



BURNOUT AND ACADEMIC OPTIMISM AMONG PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GRIT

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Abstract:

This study examined the mediating effect of grit on the relationship between burnout and academic optimism among public elementary school teachers using a descriptive-correlational research design. A validated survey instrument was administered to respondents selected through stratified random sampling. Descriptive statistics, particularly the mean, were used to determine levels of burnout, grit, and academic optimism, while inferential statistics such as Pearson's *r* and the Sobel test assessed relationships and mediation effects. Results showed that burnout levels were generally low, with personal accomplishment as the most dominant indicator. Academic optimism was very high, characterized by strong collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis. Teachers also demonstrated very high levels of grit, reflecting perseverance and resilience. Correlation analysis revealed a very weak negative relationship between burnout and academic optimism, suggesting that burnout had minimal impact on teachers' positive perceptions of student success. Furthermore, grit did not significantly mediate the relationship between burnout and academic optimism. The study contributes to the literature on teacher well-being and underscores the need for programs that cultivate resilience and grit among educators, particularly in resource-limited educational settings.

SDG Indicator: #4 (Quality Education).

Keywords: educational management, mediating effect, path analysis, grit, burnout, academic optimism, public school teachers, Philippines

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1. Introduction

Teachers' academic optimism is increasingly under threat due to the intensifying demands of standardized testing, evolving curriculum standards, and persistent socioeconomic inequalities. These pressures weaken teachers' belief in their own instructional capacity, in the support of their school community, and in the potential for all students to succeed. As Gramaje and Buenviaje (2023) assert, both external and internal challenges contribute to the gradual decline of academic optimism, making it difficult for teachers to sustain a positive outlook within the classroom. This problematic issue calls for responsive educational policies that support the preservation and strengthening of academic optimism among teachers.

In light of these concerns, understanding teachers' academic optimism is crucial because it shapes how educators perceive their role, their students' potential, and the overall learning environment. When teachers maintain a strong sense of academic optimism, they are more likely to believe in their ability to positively influence student learning, trust their school community, and remain committed despite external challenges. This optimistic mindset fosters a climate of encouragement and resilience, which not only supports instructional practices but also cultivates a culture of hope and perseverance within schools. By focusing on the significance of academic optimism, this study underscores its foundational role in promoting meaningful and sustainable educational progress.

Corollary to this, it is reported in literature that burnout and academic optimism have a significant inverse relationship, where higher levels of academic optimism are associated with lower levels of burnout among teachers. Research consistently shows that teachers experiencing burnout often exhibit reduced academic optimism, as stress and exhaustion undermine their belief in their ability to positively impact students. Conversely, optimistic teachers are more likely to exhibit resilience, emotional stability, and a sense of personal accomplishment, mitigating the negative effects of burnout. This relationship underscores the importance of fostering academic optimism as a protective factor against burnout, enhancing teacher well-being and effectiveness, and ultimately improving student outcomes (Ates & Ünal, 2021; Coats, 2024; Fabella, 2023; Heruela, 2021; Kim *et al.*, 2021; Kim *et al.*, 2023; Mohammadi, 2021; Romano *et al.*, 2021; Schwarz, 2023; Uzum & Unal, 2023; Wu *et al.*, 2019).

Building on this, burnout and grit also demonstrate a significant inverse relationship, with higher levels of grit associated with lower levels of burnout among educators. Teachers with greater grit, characterized by perseverance and passion for long-term goals, are better equipped to withstand the pressures and stressors of their profession, thereby reducing the likelihood of experiencing burnout. Conversely, burnout, marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment, can weaken grit, making educators less resilient in the face of challenges. This dynamic highlights the critical role of grit in mitigating burnout, enhancing teacher retention, and promoting both professional and personal well-being

(Al-Zain & Abdulsalam, 2021; Dillenschneider, 2023; Fabelico & Afalla, 2020; Heruela, 2021; Kasalak & Dagyar, 2022; Mijakoski *et al.*, 2022; Rahman *et al.*, 2024; Shakir *et al.*, 2020; Suárez *et al.*, 2021).

In addition to the relationship between burnout and grit, the positive correlation between grit and teachers' academic optimism further underscores their interconnection. Grit complements the proactive and positive mindset encompassed by academic optimism. Teachers with higher levels of grit are more likely to exhibit strong academic optimism, as their resilience enables them to navigate challenges while maintaining trust in students, parents, and their own teaching efficacy. This synergy fosters a commitment to academic excellence and a growth-oriented approach to education. Research emphasizes that grit enhances perseverance in the face of obstacles, while academic optimism reinforces beliefs in achieving positive outcomes, thereby promoting higher teacher engagement, job satisfaction, and professional growth. Together, these traits significantly contribute to creating supportive learning environments and improving educational outcomes (Ahmad *et al.*, 2023; Ates & Ünal, 2021; Heruela, 2021; Kassoum, 2022; Kim *et al.*, 2023; Kilinc *et al.*, 2021; Mohammadi, 2021; Romano *et al.*, 2021).

Nonetheless, teachers remain vulnerable to burnout due to chronic stressors such as excessive workloads, classroom management difficulties, and the pressure to meet high academic standards, all of which contribute to burnout (Klusmann *et al.*, 2022). Emotional exhaustion, a central aspect of burnout, often manifests as fatigue, irritability, and detachment, especially in environments with limited resources, minimal administrative support, and dysfunctional workplace behaviors (Ghasemi, 2022). These challenges are intensified in the absence of strong social support systems. Furthermore, high self-efficacy may paradoxically heighten emotional strain in conflict-ridden student-teacher relationships, while low self-efficacy can lead to blaming students, thereby slightly lessening emotional fatigue (Olivier *et al.*, 2023). Empirical evidence underscores the need for schools to foster healthy work environments, provide adequate support, and implement interventions that safeguard teachers' emotional and professional well-being.

Moreover, burnout often manifests as emotional detachment, where teachers cope with stress by distancing themselves from students and colleagues, which can harm relationships and disrupt classroom interactions. A diminished sense of personal accomplishment further contributes to feelings of ineffectiveness and dissatisfaction, deepening the effects of burnout. Research indicates that addressing these symptoms can enhance teachers' sense of professional fulfillment and resilience. Promoting positive relationships and a more optimistic mindset can help educators better manage stress and support their overall well-being (Digamon & Prado, 2024; Tarraya, 2023).

In contrast to the negative effects of depersonalization, academic optimism provides a more positive and proactive approach to managing stress and fostering teacher-student relationships. Academic optimism reflects teachers' trust in students and parents, their emphasis on academic achievement, and their strong sense of self-efficacy. This positive outlook fosters a supportive and achievement-oriented learning

environment where students are motivated to thrive. Teachers with high academic optimism inspire creativity, nurture resilience, and implement effective strategies that empower learners to apply knowledge in real-life situations. Moreover, it acts as a protective factor, helping teachers manage stress and maintain engagement even in challenging teaching contexts (Manlangit & Atienzar, 2023; Wang & Hallinger, 2021).

Building on this, research confirms that trust in students and parents plays a pivotal role in enhancing academic optimism by fostering communication, collaboration, and shared accountability in the learning process (Asgari & Rahimi, 2014). When trust is established, teachers are more likely to set high expectations, create supportive environments, and motivate both students and parents to be actively involved. Furthermore, academic emphasis, which prioritizes student achievement, contributes to a culture of high standards and sustained academic effort (Wang & Hallinger, 2021). Teachers with high self-efficacy remain resilient in overcoming challenges, reinforcing their belief in student success. Together, trust, academic emphasis, and self-efficacy help sustain academic optimism and foster greater student achievement.

Moreover, the role of grit in fostering perseverance and commitment in teaching has been well-documented, with research showing that it significantly contributes to teacher resilience and long-term success. Yang *et al.* (2020) found that individuals with high levels of grit maintain motivation and focus despite adversity. In the field of education, Reis *et al.* (2021) highlighted that teachers who possess high levels of grit are more likely to persist through professional challenges and stay dedicated to their students' success. Li (2022) further reported that grit positively correlates with improved academic and professional outcomes, enhancing individuals' resilience and goal attainment in demanding work environments.

In addition, grit has been shown to enable teachers to manage classroom challenges, sustain high academic standards, and remain committed despite adversity (Vella *et al.*, 2023). Teachers with higher grit levels demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and a positive mindset, which not only contribute to job satisfaction but also enhance academic optimism (Reis *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, grit is shaped by external factors such as collegial support, school culture, and available resources. Yang *et al.* (2020) emphasize that supportive environments bolster teachers' perseverance and motivation. Li (2022) notes that grit, influenced by both individual characteristics and organizational conditions, has a profound impact on teacher well-being, performance, and the reinforcement of academic optimism.

In line with this, the study is mainly anchored on the Psychological Capital Theory (PsyCap) by Luthans *et al.* (2007) which posits that hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (collectively known as HERO) are key psychological resources that contribute to individuals' success and well-being. These elements help individuals navigate challenges and stressors, with resilience enabling them to recover from setbacks and optimism fueling a positive outlook towards future goals. In the context of teaching, PsyCap suggests that these psychological assets can mitigate the impact of burnout by enhancing teachers' ability to cope with stress and maintain motivation. Furthermore,

grit, characterized by perseverance and resilience, acts as a mediator, helping teachers stay committed to their long-term goals and sustain academic optimism despite burnout. Supporting this, Duckworth *et al.*'s (2007) Consistency Theory underscores the value of sustained interest and effort in developing grit. The theory posits that individuals who pursue long-term goals with perseverance are better equipped to manage stress and avoid burnout. In teaching, consistent effort allows educators to stay committed despite challenges, supporting emotional well-being and professional dedication. Consequently, teachers with strong grit maintain a positive mindset, which strengthens academic optimism. This optimism enhances their effectiveness in fostering student achievement and creating a productive, resilient classroom environment conducive to long-term educational success.

In the same vein, Fabelico and Afalla's (2020) application of Self-Efficacy Theory and Nalipay *et al.*'s (2021) application of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model further illustrate the psychological and environmental factors that influence teacher resilience. Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's capability to manage responsibilities, enables teachers to persist in the face of adversity, reducing burnout and reinforcing grit and academic optimism. Complementing this, the JD-R Model highlights how a balance between job demands and available resources shapes well-being. When resources match or exceed demands, teachers can sustain motivation and resilience, creating an environment conducive to academic success and professional fulfillment.

Drawing from this theory, a research model is developed to demonstrate the hypothesis and analyze data collected in this study, as shown in Figure 1. It includes three paths: the relationship between burnout and grit (path a), grit and teacher academic optimism (path b), and burnout and teacher academic optimism (path c), with *burnout* as the independent variable, *academic optimism* as the dependent variable, and *grit* as the mediating variable. *Burnout*, drawn from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress, with indicators such as *emotional exhaustion* (stressful work relationships), *personal accomplishment* (fulfillment and professional achievement), and *depersonalization* (loss of empathy and emotional distance).

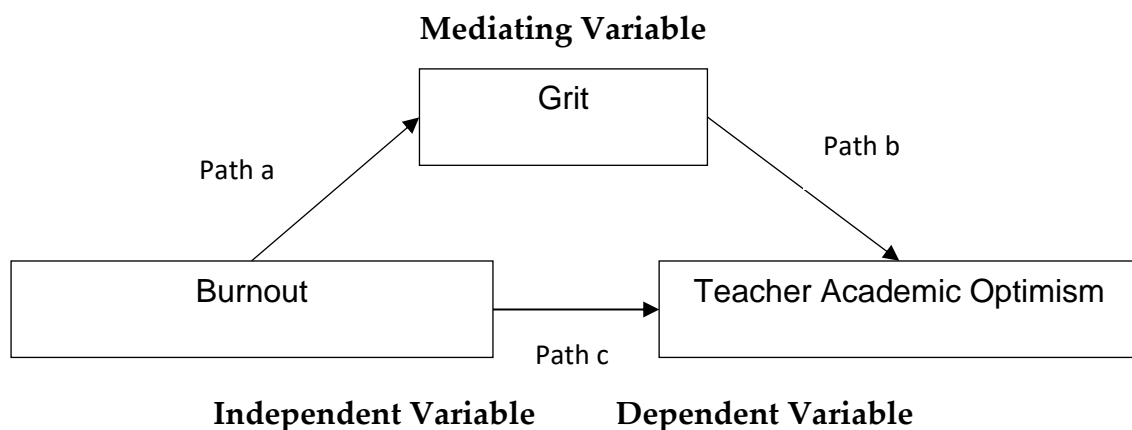


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Thus, *teachers' academic optimism* is adopted from Asgari and Rahimi's (2014) Teacher Academic Optimism Questionnaire, encompasses confidence in teaching effectiveness, trust in students and parents, and emphasis on academic success, with indicators like *trust* (confidence and reliability), *academic emphasis* (goal-oriented behavior), and *self-efficacy* (motivating disengaged students). Lastly, *grit*, measured by Li's (2015) Grit Questionnaire, reflects persistence and perseverance in pursuing passions and overcoming obstacles.

Moreover, Ayca (2021) highlights a significant gap in the existing literature regarding the intricate relationship between burnout, academic optimism, and grit among public elementary school teachers. While numerous studies have explored burnout and academic optimism independently (Fabelico & Afalla, 2020), the mediating role of grit in this relationship remains underexplored, particularly in the context of public elementary education. This lack of research limits a deeper understanding of how burnout affects teachers' academic optimism and how grit could serve as a protective factor. Uniquely, this study focuses on public elementary school teachers in the DepEd Division of Davao del Sur, addressing a context not previously studied in-depth, where the challenges of burnout are compounded by the demands of teaching in resource-limited settings.

The urgency of conducting this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into how burnout, grit, and academic optimism interact among public elementary school teachers. By identifying the mediating role of grit in the relationship between burnout and academic optimism, the research aims to contribute to the development of well-informed interventions that can enhance teacher resilience and psychological well-being. Strengthening these attributes is crucial, especially in high-pressure educational environments where teacher motivation directly impacts the learning atmosphere. Ultimately, the findings of this study could help improve instructional quality, promote a more supportive school climate, and lead to better academic outcomes for students in the local context.

Furthermore, the main objective of this study is to investigate the mediating role of grit on the relationship between burnout and teacher academic optimism of public elementary teachers. Specifically, the following objectives are formulated: to describe the level of burnout among public elementary teachers in terms of emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization; to ascertain the level of teacher academic optimism among public elementary teachers in terms of trust to parents and students, academic emphasis and self-efficacy; to measure the level of grit among public elementary teacher; to determine the significance of the relationship between burnout and teacher academic optimism, burnout and grit, and grit and teacher academic optimism; and to determine the significance of mediating effect of grit on the relationship between burnout and academic optimism of public-school teachers.

At 0.05 significance level, the following alternative hypotheses were examined: there is significant between burnout and teacher academic optimism; there is significant relationship between burnout and grit; there is significant relationship between grit and

teacher academic optimism; and there is significant mediating role of grit on the relationship between burnout and teacher academic optimism.

Further, this study holds substantial global and social relevance as it examines the dynamic interplay between burnout, academic optimism, and grit—three key psychological factors that significantly influence teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. The findings offer vital insights that can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at reducing burnout and fostering resilience, thereby supporting teacher retention, professional growth, and student academic success. Moreover, the study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which advocates for inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. By enhancing teachers' mental well-being, professional commitment, and sustained motivation, this research contributes meaningfully to the advancement of a healthier global education system, improved learning outcomes, and sustainable community development across diverse educational settings.

Moreover, this study offers valuable and practical implications for teachers, school heads, policymakers, and future researchers. Teachers can gain greater awareness and deeper understanding of how personal traits such as grit, academic optimism, and resilience can serve as protective buffers against burnout, leading to enhanced teaching performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. School heads may use the findings to design and implement targeted support systems, wellness initiatives, and professional development programs that intentionally prioritize and sustain teacher well-being, motivation, and retention. For future researchers, this study provides a robust theoretical foundation and a methodological model to explore additional variables influencing teacher psychology, fostering continuous academic dialogue and encouraging the development of more effective, evidence-based educational practices within the public school system.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the Division of Davao del Sur under the Department of Education (DepEd) Region XI, which includes a mix of urban and rural public elementary schools—an appropriate context for exploring teacher burnout, grit, and academic optimism. The target population consisted of 2,660 public elementary school teachers, from Teacher I to Master Teacher levels, across the division's various districts. Using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 336 respondents was determined. To reduce sampling bias and ensure fair representation, the study employed stratified random sampling, following the approach of Simkus (2022).

Accordingly, the sample was distributed equally across five school districts, with each district treated as a separate stratum to ensure proportional representation in the study. Specifically, the respondents were allocated as follows: School A (67), School B (67), School C (67), School D (67), and School E (68). This equal distribution ensured that

all school districts were fairly and equitably represented, thereby enhancing the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the study's findings. By adopting this stratified sampling approach, the study was able to capture a wide range of diverse teaching experiences, perspectives, and contextual factors unique to each district. Overall, this method provided a more balanced, comprehensive, and inclusive perspective that reflects the realities across the entire school division.

In terms of eligibility, the study applied the following inclusion criteria: only permanent public elementary school teachers currently assigned to schools within the Division of Davao del Sur were eligible to participate. Exclusion criteria included teachers who were on leave, not directly engaged in classroom teaching, or assigned outside the division. As part of the withdrawal criteria, participation in the study was voluntary. Teachers could choose to withdraw at any time due to personal reasons, lack of interest, or any circumstances affecting their continued participation. Additionally, respondents who did not comply with the research protocols or failed to complete the required data collection procedures were excluded from the final dataset.

In this study, a modified survey questionnaire was employed as the primary instrument for data collection, measuring three core variables: burnout, teacher academic optimism, and grit. For burnout, the instrument consisted of 23 items adapted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory by Maslach and Jackson (1981), covering emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Teacher academic optimism, as the dependent variable, was measured using 29 items derived from the Teacher Academic Optimism Questionnaire by Asgari and Rahimi (2014), which assessed trust in students and parents, academic emphasis, and teacher self-efficacy. Lastly, grit as the mediating variable was measured using 12 items adapted from the Grit Questionnaire developed by Li (2015), assessing both perseverance of effort and consistency of interest among teachers.

To ensure consistent understanding and analysis of responses, all items in the survey used a five-point Likert scale. The scale enabled respondents to indicate the frequency of the described practices, with the following interpretation ranges: a mean score of (4.20–5.00) was interpreted as very high, signifying that the practice is always observed; a mean score of (3.40–4.19) indicated high, showing the practice is often observed; a mean score of (2.40–3.39) represented moderate, reflecting occasional observation; a mean score of (1.80–2.59) was interpreted as low, denoting infrequent practice; and a mean score of (1.00–1.79) indicated very low, meaning the practice is rarely observed. This uniform interpretation scale allowed for coherent analysis across all the variables being examined in the study.

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the modified questionnaire was carefully evaluated by a panel of field experts who thoroughly reviewed its content for clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and appropriateness. The average rating given by the validators was 4.3, which was interpreted as “very good” based on the evaluation scale. This validation process ensured that the instrument was adequately designed to accurately measure the intended constructs, thereby confirming its suitability and

readiness for use in the actual data-gathering process. In addition, constructive feedback and recommendations provided by the validators were thoughtfully considered and incorporated in revising and refining the questionnaire items to enhance clarity, precision, cultural sensitivity, and contextual relevance to the elementary teaching population under study.

Following validation, a pilot test was conducted to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument. A group of 40 public elementary teachers not included in the final sample participated in the pre-testing phase, which served as a feasibility study as described by Simkus (2022). The results showed high reliability across all constructs. The burnout scale achieved a Cronbach's alpha of .924, the teacher academic optimism scale had a score of .942, and the grit scale obtained a score of .920. All these scores were interpreted as "Excellent," indicating that the instrument had strong internal consistency and was dependable for use in the full-scale study. This study employed a correlational non-experimental quantitative research design, which is appropriate for exploring the nature and strength of relationships among variables without manipulating any conditions experienced by participants. As emphasized by Salmons (2023), this type of design is well-suited for identifying associations between two or more variables, such as burnout, grit, and teacher academic optimism, without establishing causality. The non-experimental approach was deemed most appropriate for the context of this study, as it allowed the researcher to observe and measure naturally occurring variations in teacher behaviors and attitudes within their educational settings, thereby ensuring the authenticity of responses and safeguarding ethical standards by not subjecting participants to experimental treatments.

To further support the research objectives, mediation analysis was utilized as a statistical technique to explore how grit, as a mediating variable, influences the relationship between burnout (independent variable) and teacher academic optimism (dependent variable). Mediation analysis allowed the researcher to test whether the effect of burnout on academic optimism occurred directly or indirectly through grit. As described by Sidhu *et al.* (2021), the analysis involves estimating total, direct, and indirect effects using linear regression coefficients, typically applying the formula ab or the difference between c and c' . Moreover, the strength of the mediation was examined using the proportion mediated or Cohen's d , in line with the guidance of Rijnhart *et al.* (2021). This approach offered valuable insights into the mechanisms through which burnout affects academic optimism and provided evidence for possible intervention points to strengthen teacher resilience and optimism.

Following the choice of design and analytical approach, the data collection process began on November 12, 2024, after the researcher obtained formal permission from the Schools Division Superintendent, District Supervisors, and school heads across Davao del Sur. Upon receiving approval, printed survey questionnaires were duplicated and distributed to the selected participants. Consent letters and instruments were personally delivered to school heads and district representatives to ensure transparency and voluntary participation. The questionnaires were handed directly to teachers through

face-to-face interactions to facilitate clarity and build trust. For schools located in remote areas, an alternative online version of the survey was made available via Google Forms, allowing respondents to participate at their convenience. After the distribution phase, completed responses were carefully collected and reviewed for completeness and accuracy, with any missing or unclear responses resolved before proceeding to tabulation and data analysis.

To analyze the data comprehensively, the researcher employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The mean was computed to determine the level of burnout, grit, and teacher academic optimism among public elementary school teachers. To assess the strength and direction of the relationships between these variables, the Pearson r correlation coefficient was calculated. Furthermore, to evaluate the mediating role of grit in the relationship between burnout and teacher academic optimism, the Sobel test was used. This provided a basis for identifying whether grit significantly mediated the connection between the independent and dependent variables, thereby addressing one of the primary research objectives of the study.

Finally, this research rigorously adhered to established ethical standards to ensure the protection of all participants involved. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was granted by the University of Mindanao Ethics and Research Committee under Protocol No.: 2024-388, along with formal permission from the Department of Education–Division of Davao del Sur and participating school heads. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, their rights, and the voluntary nature of their involvement through informed consent forms. Privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained, with no identifying data collected. Data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. Furthermore, academic integrity was upheld by using Turnitin and Grammarly to ensure proper citation and by avoiding data falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism. The research adviser, who played a significant role in guiding the study, was duly acknowledged as the secondary author, ensuring transparent authorship and ethical collaboration throughout the research process.

3. Results and Discussions

The data obtained from the respondents on burnout, academic optimism, and grit are presented, analyzed and interpreted in this section based on the research objectives previously stated. The order of discussions on the mentioned topic is as follows: level of burnout; level of academic optimism; level of grit; correlation between burnout and teacher academic optimism; correlation between burnout and grit; correlation between grit and teacher academic optimism; and the mediating role of grit on the relationship between burnout and teacher academic optimism.

3.1 Burnout

The findings presented in Table 1 reveal that the overall level of burnout among respondents is low, with an overall mean of 1.98 and a standard deviation of .11,

indicating a relatively consistent response among participants. Among the three main indicators, personal accomplishment assessment recorded the highest mean of 2.33 with a standard deviation of .36, suggesting that feelings of professional fulfillment and achievement are slightly more variable but still relatively low in terms of burnout. Conversely, depersonalisation had the lowest mean of 1.80 with a standard deviation of .30, showing minimal emotional detachment, accompanied by moderate consistency in responses. The highest mean across specific items was 2.44, reflecting occasional challenges, with a standard deviation of .50, while the lowest mean was 1.57 with a standard deviation of .50, indicating a very low occurrence of specific burnout experiences but with noticeable variation among respondents. Overall, the findings highlight that burnout symptoms are present but remain at a manageable level.

Table 1: Level of Burnout

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Occupational Exhaustion	0.26	1.82	Low
Depersonalisation	0.30	1.80	Low
Personal Accomplishment Assessment	0.36	2.33	Low
Overall	0.11	1.98	Low

These findings suggest that while burnout symptoms among teacher-respondents are generally manageable, areas related to personal accomplishment require attention, as they exhibit the highest level of burnout compared to other indicators. This suggests that teachers may struggle with feeling recognized or fulfilled in their professional achievements, which could impact their motivation and overall job satisfaction. Conversely, the low levels of depersonalization suggest that respondents maintain meaningful connections and emotional engagement in their roles, which is a positive indicator of professional resilience. These results imply that targeted interventions, such as professional development opportunities, recognition programs, and well-being initiatives, could further support teachers in sustaining their sense of achievement and reducing burnout risks, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness and retention in the profession.

The findings align with the conclusion of Pabatang and Zabala (2022), who revealed that most education teachers exhibit low levels of burnout across emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Similarly, Cammayo *et al.* (2023) found that Filipino teachers reported moderate levels of depersonalization and personal accomplishment, suggesting manageable stress levels and a sustained sense of professional fulfillment. These results indicate that teachers generally maintain resilience and effectively navigate the demands of their profession. This concurrence underscores the importance of fostering supportive work environments and providing resources to sustain this positive state. While burnout remains at a manageable level, efforts to further reduce it, particularly in areas related to personal accomplishment, may enhance job satisfaction and effectiveness. This alignment with existing studies emphasizes the need for continued research and targeted interventions to ensure teachers' well-being and

long-term commitment to their roles, contributing to a more sustainable educational system.

3.2 Academic Optimism

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that the overall level of teacher academic optimism is very high, with an overall mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of .45. Among the three indicators, collective efficacy had the highest overall mean of 4.38 with a standard deviation of .48, while academic emphasis had the lowest overall mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of .52, though both indicators remain at very high levels. Within collective efficacy, the highest mean was observed in the belief that every child can learn, demonstrating strong confidence in student potential, while its standard deviation of .57 indicates consistency in responses. In academic emphasis, the highest mean was noted in the recognition and acknowledgment of academic achievement by the school, with a standard deviation of .68, emphasizing the value placed on academic success and some variation in perceptions.

Table 2: Level of Teacher Academic Optimism

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Collective Efficacy	0.48	4.38	Very High
Faculty Trust in Parents and Teachers	0.56	4.25	Very High
Academic Emphasis	0.52	4.23	Very High
Overall	0.45	4.29	Very High

The findings suggest that teachers demonstrate a high level of confidence in their collective ability to support student success, trust in the collaboration between parents and colleagues, and a strong emphasis on academic achievement within their schools. This optimistic outlook likely fosters a positive school culture, where teachers feel empowered to address challenges and maintain high standards for student performance. The results imply that the teachers' shared belief in their efficacy and trust in the school community contribute to creating a supportive and academically driven environment. To sustain and enhance this optimism, initiatives that reinforce teacher collaboration, recognize academic excellence, and strengthen partnerships with parents could be beneficial in further promoting educational success.

The findings confirmed the conclusion of Ahmad (2023), who discovered that teachers exhibit a high level of academic optimism, reflecting their confidence in their ability to positively influence students' learning outcomes and classroom performance. This optimism is strengthened by their trust in parents and collaborative relationships, which contribute to a supportive educational environment. The presence of collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis highlights the resilience and dedication of teachers in overcoming challenges and fostering student success. These findings emphasize the importance of professional development programs that build on teachers' strengths and promote best practices in schools.

3.3 Grit of Teachers

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that the overall level of grit among teacher-respondents is very high, with an average score of 4.31 and a standard deviation of .44, suggesting consistent responses across participants. The highest average score of 4.50 was observed for the statement that setbacks serve as motivation for perseverance and growth, with a standard deviation of .58, highlighting the respondents' ability to view challenges as opportunities for personal development, though with moderate variability. On the other hand, the lowest average score of 4.09 was recorded for the statement that teachers often set goals but later decide to pursue different ones, with a standard deviation of .79, indicating a lower level of persistence in maintaining focus on initial goals, accompanied by slightly higher variability in responses.

Table 3: Level of Grit

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
New ideas and projects continuously invigorate my creative process, adding depth and diversity to my endeavours.	0.59	4.38	Very High
Setbacks served as motivation for me to persevere and grow.	0.58	4.50	Very High
I passionately explore various ideas and projects, allowing me to gather insights and refine my focus for future endeavors.	0.59	4.46	Very High
I am a hard worker.	0.66	4.43	Very High
I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.	0.79	4.09	High
I excel at tasks requiring agility and adaptability, leveraging my strengths to navigate longer-term projects effectively.	0.52	4.29	Very High
I see my projects through to completion.	0.64	4.26	Very High
I am committed and hardworking.	0.58	4.45	Very High
I find myself drawn to new interests every few months.	0.58	4.25	Very High
I successfully reached a long-term goal after years of dedicated effort.	0.59	4.22	Very High
My interests evolve annually.	0.66	4.18	High
I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.	0.50	4.21	Very High
Overall	0.44	4.31	Very High

In addition, the findings imply that public school teachers demonstrate a very high level of grit, characterized by resilience, perseverance, and a strong commitment to overcoming challenges and achieving long-term goals. This suggests that setbacks are seen as opportunities for growth, fostering a mindset that values dedication and adaptability in their professional responsibilities. The high level of grit among teachers indicates their capacity to succeed in tasks requiring sustained effort and focus, even in the face of challenges associated with the teaching profession. However, the relatively lower mean for maintaining focus on initial goals highlights the need for strategies to enhance consistency in goal-setting and execution. Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of fostering supportive environments that promote resilience and adaptability among public school teachers, as these traits significantly contribute to their effectiveness and overall success in education.

Further, the findings align with the conclusions of Shao (2023), who revealed that teacher self-efficacy and grit were positively associated with teacher psychological well-being, highlighting the importance of these teacher characteristics in promoting well-being. Similarly, He *et al.* (2023) found that both teacher growth mindset and grit exhibit a direct positive influence on teacher well-being, with grit also acting as a mediator in the connection between teacher mindfulness and occupational well-being. These results underscore the significance of cultivating grit and self-efficacy to enhance teacher well-being. While burnout remains at a manageable level, efforts to further reduce it, particularly in areas related to personal accomplishment, may enhance job satisfaction and effectiveness. This alignment with existing studies emphasizes the need for continued research and targeted interventions to ensure teachers' well-being and long-term commitment to their roles, contributing to a more sustainable educational system.

3.4 Correlations between Burnout and Teacher Academic Optimism

The findings presented in Table 4 reveal a very weak negative relationship between burnout and teacher academic optimism among public elementary school teachers, as indicated by a Pearson correlation of $-.12$. Despite the weak strength of the relationship, the significance level of $.00$ confirms that the correlation is statistically significant and not due to chance. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between burnout and teacher academic optimism. The negative correlation suggests that as burnout levels slightly increase, teacher academic optimism tends to decrease, albeit minimally. This highlights the importance of addressing burnout to maintain or enhance teachers' academic optimism, which plays a crucial role in fostering positive beliefs about their efficacy, trust in stakeholders, and emphasis on academic success in their schools.

Table 4: Test of the Relationship between Burnout and Teacher Academic Optimism among Public Elementary Teachers (N = 336)

Predictor	Pearson Correlation	Strength of the Relationship	Sig (2-tailed)	Interpretation	Decision
Burnout	$-.120$	Very Weak-negative	$.000$	Significant	Reject H_0

Outcome: Teacher Academic Optimism

The findings imply that even a minimal increase in burnout levels can negatively impact teacher academic optimism, emphasizing the need for proactive measures to support public elementary teachers' well-being. Maintaining low levels of burnout is essential to sustaining teachers' positive beliefs in their efficacy, fostering trust in parents and students, and reinforcing the importance of academic achievement. School administrators and policymakers should prioritize mental health programs, workload management, and professional development opportunities that mitigate burnout. By addressing these factors, schools can cultivate an environment where teachers remain motivated, resilient, and optimistic, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education

and fostering a positive school climate. These results support the theoretical framework that emphasizes the role of positive psychological capacities—such as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—in enabling individuals to effectively manage challenges and maintain a forward-looking, confident approach to their professional roles.

In a similar vein, the findings are corroborated by the conclusion of Mohammadi (2023), who highlighted that academic optimism significantly influences classroom management and job burnout among elementary school teachers, with factors like scientific emphasis, trust, and self-efficacy positively impacting behavior and education management. Additionally, these components are strongly associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, emphasizing their critical role in teacher well-being and effectiveness. Similarly, Song (2022) emphasized that academic optimism and teacher efficacy are pivotal in enhancing teacher well-being, suggesting that fostering these attributes can mitigate stress and promote resilience in educational settings. These insights underscore the importance of cultivating academic optimism and self-efficacy to improve classroom management and reduce burnout, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes.

3.5 Correlations between Burnout and Grit

The findings in Table 5 reveal a statistically significant weak negative correlation between burnout and grit among public elementary teachers, as evidenced by a Pearson correlation value of $-.32$ and a significance level of $.00$. This indicates that as burnout levels increase, grit tends to decrease slightly, although the relationship is not strong. The significance level suggests that the observed relationship is unlikely due to chance. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating no significant relationship between burnout and grit is rejected. This finding emphasizes the inverse relationship between teachers' perseverance and passion for long-term goals (grit) and their experience of burnout, highlighting the potential impact of stress and exhaustion on sustained commitment and resilience.

Table 5: Test of the Relationship between Burnout
and Grit among Public Elementary Teachers (N = 336)

Predictor	Pearson Correlation	Strength of the Relationship	Sig (2-tailed)	Interpretation	Decision
Burnout	-.318	Weak-negative	.000	Significant	Reject H_0

Outcome: Grit.

Corollary to this, the findings provided herein suggest that burnout among public elementary teachers is negatively related to grit, indicating that teachers experiencing higher levels of burnout may struggle with maintaining their perseverance and passion for long-term goals. This relationship highlights the importance of addressing teacher burnout to strengthen their resilience and sustained commitment to their profession. As burnout increases, teachers may become less effective in managing long-term challenges, which can affect their job satisfaction and overall performance. Therefore, it is crucial for

school administrators and policymakers to prioritize initiatives aimed at reducing burnout and fostering grit, such as providing support systems, professional development, and stress-management resources. These findings confirm the assumptions of the Psychological Capital Theory, which underscores the role of positive psychological resources—such as grit and resilience—in enhancing well-being and performance even in challenging work environments.

Consequently, this finding is supported by the premise of Dam *et al.* (2018), who reported that burnout and grit are correlated based on their findings. Residents with high grit scores were less likely to experience burnout and low well-being, suggesting that higher levels of perseverance and passion for long-term goals help protect against burnout. Conversely, those with low grit scores were more likely to experience burnout and low well-being, indicating that a lack of resilience and commitment makes individuals more susceptible to burnout and poor mental health.

3.6 Correlations between Grit and Teachers' Academic Optimism

The findings presented in Table 6 reveal a strong positive relationship between grit and teacher academic optimism among public elementary teachers, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of .65. This indicates that teachers with higher levels of grit, characterized by perseverance and passion for long-term goals, tend to exhibit greater academic optimism, which includes collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis. The significance level of .00 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant and not due to random chance. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant relationship between grit and teacher academic optimism, is rejected. These results emphasize that teachers' resilience and dedication significantly contribute to fostering a positive and optimistic academic environment, potentially leading to improved educational outcomes.

Table 6: Test of the Relationship between Grit and Teacher
Academic Optimism among Public Elementary Teachers (N = 336)

Predictor	Pearson Correlation	Strength of the Relationship	Sig (2-tailed)	Interpretation	Decision
Grit	.646	Strong	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀

Outcome: Teacher Academic Optimism

Thus, the results imply that enhancing teachers' grit—defined by their perseverance and passion for long-term goals—can significantly boost their academic optimism, a critical factor in creating a positive and productive school environment. This relationship highlights the importance of supporting teachers in building resilience and sustaining motivation, as these qualities directly influence their confidence in collective efficacy, trust in stakeholders, and emphasis on academic success. Schools and education systems can leverage this insight by implementing professional development programs, wellness initiatives, and supportive policies aimed at strengthening teachers' grit, thereby fostering a more optimistic and collaborative academic culture that benefits both

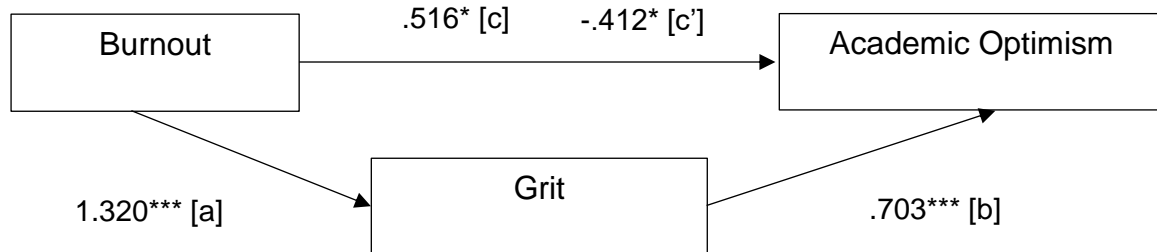
educators and students. These findings affirm the assumptions of the Psychological Capital Theory, which emphasizes the value of cultivating positive psychological resources to improve work-related attitudes and outcomes.

Hence, the correlation between grit and teachers' academic optimism, as evidenced by studies and findings, indicates a strong positive relationship (Fernández-Martín *et al.*, 2020). This means that teachers with higher levels of grit, characterized by their perseverance and passion for long-term goals, are more likely to exhibit greater academic optimism. Academic optimism encompasses collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis, all of which are essential for fostering positive educational outcomes. This correlation underscores grit as a significant predictor of teachers' confidence, trust in stakeholders, and commitment to academic success. Furthermore, Shao (2023) found that teacher grit positively influences psychological well-being, suggesting that fostering grit can enhance teachers' resilience and effectiveness. These findings suggest that cultivating resilience, perseverance, and dedication among teachers can enhance their overall academic outlook, professional growth, and effectiveness in the classroom environment.

3.7 Mediation Analysis of the Three Variables

The mediation analysis reveals the following values for each path in Figure 2. Path a, representing the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator, has a coefficient of 0.52. Path b, representing the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable, has a coefficient of 1.32. Path c, the total effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable before including the mediating variable, is 0.52. After the inclusion of the mediating variable, the direct effect, represented as path c', is -0.41. The percentage of the total effect that is mediated is 179.83 percent, indicating that the indirect effect exceeds the total effect, highlighting a suppression effect. The statistically significant Sobel z-value of 5.70 and the ratio index of 2.56 confirm the substantial mediating role, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Expanding on the findings, the results from the mediation analysis highlight the significant role of grit as a mediator between burnout and teacher academic optimism. Grit strengthens this relationship by mitigating the negative effects of burnout while enhancing the positive attributes associated with teacher academic optimism. This suggests that even when teachers experience high levels of burnout, their perseverance and passion for achieving long-term goals can buffer the adverse effects on their optimism, helping them maintain a hopeful and proactive outlook. By fostering grit, teachers are better equipped to navigate challenges, sustain their professional commitment, and uphold confidence in themselves, their students, and the educational system. These insights emphasize the critical value of promoting grit in professional development programs to sustain teachers' confidence, trust, and emphasis on academic success despite adversity.



Mediation Analysis

Sobel z 5.700339, $p < 0.05^{***}$

Percentage of the total effect that is mediated 179.833256%

Ratio of the indirect to direct effect -2.252611

Effect Size Measures

Unstandardized Coefficients

Total: 0.516

Direct: -0.412

Indirect: 1.320

Ratio Index: 2.558

Figure 2: Medgraph showing the variables of the study

This supports the notion of Sadoughi *et al.* (2024) that grit, burnout, and academic optimism are interconnected in the teaching profession. Grit, defined by perseverance and passion for long-term goals, protects teachers from burnout by fostering resilience. Teachers with higher grit are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion, reducing burnout. This resilience also contributes to academic optimism, a belief in academic success and collective efficacy. Teachers with strong grit are more likely to maintain trust in students, colleagues, and the educational system, even when facing setbacks. Academic optimism is strengthened when teachers stay committed and hopeful, even in challenging situations. Additionally, Kristinsson *et al.* (2023) found that grit significantly reduces emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, key components of burnout, suggesting that fostering grit can enhance teacher well-being and effectiveness.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that targeted interventions be implemented to address the areas with the lowest levels across the three measured variables: burnout, teacher academic optimism, and grit. First, since personal accomplishment was the most affected area of burnout, initiatives such as teacher recognition programs, mentorship opportunities, and regular feedback sessions should be prioritized to enhance teachers' sense of achievement and fulfillment. These efforts can motivate teachers and reduce feelings of underappreciation. Second, academic

emphasis was identified as needing improvement under academic optimism; therefore, schools are encouraged to support professional learning communities, collaborative academic planning, and initiatives that recognize academic achievements to strengthen teachers' commitment to academic standards. Lastly, to enhance grit, particularly persistence and goal-directed focus, schools may implement coaching sessions, personalized goal-tracking systems, and reflective practices that encourage teachers to stay committed to long-term goals while remaining adaptable. Collectively, these recommendations aim to holistically support teachers by fostering a sense of accomplishment, sustaining optimism, and reinforcing perseverance, thereby promoting well-being, resilience, and effectiveness in the educational environment.

5. Conclusion

The study's findings revealed that burnout among public elementary school teachers was generally low, characterized by minimal occupational exhaustion and depersonalization, alongside a high sense of personal accomplishment. Both academic optimism and grit were rated very high, indicating that teachers demonstrated strong perseverance and a collective confidence in achieving academic goals. Inferential statistics showed a weak-negative correlation between burnout and academic optimism, suggesting that an increase in burnout slightly diminished academic optimism. Conversely, a strong positive correlation was observed between burnout and grit, and between grit and academic optimism. These findings suggest that teachers who exhibit perseverance and determination despite stress are more likely to maintain an optimistic outlook. Grit was found to partially mediate the relationship between burnout and academic optimism, with the Sobel Z-test confirming the statistical significance of this mediation.

Building on these findings, the strong presence of grit as resilience supports Psychological Capital Theory's assertion that psychological resources—hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—enhance workplace outcomes. Grit, acting as resilience, allows teachers to maintain optimism despite stress. Although burnout is low, some indicators show areas needing improvement. Teachers' lack of motivation to innovate and solve challenges points to the need for capacity-building workshops focused on creativity and problem-solving. Depersonalization indicators reflect a lack of connection with colleagues and students, which can be addressed through mentorship programs and meaningful team interactions. Communication gaps identified under personal accomplishment call for regular meetings, collaborative planning, and feedback sessions to strengthen professional relationships and foster mutual understanding among staff. These findings align with recent studies showing the positive impact of psychological capital on employee well-being and performance (Goel & Wani, 2024).

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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