote grit and long-term commitment to strengthen motivation. Teachers and curriculum developers should integrate strategies like interactive, culturally enriched tasks, goal-setting interventions, and formative feedback to improve learners' emotional involvement, resilience, and self-regulated learning for better language achievement.

**Keywords:** education, language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, L2 grit, mediating effect, Philippines

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## 1. Introduction

In a language-learning classroom, one of the significant problems that needs to be addressed among the faculty members, teachers, and students is the lack of motivation (Filgona, 2020; Dağgöl *et al.*, 2013; Astuti, 2013; Dörnyei, 2005). One of the primary reasons is that, because of other priorities, students lose confidence in their efforts to excel in their performance at school. Also, studies have found that students' motivation to acquire a language could have a significant impact on them due to negative emotions, like anxiety, loss of confidence, and lack of interest (Shirvan & Talebzadeh, 2020; Buscagan *et al.*, 2023). Students might encounter difficulties in learning a second language in the classroom, especially those who lack instrumental or integrative motivation (Cook, 2000), because they are not involved in the learning process, which could impede their ability to achieve class learning objectives (Alshenqeeti, 2018).

Moreover, several studies have investigated low levels of motivation among students in classrooms. To exemplify, a study by Xie (2020), which was supported by Jenal *et al.* (2022), argued that students' demotivation was manifested when they also experienced test anxiety, which could hinder their motivation to learn. In addition, Ibrahim *et al.* (2023) found a weak relationship between motivator and hygiene factors in language classrooms, which suggests minimal impact on their learning since motivational and hygiene factors can temporarily interfere with language learning, such as heavy workloads. Problems like these could lead to issues like intrinsic motivation since it is a key predictor for students' good academic performance (Miyamoto *et al.*, 2020).

Researchers have identified that attitudes and motivation have been significant in learning L2 since the 1940s. L2 learning is when individuals acquire another language aside from their native language (L1), either naturally or in an educational setting, which includes developing linguistic ability and communicative competence in L2 learning due to social, cognitive, affective, and environmental factors (Loewen, 2020). Several studies have revealed that personal attitudes shape how learners approach language learning (Aydin, 2018; Delfabbro & King, 2021; Jahangard *et al.*, 2020). For instance, Rasool and Winke (2019) have emphasized that students are more motivated to learn when they possess a good language attitude. A study among 352 secondary public-school students found that academic motivation demonstrated a significant positive correlation with attitudes toward English learning. Another study revealed that maintaining a positive attitude is significant to many Japanese students' motivation to learn (Kirkpatrick *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, Jalalzai *et al.* (2023) pointed out that higher levels of motivation in learning L2 affect students' attitudes in terms of their cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects. This relationship is further supported by a study of Turkish learners, which claims that a strong predictor of high motivation to learn L2 is a positive attitude (Abdul *et al.*, 2019; Genc & Aydin, 2017). This also aligns with Sengkey's (2018) findings, in which college students show a higher motivation to learn when they have positive attitudes towards learning L2.

In both English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), students must exhibit a positive attitude in learning L2 and grit in the language learning process. Studies have investigated how students' EFL attitudes could predict learning perseverance. A study by Somblino and Alieto (2020) revealed that having a positive language attitude not only promotes interest but also encourages effort in both ESL and EFL learning. Also, Toar *et al.* (2024) pointed out that there is a moderate link between students' EFL attitude and EFL learning perseverance. Moreover, Kholili and Ferdiyanto (2022) indicated that students with prevalent EFL grit demonstrated positive attitudes and a strong passion for striving for their future jobs.

Motivation is significant since it affects the amount of effort students must exert in accomplishing their goals (Melendy, 2008), and boosting students' motivation could be through positive feedback and encouragement from teachers and parents (Caballo, 2025). Having a strong sense of grit and higher motivational levels is expected to align among individuals. Hence, it is reasonable to argue that regardless of the level of grit, whether general or specific to language learning, it exhibits the degree of motivation in language learners (Pawlak *et al.*, 2024). This claim was strengthened by a study conducted by Wu *et al.* (2022), which shows that there is a significant and moderate correlation between students' motivation and their language learning grit. Also, a study by Teimouri *et al.* (2022), which investigated the relationship between L2 grit and language learning success, found that L2 grit is necessary for language development, along with intrinsic motivation being crucial for effective learning.

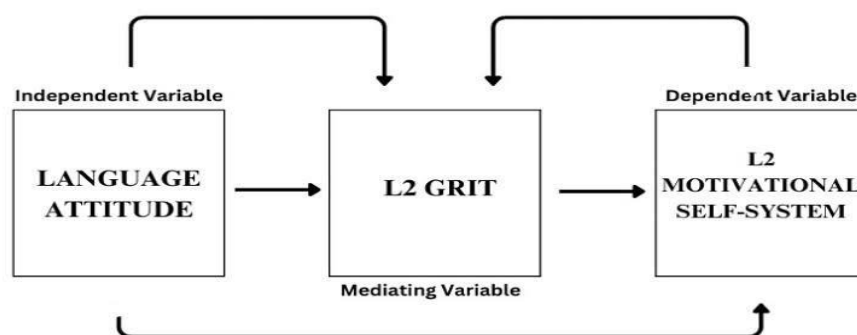
Moreover, a study by Lee and Drajati (2019), which explores grit as one of the affective variables accompanied by motivation and self-confidence, has posited that it significantly impacts students' willingness to communicate (WTC). Also, Kim *et al.* (2018) pointed out that persistence was the most significant predictor of motivation and L2 proficiency among secondary South Korean English learners. Furthermore, Changlek and Palanukulwong (2015) investigated motivational traits among gritty Thai students and revealed that gritty students demonstrated high levels of motivation and low levels of anxiety compared to their peers.

This study is mainly anchored by Gardner's socio-educational model, which claims that motivation in learning L2 is determined by learners' language attitudes and their community. According to the model, motivation includes a "complex interplay of variables, which consists of the combination of effort plus desire in attaining the goal of learning L2 plus desirable attitudes towards language learning (Gardner, 1985). In the ESL context, it comprises two types of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation encourages individuals toward specific objectives and goals, while the motivation occurs from a desire to become a part of and progress within the community.

Also, the leading theory is supported by Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset Theory, which talks about how our beliefs about intelligence and the capacity to modify our thinking can affect how we deal with obstacles, respond to criticism, and attain our goals. This defines the learners who believe in the ability to grow through effort and are likely

to persevere in language learning, corresponding to L2 grit—the sustained effort and perseverance required to maintain motivation and achieve second language acquisition. Lastly, this is further supported by McClelland’s Achievement Motivation Theory, which underscores an individual’s high achievement motivation in overcoming difficulties, such as in the context of language learning. This theory also confirms the significance of L2 grit as a mediator between language attitudes and motivation, which explains why students remain motivated and persistent when learning a second language, even in difficult situations.

The variables of the study are shown in Figure 1. The independent variable for this study is language attitude. Baker (1992) viewed language attitude as constructs that show the persistence and direction of an individual’s behavior. Still, from Gardner’s viewpoint (1985), these are language learning motivational components, which combine effort, desire, and affirmative attitudes. However, Wenden (1991) expounds this into three aspects, which are cognitive (opinions and beliefs), affective (feelings and emotions), and behavioral (intentions or actions). Having positive and negative attitudes toward learning a language must include three components that will regulate one’s desire towards a language. Hence, a positive attitude towards language learning is distinguished by their strong desire to learn, comfort in speaking a language, and enthusiasm. Contrarily, having a negative performance in acquiring a language is due to a lack of interest (Ratnadewi *et al.*, 2020).



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Relationship of the Variables

On the other hand, the study’s dependent variable is the L2 motivational self-system proposed by Dornyei (2005), which includes three main elements: the ideal L2 self, the Ought-to L2 self, and the learning experience. The ideal L2 self involves the goals and vision of a learner in becoming a successful language user (Busse, 2009), while the ought-to L2 self includes the standards and expectations from external components like family, teachers, or society, and the L2 learning experience refers to the immediate environment and tasks that learners must deal with during the process of language learning (Ouyang & Lin, 2020). In other words, the L2 motivational self-system focuses on the direction of motivation, which addresses why learners are motivated to acquire a second language. However, it does not highlight how learners sustain those motivational forces when dealing with language learning challenges.

Moreover, the mediating variable of this study is the L2 Grit, established by Duckworth (2007) and described as the determination and enthusiasm for long-term goals. L2 grit, as presented by Duckworth (2016), highlights the enthusiasm of interest and persistence in pursuing goals. Enthusiasm shows individuals' inclination to achieve their goals, while persistence inspires them to engage in the processes required to achieve those goals. Researchers indicated that grit is considered domain-specific (Teimouri *et al.*, 2022; Yang, 2022), which means it could vary depending on the field of learning or application. In this context, L2 grit emphasizes how learners sustain their efforts and motivation when facing setbacks in the language learning process. When learners possess this trait, it helps them to stay persistent, committed, and resilient in enhancing language proficiency.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on the relationship between language attitudes and the L2 motivational system (Kirkpatrick *et al.*, 2024; Jalalzai *et al.*, 2023; Yuliani *et al.*, 2023; Anokye, 2022; Sellami-Sellami, 2021; Alimyar, 2020) in the EFL context, there remains a noticeable gap in understanding this relationship within the ESL context, particularly in the Philippine context. Two of the studies were conducted among students in universities in Bohol (Abdul *et al.*, 2019) and Samar, Philippines (Alaga, 2019), in which the studies only dealt with attitudes and motivation toward learning a second language. As for mediating effects, there is a lack of research on the relationship between L2 grit, language attitude, and L2 motivational self-system. A study by Zhao and Wang (2023) found that language attitudes and learning perseverance affect the motivational drives of learners, which further shows that having a long-term commitment and persistence is also essential in second language acquisition.

With that said, there is a need for further research in examining the relationships between the two variables with L2 Grit as the mediator. This research interest could determine the essential role of L2 grit as a mediating variable to language attitudes and L2 motivational self-system, focusing on Davao City as the locality. This research could have implications for updating existing literature on each variable involved in the study. The results would indicate that teachers should consider incorporating activities that encourage motivation and grit, such as goal setting and persistence-based tasks, to enhance students' long-term language learning motivation. These practices can help address the gap between positive language attitudes and sustained motivational efforts, specifically in ESL contexts like Davao City.

This study has significance regarding academic and practical implications, especially in enhancing the understanding of the language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, and L2 grit. Through exploring the relationship of these variables, this study will not only fill gaps in the current literature but also provide a thorough understanding of the framework of how language attitudes and grit contribute to L2MSS in language learning. Language teachers and curriculum developers could utilize these findings to formulate strategies that will enhance positive language attitudes and learners' perseverance in attaining long-term goals. Also, this study will contribute to the existing knowledge of SLA as it will address the gaps in previous studies by examining how language attitudes influence motivation and how grit sustains it over time. This will

provide new perspectives on the relationship between affective factors and language success. Future researchers could use it as their reference, and it will serve as their guidance to gather information and building blocks for a bigger study. Most importantly, this study is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically in the quality education aspect.

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS) as mediated by L2 Grit among Education students. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives: to determine the level of language attitude among education students; to determine the education students' level of L2 motivational self-system; to determine the level of L2 grit among education students; to determine the significant relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system among education students; to determine the significant relationship between language attitude and L2 grit among education students; to determine the significant relationship between L2 grit and L2 motivational self-system among education students; and, to determine the L2 grit and its mediating effect on the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system among education students.

## **2. Method**

This section focuses on the study's methodology, which includes the research respondents, design, data collection instruments, and procedures throughout the research process.

### **2.1 Research Respondents**

The total population of the enrolled students from the College of Teacher Education in one of the higher learning institutions in Davao City is 1,659. From this population, the target respondents were calculated using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator. The chosen respondents of this study included students from different levels and programs under the College of Teacher Education. In choosing the respondents, random stratified sampling was used as the method for conducting the research. This approach is usually applied when working with data grouped into different strata or subgroups. Through this method, it is easier to identify a sample population most suitable to represent the entire study population (Thomas, 2023).

The study gathered 313 respondents in all year levels and courses of the College of Teacher Education program in the University of Mindanao, Matina campus. Particularly, 141 surveys were gathered for the first-year level, 52 questionnaires were collected from the second-year level, 65 surveys for the third-year level, and 55 surveys were gathered for the fourth-year level, which met the goal of 313 respondents. The College of Teacher Education comprises courses, namely: Bachelor of Elementary Education, Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Bachelor of Special Needs Education Major in Early Childhood Education, Bachelor in Physical Education, Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English, Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in

Mathematics, Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies, Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Filipino, Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Science.

To guarantee that there will be no bias in the choosing of respondents and maintain equal representation for all variables given, a selection criteria is to be taken into account: (1) he or she must be bona fide student of University of Mindanao; (2) he or she must be a college student under College of Teacher Education program; (3) he or she must be an enrollee of the second semester school year 2024-2025; (4) he or she must have the willingness to take part in the study. The researchers will exclude those who have been rejected from participating in the study, as well as those who decide to retreat or withdraw during the distribution of the survey questionnaire.

## 2.2 Research Instruments

This study utilized three adapted survey questionnaires to gather data on Language Attitude, L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS), and L2 Grit among education students. The Attitude Questionnaire test was adapted from Abidin *et al.* (2012) to measure the level of language attitude, which consists of three indicators: behavioral, affective, and cognitive aspects. On the other hand, the L2 Motivational Self-System Scale by Taguchi *et al.* (2009) was implemented to assess the level of the L2 motivational self-system, which comprises three indicators: The Ideal L2 Self, The Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. Moreover, the L2 Grit scale from Teimouri *et al.* (2022) was used to measure the level of L2 grit, which consists of two indicators: perseverance of effort and consistency of interest.

The questionnaires used in this study were subjected to validity and reliability, including the statistical reliability process. As part of the process, the researchers obtained approval to adapt these tools from other studies that dealt with Language Attitude and L2 Motivational Self-System: The Mediating Effect of L2 Grit. A Cronbach's Alpha of .843 indicated that the survey questionnaire was reliable in gathering data. An informed consent form was presented using the introduction script, which explained the study's purpose to the participants. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, confidential, and that their identities would be concealed.

## 2.3 Research Design and Procedure

This research employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design to investigate the relationships among the three key variables: language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, and L2 grit. This approach allows for describing relationships among the variables without controlling or manipulating any of them (Lappe, 2000; Devi *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, mediation analysis was used to test whether L2 grit mediates the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system, which allows the understanding of the indirect effects among these variables (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2006). The adapted survey questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was utilized as the primary data collection instrument. The steps that were taken in the data gathering process are as follows: First, the researchers wrote a formal letter to the Dean of the

College of Teacher Education at the University of Mindanao, Matina Campus, to request permission to conduct the study among education students. After gaining approval, the survey questionnaires were distributed to the students, explaining the study's purpose and objectives. Before distribution, respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary, and their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses would be fully concealed. The researchers administered the questionnaires and retrieved all the data.

Afterward, the responses were organized and tabulated in preparation for statistical analysis. The results were interpreted and analyzed by a professional to guarantee accuracy. The privacy of the collected data and the anonymity of the respondents were protected throughout the research process. Then, the researchers have sufficient data based on the survey results. The study's findings were used to come up with meaningful conclusions and give applicable recommendations from the data analyzed.

The following statistical tools were used to tabulate and interpret the data: First, each variable had descriptive statistics calculated by getting the mean and standard deviation. Mean was used to describe the level of language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, and L2 grit among education students. Standard deviation was measured as the spread of data from the mean in the dataset (Ayeni, 2014). Also, Pearson's *r* correlation was utilized to determine the significance and direction of the relationships between language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, and L2 grit. Furthermore, mediation analysis was employed to test the mediating role of L2 grit on the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings after the data were gathered in the study. The data presented would help to determine the level of three variables, which are the language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, and L2 grit. Moreover, the analysis would examine the significant relationships among these variables and determine whether L2 grit mediates this relationship among education students.

#### 3.1 Language Attitude among Education Students

Table 1 shows the level of language attitude among education students defined by the following indicators: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects.

**Table 1:** Level of Language Attitude

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	SD
Behavioral	3.41	.45
Cognitive	3.70	.50
Emotional	3.72	.51
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>.43</b>



The overall level of language attitude of education students had a mean of 3.61 ( $SD=.43$ ), which is described as a high level and reveals that students mostly exhibit favorable attitudes. This indicates that students with a positive attitude towards language learning are more likely to be actively engaged in learning tasks, which leads to an improved language outcome over time. High levels of language attitude can encourage students to communicate and participate in classroom interaction, which could develop their communicative competence. Furthermore, high levels of language attitude can make learners persistent in dealing with learning challenges, which sustain their efforts towards language learning.

Among the presented data, the emotional aspect acquires the highest mean scores of 3.72 ( $SD=.51$ ), followed by cognitive with 3.70 ( $SD=.50$ ), and the behavioral aspect with a mean value of 3.41 ( $SD=.45$ ), which was both described as high. This suggests that learners have a strong emotional link to English, where they perceive it as both enjoyable and meaningful to their character and intentions, which promotes their interests, good learning experiences, and constant dedication to language proficiency. Also, high levels of cognitive aspects suggest that students consider English not just a subject but a means of accessing knowledge, improving creativity, and relating to their previous knowledge. Moreover, this clearly shows that language learners are highly determined in learning English, communicate with effective native speakers, and acquire native-like usage, which suggests a strong desire to enhance their language ability and speaking conviction. The findings support the study of Li *et al.* (2023), which indicates that students with high levels of language attitude are more likely to excel in the language learning process. This also justifies the claim that learners with high levels of language attitude could be persuaded to enhance their language skills when they obtain good language skills (Zulfikar *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, high levels of language attitude could result in demonstrating positive behaviour in learning the language (Anwar & Shukur, 2015).

### 3.2 L2 Motivational Self-System among Education Students

Table 2 presents the level of L2 Motivational Self-System of education students based on their responses from the following indicators: the ideal L2 self, the ought to L2 self, and L2 learning experience.

**Table 2:** Level of L2 Motivational Self-System

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	SD
The Ideal L2 Self	4.12	.65
The Ought to L2 Self	3.07	.94
L2 Learning Experience	3.85	.72
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>.55</b>

The level of L2 Motivational Self-System has an overall mean of 3.68 ( $SD=.55$ ), which implies a high level. It demonstrates that students had a sustainable effort and interest toward language goals. This suggests that students have a clear and ideal vision of themselves as successful language users. This also means that students are motivated not

only by external factors but also by the internal drive, which makes language learning doable and could lessen changes due to external factors. Students with high levels of motivation are more likely to be involved in self-regulated learning, as learners are accountable for their progress.

Regarding its indicators, the ideal L2 self had the highest mean value of 4.12 ( $SD=.65$ ), which is described as high. This indicates that students strongly envision themselves using English in future situations, such as interacting and working with foreign speakers, or striving for professional development. Following this, the L2 learning experience got the second with a mean score of 3.85 ( $SD=.72$ ), which is also labeled as high. This shows that a good language learning experience makes students become highly interested and find the language learning process both pleasurable and satisfying. In contrast, the ought to L2 self had the lowest mean value of 3.07 ( $SD=.94$ ), which is characterized as a moderate level. This implies that learners are moderately motivated by external factors such as peer expectations, notable individuals, and established norms. Their motivation is directed by compliance, commitment to satisfy others' expectations, or to prevent unfavorable outcomes. Although it was extrinsically driven, it plays an essential role in supporting students to appreciate and strive for language learning.

The findings align with the study of Purnama and Muljadi (2021), which stated that higher levels of motivation could lead to better outcomes and achieving their goals in language learning. Additionally, this supports the claim that high motivation levels would lead to higher behavior, emotional engagement, and a strong desire to become English speakers in the future (Wu, 2024; Sadoughi *et al.*, 2022; Lamb & Arisandy, 2020). Moreover, high levels of learner motivation suggest that students are motivated due to the desire to meet expectations or gain approval from teachers, parents, and peers (Lee & Lee, 2020; Zhang & Liu, 2022; Liu & Li, 2023), which further means that learners wanted to learn and participate in the language learning activities due to academic compliance for their degree (Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009) or because of pressure (Papi, 2010).

### 3.3 L2 Grit among Education Students

Table 3 shows the level of L2 grit among education students.

**Table 3: Level of L2 Grit**

	x	S.D.
Overall	3.67	.60

The overall mean of L2 grit among education students is 3.67 ( $SD=.60$ ), which indicates that their level of L2 grit is considered high. This suggests that students exhibit strong passion and dedication in language learning, especially in dealing with struggles and being consistent with language goals. Even though their language learning consistency changes over time, they could still address their weaknesses and stay focused on the language learning process. This further demonstrates that their continuing efforts and commitment have an essential role in language learning.

This result supports the study of Teimouri *et al.* (2022), which stated that learners with high levels of language grit tend to exert more effort in their learning and are more likely to participate in the classes. Also, Shafiee Rad and Jafarpour (2022) state that high levels of L2 grit help learners analyze and improve their emotions and recover immediately from challenges. Moreover, Abdolrezapour and Ghanbari (2021) show that learners' higher levels of L2 grit and emotion could lead to the academic achievement of the students in language learning since they are more energetic and dedicate more time to their language learning activities (Khajavy & Aghaee, 2022; Sudina & Plonsky, 2020)

### 3.4 Correlation Analysis between Language Attitude and L2 Motivational Self-System in Education Students

Table 4 below shows the correlation between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system.

The results revealed a significant relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system since the p-value is less than 0.05. The relationship shows a strongly positive correlation since the r-value is 0.677. It demonstrates that when the language attitude increases, the L2 motivational self-system also increases. Likewise, if the former decreases, the latter also decreases.

**Table 4:** Significant Relationship between Language Attitude and L2 Motivational Self-System

Language Attitude	L2 Motivational Self-System			
	The Ideal L2 Self	The Ought-to L2 Self	L2 Learning Experience	Overall
Behavioral	.187*	.437*	.422*	.507*
Cognitive	.302*	.459*	.448*	.576*
Emotional	.508*	.350*	.621*	.672*
<b>Overall</b>	.389*	.477*	.575*	<b>.677*</b>

\*p<0.05

Among its indicators of language attitude and L2 motivational self-system, the emotional aspect and L2 learning experience ( $r=0.621$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), which describes a moderate to strong correlation. This implies that the learner's emotional attitudes are linked to their learning experiences in language learning, which emphasizes that emotions help learners to be motivated. However, the relationship between the behavioral aspect and the ideal L2 self has a very weak positive correlation ( $r=0.187$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This indicates that learners' behavioral attitudes towards language learning are not strongly linked with how the learners envision themselves as proficient language users. This highlights that behaviors don't likely influence students' motivation.

The relationship between language attitudes and L2 motivational self-system is confirmed by a study of Pham (2021), which indicates that attitude and motivation are related to each other in the language learning process, which means that if learners have a positive language attitude and are well-motivated, they will perform well in the learning process. Also, Jalalzai *et al.* (2023) emphasize that students' attitudes in terms of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects are associated with higher levels of motivation in the language learning process. Additionally, studies conducted by

Kirkpatrick *et al.* (2024), and Rasool and Winke (2019) revealed that maintaining a positive attitude is linked with learners' motivation, which means that since they recognize that learning a language is essential for them, they tend to be motivated and have positive language attitudes (Imsa-Ard, 2020).

### 3.5 Correlation Analysis between Language Attitude and L2 Grit among Education Students

Table 5 below shows the relationship between language attitude and L2 Grit.

The results reveal a significant relationship between language attitude and L2 grit since the p-value is less than 0.05. The relationship shows a moderately positive correlation since the r-value is 0.514. Therefore, it clearly states that when the language attitude increases, the L2 grit also increases.

**Table 5:** Significant Relationship between Language Attitude and L2 Grit

Language Attitude	L2 Grit
Behavioral	.350*
Cognitive	.421*
Emotional	.556*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>.514*</b>

\*p<0.05

Regarding the indicators of language attitude and L2 grit, the highest correlation was observed between the emotional aspect ( $r=0.556$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), which describes a moderately positive correlation. This suggests that learners' emotional attitude is moderately related to their learning perseverance and passion for language learning. Meanwhile, the behavioral aspect has the lowest correlation ( $r=0.350$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), which shows a weak positive correlation. This implies that even though learners' behavioral attitudes are associated with L2 grit, they may not fully demonstrate internal perseverance and long-term commitment towards language learning.

The relationship between language attitudes and L2 grit is confirmed by a study of Toar *et al.* (2024), which reveals that there is a relationship between students' language attitudes and language learning perseverance. In addition, Kholili and Ferdiyanto (2022) argued that students with observable language grit are likely to influence positive attitudes and a strong passion in striving for their academic success. Moreover, intense grit could make the learners deal with challenges, showing a positive attitude toward their engagement in the language learning process (Zhang & Liu, 2022; Liu & Li, 2023; Sudina & Plonsky, 2020).

### 3.6 Correlation Analysis between L2 Motivational Self-System and L2 Grit among Education Students

Table 6 below shows the correlation between L2 motivational self-system and L2 Grit.

The results revealed a significant relationship between L2 motivational self-system and L2 grit since the p-value is less than 0.05. The relationship shows a moderately

positive correlation since the  $r$ -value is 0.576. Hence, it was asserted that when the L2 motivational self-system increases, the L2 grit also increases.

**Table 6:** Significant Relationship between L2 Motivational Self-System and L2 Grit

L2 Motivational Self-System	L2 Grit
The Ideal L2 Self	.438*
The Ought-to Self	.275*
L2 Learning Experience	.563*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>.576*</b>

\* $p < 0.05$

Among the indicators of L2 motivational self-system and L2 grit, the highest correlation was observed between the L2 learning experience ( $r=0.563$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), which describes a moderately positive correlation. This suggests that students' learning experience in language learning is moderately linked to their learning perseverance and passion for long-term language proficiency. However, the ought-to L2 self showed the lowest correlation ( $r=0.275$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), which shows a weak positive correlation. This implies that external motivations may not strongly lead to a sustained effort and passion in language learning.

The relationship between L2 motivational self-system and L2 grit conforms to the study of Wu *et al.* (2022), which reveals that there is a link between language learners' motivation and grit that affects their language performance (Liu & Li, 2023; Bozgün & Akın-Kösterelioğlu, 2021; Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020; Giordano, 2019; Loganathan *et al.*, 2016; Aldosari, 2014). In addition, a study by Pawlak *et al.* (2024) argues that whether grit could be general or specific to language learning, there is a relationship with the learner's level of motivation. Moreover, Teimouri *et al.* (2022) point out that language learning grit with intrinsic motivation is essential for effective learning, which means that internal motivation helps learners persist in learning activities (Werner *et al.*, 2018).

### 3.7 L2 Grit as a Mediator on the Relationship between Language Attitude and L2 Motivational Self-System among Education Students

In the context of L2 grit's mediating role in the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system, the correlation coefficients for each path in the mediation analysis, that is, the links between each variable, are statistically significant. Hence, each condition necessary to test for the possible role of a mediator has been met.

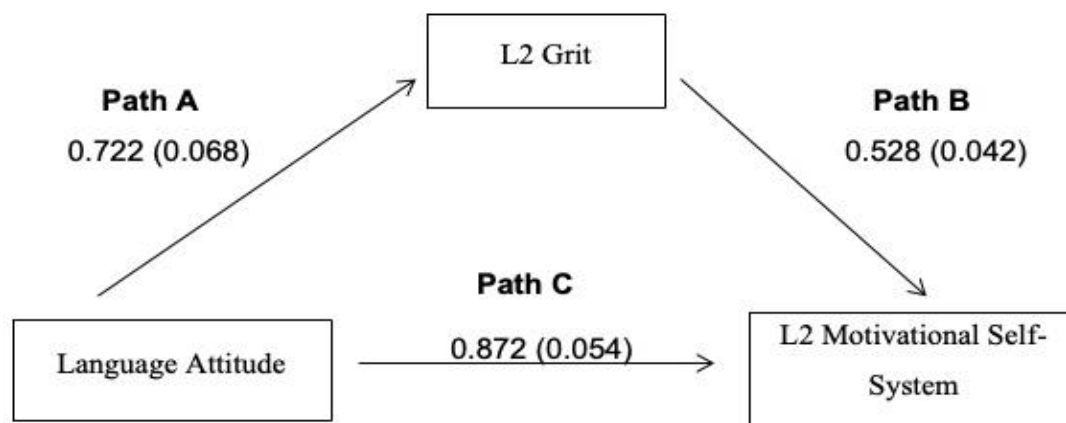
**Table 7:** Regression of Variables for Testing Mediation

Step		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient Beta	T	Sig.	Part Correlation
		B	Std. Error				
<b>1 (Path C)</b>							
Language Attitude on L2 Motivational Self-System		.872	.054	.677	16.259	.000	.677
<b>2 (Path A)</b>							
L2 Grit on Language Attitude		.722	.068	.514	10.589	.000	.514
<b>3 (Path B)</b>							
L2 Motivational Self-System on L2 Grit		.528	.042	.576	12.454	.000	.576
<b>4</b>	L2 Motivational Self-System on L2 Grit and Language Attitude						
	Language Attitude	.667	.058	.518	11.424	.000	0.444
	L2 Grit	.284	.042	.310	6.839	.000	0.266
<b>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.529</b>							

Table 7 shows the regression analysis for testing mediation on each path among the three variables: language attitude, L2 motivational self-system, and L2 grit.

Regression analysis reveals that language attitude significantly predicted L2 motivational self-system ( $B=0.872$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), which means that language learners with more positive attitudes tend to develop stronger motivational self-perception. Also, language attitude significantly predicted L2 grit ( $B=0.722$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), which suggests that positive attitudes are linked with greater commitment to language learning. Similarly, the L2 grit was a strong predictor for learners' L2 motivational self-system ( $B=0.528$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), indicating that learners' stronger perseverance demonstrates stronger motivational selves in language learning.

When both the language attitude and L2 grit were entered at the same time in the regression model predicting the L2 motivational self-system, both are still significant predictors. However, the direct effect of language attitude on L2 motivational self-system decreased from  $B=0.872$  to  $B=0.677$ , which indicates a partial mediation effect. The  $R^2$  value of the model was 0.529, which shows that language attitude and L2 grit combined explained 52.9% of the variance in L2 motivational self-system. This implies that language attitude plays an essential role in learners' motivation directly and indirectly via L2 grit. When learners have more positive attitudes toward language learning, they are not only motivated but also likely to persist and sustain their efforts, which further enhances their motivational self-system. Hence, this mediation suggests that developing students' grit can further improve their motivation towards language learning.



**Figure 2:** Mediation Analysis between Variables

Figure 2 below shows the mediation diagram between the three variables, which further illustrates this relationship with Path A being significant ( $B=0.722$ ), as well as Path B ( $B=0.528$ ). However, Path C remained significant but weakened when L2 grit is included, which supports the presence of mediation. This analysis suggests that L2 grit mediates the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system. While a positive language attitude has a direct effect on increasing learners' motivation, part of this effect is also channelled through grit, which implies that grit and persistence are essential through which positive attitudes are translated into an enhanced motivational self-system. Hence, this shows that even though developing a language attitude is essential, it is also vital to cultivate a sense of grit in building and maintaining learners' motivation in the long term.

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	0.722	Sobel test:	8.1116357	0.04699619
b	0.528	Aroian test:	8.09669852	0.04708289
s <sub>a</sub>	0.068	Goodman test:	8.12665586	0.04690933
s <sub>b</sub>	0.042	Reset all	Calculate	

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	0.722	Sobel test:	8.1116357	0.04699619
b	0.528	Aroian test:	8.09669852	0.04708289
s <sub>a</sub>	0.068	Goodman test:	8.12665586	0.04690933
s <sub>b</sub>	0.042	Reset all	Calculate	

**Figure 3:** Test for Significance of Mediation (Sobel Test)

Figure 3 shows the Sobel Test to determine the significance of L2 grit as the mediating variable. The z-value is 8.11 ( $p=0.000$ ), which means that the indirect effect of the relationship between Language Attitude and L2 Motivational Self-System via L2 Grit is statistically significant. The unstandardized indirect effect was estimated at 0.381, which means that approximately 38.1% of the total effect is mediated by L2 grit.

Furthermore, the indirect-to-total effect ratio was calculated as 0.563, which indicates that more than half of the total effect of language attitude and L2 motivational self-system is associated with the indirect pathway through L2 grit. This reveals that L2 grit mediates the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system. In this study, the students' level of language attitude affected the students' L2 motivational self-system indirectly through the mediating effect of L2 grit. Therefore, the teacher education students with high levels of language attitude improved their motivation through L2 grit, and the effect of L2 grit was essential.

The results from this study confirm Gardner's socio-educational model, which asserts that motivation results from a complex interaction between learners' attitudes toward the language and their broader social environment. The findings indicate that language attitude has a significant relationship with learners' grit and their motivational self-system and that grit acts as a mediator in this connection. This implies that more positive attitudes in language learners are not just more motivating but also more likely to manifest persistence and effort over time. These patterns align with the components of Gardner's model, which are effort, desire, and positive attitudes, emphasizing how motivation in L2 learning is internally driven and socially determined. The mediation of grit further strengthens the fact that persistence is crucial in developing positive language attitudes into strong motivational orientations. Hence, Gardner's theory is confirmed here, showing positive attitudes and grit as necessary in building long-term language learning motivation.

#### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study revealed that education students demonstrated high levels of language attitude with all indicators: cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects obtained high mean scores. This implies that students mostly exhibit favorable attitudes. Regarding the education students' level L2 motivational self-system, it was revealed as high. Two of its domains are described as high, except for one indicator: the ought-to L2 self being at the moderate level. This means that learners have a clear vision of themselves as successful language users, are intrinsically motivated, and are more likely to be involved in self-regulated learning. Moreover, the results demonstrated high levels of L2 grit, which means that education students exhibit strong passion and dedication in language learning, especially in dealing with struggles and being consistent with language goals.

Also, the correlation analysis showed a significant relationship among all variables. A strongly positive correlation was observed between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system. This shows that as students have positive attitudes, they are also motivated in their learning. Additionally, moderately positive relationships were found between language attitude and L2 grit, as well as L2 motivational self-system and L2 grit. Thus, it implies that when their level of language attitude increases, they tend to be more persistent in dealing with challenges. When learners are motivated, they are more committed to the language learning process.



Then, mediation analysis indicated that L2 grit partially mediates the relationship between language attitude and L2 motivational self-system, with approximately 38.1% of the total effect. This means that the language attitude affected the L2 motivational self-system indirectly through the mediating effect of L2 grit among learners. It implies that students with positive language attitudes are more likely to persist in learning, which enhances learners' motivational self-perceptions in language acquisition. Hence, this mediation indicated that developing students' grit can further enhance their motivation in second language acquisition.

This study confirms Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Acquisition, which emphasizes that motivation is influenced by learners' attitudes toward the language and the broader social and educational setting. The observed relationships in this study support Gardner's view that motivation results from the combination of effort, desire to achieve goals, and favorable attitudes toward language learning. The mediating role of L2 grit also confirms this model by indicating that sustained effort and commitment contribute to the presence of a strong L2 motivational self-system.

The findings suggest key recommendations for improving language learning in education students. First, since students show significant positive attitudes, language teachers should continue to nurture and improve such attitudes through interactive and culture-enriched activities like group discussions, multimedia presentations, and authentic communication tasks, which could further enhance learners' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive involvement in language learning.

Second, both the ideal and ought-to L2 self-components of the L2 motivational self-system should be facilitated to improve. Even though students have a clear vision of their ideal selves to become successful users of L2, the moderate mean score on the ought-to L2 self indicates the need for targeted interventions. Teachers and counselors can provide guided goal-setting sessions, mentorship, and career-focused language workshops to make students see the importance of language learning in fulfilling society's and the workplace's expectations.

Third, integrating activities that enhance grit in the curriculum for language learning is strongly recommended. Students are encouraged to build grit through regular, manageable tasks like keeping vocabulary logs, establishing weekly learning goals, and writing brief reflection papers on how they persevere over language-related difficulties. Peer collaboration and reward systems can also support the reinforcement of students' sustained effort and dedication.

Lastly, language instructors must provide formative feedback that not only addresses academic success but also recognizes student effort and progress. Positive reinforcement can play a significant role in building persistence and motivation. Finally, future researchers can investigate how these grit-oriented interventions work and analyze how language attitudes and motivation change over varying learning environments, particularly in the Davao City context, to confirm their relevance and effectiveness. However, it must be noted that the recommendations presented are solely

based on the data from a particular student population and may require adaptation for wider application across various learning contexts.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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