

An investigation into the predictive role of EFL teachers' sense of grit and positive psychological capital in their emotional literacy

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Received: 2024-05-31 / Accepted: 2024-10-02

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi43.30978>

ISSN paper edition: 1697-7467, ISSN digital edition: 2695-8244

ABSTRACT: A large number of empirical studies has been done on diverse psycho-emotional variables related to second/foreign language (L2) education in different educational settings. However, the literature is limited chiefly to learner-psychology variables, with attention turning to teacher psychology only recently. Three crucial constructs related to L2 teachers are grit, positive psychological capital, and emotional literacy. However, the interaction between these three has received scarce (if any) attention so far. To fill this gap, this quantitative study delved into the predicting role of teachers' grit and positive psychological capital in their emotional literacy. To this end, the 560 EFL teachers who participated in this study completed three scales over four months. Structural equation modelling (SEM) and regression analysis revealed a positive association among EFL teachers' grit, positive psychological capital, and emotional literacy. Moreover, the regression analysis results pinpointed that both grit and positive psychological capital could significantly predict EFL teachers' emotional literacy. More specifically, it was found that grit and positive psychological capital could jointly predict 67% of the variance in emotional literacy. The study provides implications for EFL teachers, researchers, school managers, and teacher educators regarding the prominence of emotional factors in language teaching.

Keywords: EFL teachers, Positive Psychology, L2 grit, Positive psychological capital, Emotional literacy, SEM

Una investigación sobre el papel predictivo del sentido de agallas y el capital psicológico positivo de los profesores de Inglés/LE en su alfabetización emocional

RESUMEN: Se ha realizado una gran cantidad de estudios empíricos sobre diversas variables psicoemocionales relacionadas con la educación de una segunda lengua extranjera (L2) en diferentes entornos educativos. Sin embargo, la revisión bibliográfica se limita principalmente a las variables psicológicas del Alumnado, y sólo recientemente se ha prestado atención a la psicología del profesor. Tres constructos cruciales relacionados con los profesores de L2 son las agallas, el capital psicológico positivo y la alfabetización emocional.

Sin embargo, la interacción entre estos tres ha recibido escasa (o ninguna) atención hasta la fecha. Para llenar este hueco, esta investigación cuantitativa profundizó en el papel predictivo de la determinación y el capital psicológico positivo de los profesores en su alfabetización emocional. Para ello, los 560 profesores de Inglés/LE que participaron en este estudio completaron tres escalas a lo largo de cuatro meses. El modelo de ecuaciones estructurales (MEE) y el análisis de regresión revelaron una asociación positiva entre las agallas de los profesores de Inglés/LE, el capital psicológico positivo y la alfabetización emocional. Además, los resultados del análisis de regresión señalaron que tanto la determinación como el capital psicológico positivo podían predecir significativamente la alfabetización emocional de los profesores de Inglés/LE. Más concretamente, se observó que la determinación y el capital psicológico positivo podían predecir conjuntamente el 67% de la varianza en la alfabetización emocional. El estudio ofrece implicaciones para profesores de Inglés/LE, investigadores, gestores escolares y formadores de profesores en relación con la importancia de los factores en la enseñanza de idiomas.

Palabras claves: Profesores de Inglés/LE, Psicología Positiva, Agallas de L2, Capital psicológico positivo, Alfabetización emocional, MEE

1. INTRODUCTION

An increasing body of research has considered the role and power of emotions in foreign language teaching and learning processes (Derakhshan, 2022; Derakhshan & Yin, 2024; Mercer, 2020; Zhi & Derakhshan, 2024). It has also been claimed that second/foreign language (L2) teaching is an emotionally demanding profession worldwide (Dewaele, 2020). This emotional challenge is due to the multi-layered interactions among several inner and outer factors and variables (Derakhshan *et al.*, 2023). With regard to positive psychology (PP), research in the field of L2 education has now shifted toward educators' emotions during teaching and their psycho-affective strengths to deal with setbacks (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2019). Grit has been one of the first positive personality traits to be explored in relation to teachers. It is defined as one's diligence in pursuing his/her goals despite difficulties (Duckworth *et al.*, 2007). The concept of grit bears a resemblance to intrinsic motivation and empowers teachers with the drive and enthusiasm to persevere diligently toward achieving long-term goals (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Grit has been found to influence English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and teachers in different areas (Derakhshan *et al.*, 2023; Liu *et al.*, 2023). Most of the studies on L2 grit revolve around student-related factors. Although teacher-psychology factors play a crucial role in shaping grit in the classroom (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023), the close tie that L2 grit may have with teachers' positive emotions has received insufficient attention in EFL contexts. Some studies report the interaction of grit with teachers' well-being, resilience, and enjoyment (e.g., Fathi *et al.*, 2023; Liu *et al.*, 2023).

Another teacher-related factor is positive psychological capital (PPC), which is essential in challenging contexts like L2 education (Mercer, 2020). PPC refers to various mental resources that an individual uses to develop personally and professionally in a dynamic way (Luthans *et al.*, 2007; Wu & Kang, 2023). Research shows that PPC enhances teachers' professional development status, identity, and effectiveness (Allameh *et al.*, 2018; Wang & Li, 2011). Teachers' work engagement, achievement emotions, academic performance, and sense of grit have also been correlated with their PPC (Wu & Kang, 2023; Xu, 2023; Xu & Zhu, 2022). Another area that EFL teachers' PPC may also affect is their perceived

emotions and how they regulate them. In challenging environments such as L2 education, teachers need to be equipped with numerous competencies. As a case in point, they should have emotional literacy skills (e.g., self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation) so that they can understand their own and others' feelings as a way to improve work quality and well-being (Steiner, 2003). The construct of emotional literacy has recently gained the attention of educational researchers, given its impact on pedagogy, learning, and professionalism (Alemdar & Anılan, 2020). However, the way it is manifested in L2 education remains unclear. The current studies are confined to its conceptualization and impact on teaching rather than the teachers' psycho-emotional world. Moreover, whether other teacher-related factors like grit and PPC predict this variable is unknown. Since grit and PPC are two affective constructs, EFL teachers are expected to be literate enough to decipher such emotions and factors in their career. This literacy is expected of L2 teachers because they are the main stakeholders and shapers of education. We need to look into this interplay of L2 teacher emotions since they may affect other emotions and classroom practices. Learner emotions are also linked to those of teachers. However, such an interplay has been overlooked by educational psychologists and researchers. The present study used a quantitative approach to fill this gap by examining whether EFL teachers' sense of grit and PPC can predict their emotional literacy. Another study objective was to model the association among the three variables. By highlighting their possible interaction, this study contributes to the field by expanding the knowledge related to language teacher psychology. It unmasks the reciprocal interaction among a wide range of teacher-related emotions in English language education, which can foster the process of teaching and learning in an emotion-sensitive environment. The following sections provide the theoretical, methodological, and statistical approaches used in the study.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. The Concept of Grit in Education

In the past decade, different educational researchers and specialists have accentuated the essentiality of grit development in academic performance and success (Solhi *et al.*, 2023). Grit is, by nature, a non-cognitive trait in individuals that motivates and pushes them to work diligently and with interest (Duckworth *et al.*, 2007). To be considered gritty, one needs to have a perseverant effort and consistent interest in what he/she is doing despite challenges (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Pan, 2022). The construct of grit is regarded as a personality trait beyond motivation that is subject to internal and external variables (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). As put by Reed *et al.* (2013), unlike other psycho-emotional variables, grit hardly changes in relation to contextual variations. Two dimensions of grit have been reported in the literature: 'perseverance in effort' and 'persistence of interest' (Duckworth *et al.*, 2007).

With these dimensions, the concept of grit has been highlighted in EFL education thanks to several complexities involved in learning a foreign language. The challenges in education (e.g., fund, logistics, technology acceptance, and professionalism) have now changed, given the changing world that we live in (Duckworth *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, educators, regardless of subjects, require more literacies other than just pedagogical ones to develop adaptive adjustments and avoid burnout. Teachers must be gritty to diligently follow their goals and

manage setbacks. This construct can affect different aspects of teaching and learning in EFL contexts (Sudina *et al.*, 2021).

2.2. Positive Psychological Capital: Definitions and Dimensions

Positive psychological capital (PPC) can be described as a set of mental resources for facing and managing difficult circumstances at work (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). PPC is an internal state that can be measured and developed to meaningfully enhance one's professional performance and success (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). PPC is seen as a composite variable, including four dimensions of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). These components increase teachers' well-being and performance. Self-efficacy refers to the degree to which a teacher is sure of his/her abilities to promote learning in learners (Bandura, 1982; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Hope, as the second dimension, concerns teachers' enthusiasm and agency to fulfill their pedagogical goals cheerfully (Snyder, 2002). Hopeful teachers usually show more perseverance in facing challenges and have more pathways to tackle them. Resilience, as another sub-component of PPC, refers to one's capability to cope with troublesome circumstances (Hiver, 2018). A resilient teacher is characterized by more job commitment and effectiveness. The final dimension of PPC is optimism or positive thinking, which can be defined as one's positive approach toward life and dealing with troubles (Seligman, 2002). Teachers with this feature develop positive rapport with students and consider challenges as chances to promote (Duckworth *et al.*, 2009). PPC has received a growing interest from educational scholars in the past years; however, it seems clear that it is a state-like construct, whereas grit is described as a trait-like construct that tends to be stable over time. To the best of our knowledge, there are only a few studies investigating grit in relation to PPC, although hypothetically, a gritty individual driven by passion and perseverance toward long-term goals could have better resources in building PPC. While the correlation between PPC and teacher-psychology factors remains under-researched, there are no EFL studies examining the role of grit in a cognitive process (such as PPC) or a complex, multifaceted affect (such as Emotional Literacy). Yet, the interplay of L2 grit with teachers' resilience, well-being, and enjoyment has recently been reported (Fathi *et al.*, 2023; Liu *et al.*, 2023).

2.3. Teachers' Emotional Literacy

As an emotional job, teaching needs teachers with high levels of emotional literacy to effectively implement instructional plans and goals (Ghiasvand *et al.*, 2024; Pishghadam & Shakebaee, 2020). Since teaching involves pressures and emotional labour imposed by other stakeholders to incur learning, it is more sensitive than other jobs. Yet, the perceived degree of emotionality varies from a person to person. That is why, teachers need to recognize and manage self and other emotions, at the same time. This necessitates emotional literacy, which is described as an individual teacher's capacity to comprehend, project, and regulate self and others' emotions in the class (Alemdar & Anılan, 2020; Goleman, 1995; Tuyan, 2003). The concept of emotional literacy is a reflection of the affective turn in education (Eraldemir-Tuyan, 2019). It concerns teachers' awareness of emotions and how

such awareness is employed to enlighten personal and occupational development (Kliueva & Tsagari, 2018; Steiner, 2003). Emotional literacy is a multi-dimensional construct in educational psychology, including five dimensions: *motivation*, *emotional awareness*, *social skills*, *empathy*, and *self-regulation* (Steiner, 2003). Emotional literacy is a subset of emotional intelligence. It denotes different skills required for understanding and managing emotions for better communication (Alemdar & Anilan, 2020).

According to Haddon *et al.* (2005), emotional literacy is a practical representation of emotional intelligence by which one interprets their and others' emotions to decide and act in specific ways. It is essential for successful everyday interactions in the classroom. Teachers' emotional literacy is changeable and evolving in positive working environments across three domains, namely classroom relationships, communication formality level, and organizational factors and climate (e.g., staff relations, support, facilities) (Haddon *et al.*, 2005). Based on this perspective, emotional literacy can be operationally defined in this study as a set of skills that EFL teachers develop during their instruction and interaction with students in the classroom to recognize and manage their own as well as others' emotions during language education (e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy).

2.4. Theoretical Framework

Different theories undergird the interaction among EFL teachers' sense of grit, PPC, and emotional literacy. The first supporting theory is Bandura's (1996) social cognitive theory (SCT), which posits that individual factors (e.g., grit, PPC, emotional literacy skills) and behaviors interact with the social context to affect each other. This theory maintains that "what people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave" (Bandura, 1996, p. 25). Hence, people have previous experiences and emotions that generate and regulate their actions. Therefore, it can be claimed that SCT underpins the potential association among teachers' grit, PPC, and emotional literacy as it explains how one's internal systems reciprocally interact with environmental factors to shape their behaviors.

Studies using PP as a theoretical framework have highlighted the pivotal role of positive emotions (e.g., grit, PPC) in education (Derakhshan, 2022). This psychological paradigm claims the incremental nature of positive emotions and outcomes in a way that PP constructs usually trigger other positive factors (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2019; Mercer, 2020). It offers benefits to teachers by encouraging them to invest, control, develop, and manage psycho-affective constructs and capital (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). The last theoretical underpinning of this study is Steiner and Perry's (1997) emotional literacy model, which underscores the significance of understanding, regulating, and expressing self as well as others' emotions to develop socially and professionally. This model states that being emotionally literate can improve personal and work quality. In other words, it stresses the combination of intelligence with emotion. Based on this conceptualization, to have PPC, gritty individuals need to know and regulate self and others' emotions in the first place. Without knowing the emotional side of their profession, EFL teachers would not be able to handle the challenging aspects of teaching English in L2 settings. This profession is highly emotional for both L2 teachers and learners, who have to deal with several linguistic, affective, cognitive, and socio-cultural factors at once. In sum, since the study comprises three emotional factors that reside in a

social context (L2 classroom), different theories underpin it. The PP school of thought, SCT, and the emotional literacy model best fit the research objectives.

2.5. Related Studies

As PP research has gained increasing attention, different constructs driven by this relatively new field in psychology (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019) were examined in different educational contexts and countries (Derakhshan, 2022). Several correlational studies corroborate that the concept of grit is positively correlated with a set of L2 variables and emotions, including well-being, resilience, engagement, enjoyment, satisfaction, commitment, enthusiasm, success, competence, interest, hope, trust, and achievement (e.g., Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023; Duckworth *et al.*, 2021; Zhao, 2023). The concept has been primarily studied in relation to L2 students; however, some attention has been given to the teachers' side of the story (Sudina *et al.*, 2021). Empirical studies have also endorsed the influence of teachers' grit on their self-efficacy, teaching effectiveness, passion, and performance (Fabelico & Afalla, 2020). Moreover, as pinpointed by Liu *et al.* (2023), EFL teachers' sense of grit can interact with other emotions like resilience and well-being to cause teaching enjoyment in language education. In another study in Chicago, Guan (2019) examined the association between grit, engagement, and PPC. The results showed that grit is strongly related to engagement and PPC. Likewise, Luthans *et al.* (2019) reported the mediating role of grit in students' academic performance and psychological capital. Concerning PPC, correlational studies show that the construct is highly correlated with teachers' work engagement (Xu, 2023), job commitment (Xu & Zhu, 2022), satisfaction (Luthans *et al.*, 2007), positive mentality (Ke *et al.*, 2009), and work quality (Allameh *et al.*, 2018). It has also been claimed that PPC reduces teachers' emotional labor (i.e., affective load/pressure) in academia (Tösten & Toprak, 2017).

Many other emotional factors are connected to teachers' PPC as noted in the literature (Carmona-Halty *et al.*, 2019; Ma, 2023). One such factor is emotional literacy, which has been empirically found to be influential in teachers' professional development, emotional labor behaviors, emotional intelligence, and social capital (Alemdar & Anilan, 2020; Eraldemir-Tuyan, 2019; Ghiasvand *et al.*, 2024; Kliueva & Tsagari, 2018). Despite these efforts, research on the emotional literacy of EFL teachers with regard to grit and PPC is still in its initial stages, and further research is needed. Most of the studies in this area are limited to the conceptualization and measurement of emotional literacy in educational settings. However, to date, the way it interacts with positive personality trait constructs like L2 grit and PPC has been ignored by educational researchers. To fill this gap, the present study aimed to reveal whether EFL teachers' grit and PPC can predict their emotional literacy. In particular, it intends to answer the following research questions and hypotheses:

- RQ1. Is there any significant association between teachers' grit, positive psychological capital, and emotional literacy skills?
- RQ2. How much variance in teachers' emotional literacy skills can be predicted by their grit and positive psychological capital?

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

In this study, 560 EFL teachers (males = 166, 29.6%; females = 394, 70.4%) were recruited. They were English teachers from different language institutes in Tehran. Their age ranged from 23 to 41 years. Concerning their education, 120 teachers (21%) had a BA, 190 (33%) had an MA, and 250 (44%) were Ph.D. holders. The participants were teaching part-time ($n = 350$, 62%) and full-time ($n = 210$, 38%) in both private (81%) and state language centres (19%). Their teaching experience level varied from 3 years to above 21 years. Their language proficiency ranged from C1 (36%) to C2 (64%), as per CEFR framework. Concerning their stage of education, the participants were teaching in higher education. They were informed by a consent and description letter of the purpose of the study and selected based on the convenience sampling technique. Before attending the study, they gave the researcher their formal agreement through a consent form indicating their voluntary participation.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. L2 Grit Scale

The L2-Teacher Grit Scale (L2TGS) validated by Sudina *et al.* (2021) was employed to measure teacher's grit. It included 14 questions with a 5-point Likert scale in which "1" represented "not like me at all" and "5" signified "very much like me." The scale had two dimensions: perseverance in effort and persistence of interest. This scale was selected because it is domain-specific and designed for L2 teachers' grit. The following is a sample item from the scale: "I don't give up easily when faced with challenges related to my teaching." The overall reliability of this instrument was measured by Cronbach's alpha, and the results showed an acceptable index of 0.82. The reliability of sub-scales was also 0.80 and 0.83, respectively.

3.2.2. Positive Psychological Capital (PPC) Questionnaire

This construct was measured using a previously validated scale developed by Tösten and Özgan (2015). It encompassed 26 items under the six sub-components of self-efficacy (4 items), optimism (5 items), trust (4 items), extroversion (5 items), psychological resilience (5 items), and hope (3 items). The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale from "never" (1) to "totally participating" (5). Cronbach's alpha was utilized to measure the reliability of each sub-component whose results, respectively, indicated the indices of 0.80, 0.86, 0.79, 0.76, 0.79, and 0.93. The overall reliability of the questionnaire was also shown to be 0.94.

3.2.3. Emotional Literacy Skills Scale

The third questionnaire used in this study was the emotional literacy scale developed by Alemdar and Anılan (2020). The scale had 31 items presented under five sub-categories

of motivation, empathy, self-regulation, emotional awareness, and social skills. A 5-point Likert scale was used to present the items, which ranged from 1 “never true” to 5 “almost always true.” The overall reliability of this instrument was assessed by Cronbach’s alpha, the results of which demonstrated an acceptable reliability level of 0.87. Considering each sub-scale reliability, the results indicated indices of 0.84, 0.79, 0.85, 0.86, and 0.87, respectively. The following is an example of items from this scale: “I believe I have to work hard to achieve a quality of life.”

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

To collect data in line with the design and research objectives of this study, the researchers designed an online questionnaire using “Google Forms,” whose link was then shared among 617 EFL teachers, of whom 560 respondents fully completed the questionnaires and submitted their responses. Before that, the researcher explained the aim of the study to the participants in a short sentence online and requested them to formally express their willingness to cooperate. The entire data collection took four months and the participants were reminded to submit their responses in a short time. Next, the collected data were double-checked to locate errors and missing data before initiating the analyses. The final data were entered into Excel sheets and fed into SPSS software. Lastly, different statistical techniques were employed to analyze the data commensurate with the research question and hypotheses. The results were then represented via Tables and Figures.

3.4. Data Analysis

The researcher used SPSS software (version 27) and AMOS (version 24) to answer the research questions. The researcher analyzed the obtained data employing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and functions such as reliability, correlation, and Multiple Linear Regression.

4. RESULTS

This study used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to find the reliability of the questionnaire, their convergent and discriminant validity, and to explore the relationships among teachers’ grit, positive psychological capital, and emotional literacy skills. To do this, a two-factor L2-Teacher Grit Scale (L2TGS) (8 items), six one-factor Positive Psychological Capital (PPC) Questionnaire (26 items), and a five-factor Emotional Literacy Scale (31 items) were projected (Figure 1). The results of these analyses are presented below.

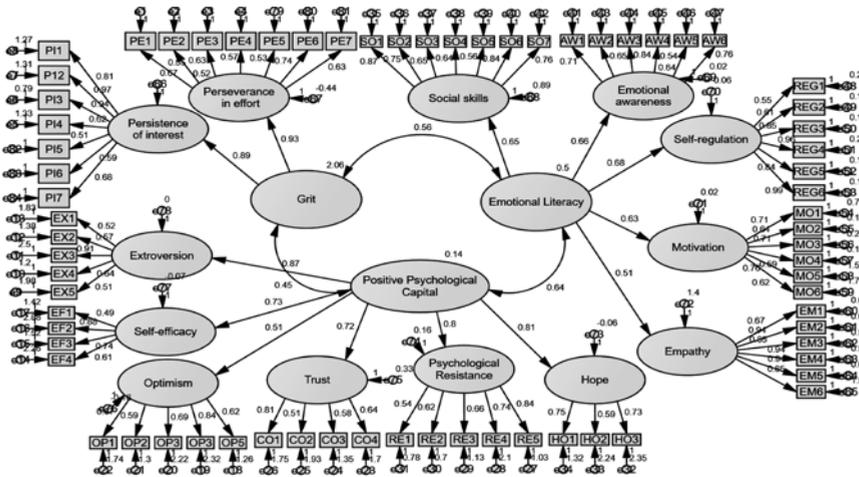


Figure 1. The final modified CFA model with standardized estimates

Table 1. The goodness of fit estimation

Criteria		Threshold			Evaluation
		Terrible	Acceptable	Excellent	
CMIN	7376.315				
DF	1999				
CMIN/DF	3.694	> 5	> 3	> 1	Acceptable
RMSEA	.062	> 0.08	< 0.08	< 0.06	Acceptable
CFI	.928	< 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.95	Acceptable
NFI	.911	< 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.95	Acceptable
GFI	.920	< 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.95	Acceptable

In Table 1, the result indicated that five determiners are the ratio of chi-square minimum-degree of freedom (CMIN-DF), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The model fit indices were all within specifications. Therefore, CMIN/DF was 3.694 (spec. ≤ 3.0), GFI = 0.920 (spec. > 0.9), NFI = 0.911 (spec. > 0.9), CFI = .928 (spec. > 0.9), and RMSEA = 0.062 (spec. < 0.080). Then the measurement models were prepared for the constructs, as shown in Figure 2.

Table 2. Reliability and validity of the variables

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	L2-Teacher Grit	Positive Psychological Capital	Emotional Literacy
L2-Teacher Grit	0.84	0.68	0.955	0.996	0.825		
Positive Psychological Capital	0.86	0.88	0.955	0.991	0.732***	0.941	
Emotional Literacy	0.87	0.75	0.923	0.981	0.659***	0.831***	0.871

*** It is significant at the .000 level

The evaluation of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) model in Table 2 revealed robust construct reliability as indicated by satisfactory composite reliability values across all questionnaire scales. Additionally, all scales demonstrated convergent validity, supported by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.50. This confirmed the model’s ability to measure the intended constructs reliably.

Moreover, the study assessed discriminant validity by examining the correlations between constructs. The significant positive correlation ($r = 0.65, p < .001$) between L2-teacher grit and emotional literacy suggested a strong association. Similarly, positive psychological capital and emotional literacy exhibited a substantial positive correlation ($r = 0.83, p < .001$). Furthermore, L2-teacher grit and positive psychological capital were strongly positively correlated ($r = 0.73, p < .001$). These correlations reinforced the discriminant validity, indicating that the model effectively distinguished between different constructs (Figures 2 and 3).

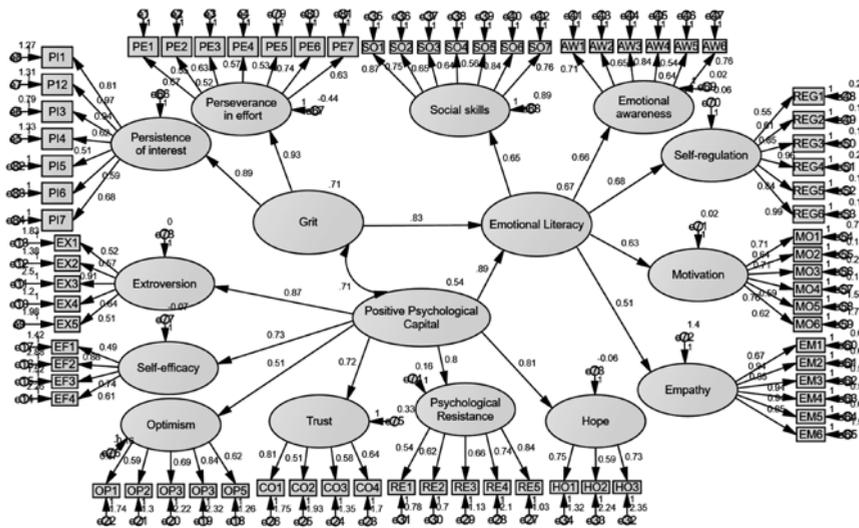


Figure 2. The final measurement model with standardized estimates

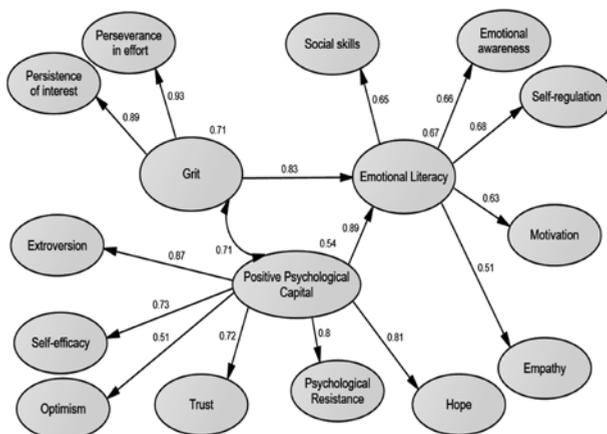


Figure 3. The final measurement model

Table 3. Standardized regression weights of the variables

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Emotional Literacy	←	Grit	.833	.022	3.498	.000
Emotional Literacy	←	Positive Psychological Capital	.891	.202	4.886	.000
Perseverance in effort	←	Grit	.926	.112	7.963	.000
Persistence of interest	←	Grit	.894			
Extroversion	←	Positive Psychological Capital	.871	.383	5.161	.000
Self-efficacy	←	Positive Psychological Capital	.733	.419	5.204	.000
Optimism	←	Positive Psychological Capital	.513	.480	5.521	.000
Trust	←	Positive Psychological Capital	.725	.412	5.264	.000
Resistance	←	Positive Psychological Capital	.803	.384	5.427	.000
Hope	←	Positive Psychological Capital	.814			
Empathy	←	Emotional Literacy	.512			
Motivation	←	Emotional Literacy	.629	.094	10.623	.000
Self-regulation	←	Emotional Literacy	.683	.102	12.055	.000
Self-awareness	←	Emotional Literacy	.661	.093	7.107	.000
Social skills	←	Emotional Literacy	.654	.095	8.949	.000

The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis of the model revealed compelling insights into the relationship between variables (Table 3). This analysis also demonstrated a robust and statistically significant positive influence of grit on teachers' emotional literacy ($\beta = .833, p < .000$). Similarly, the results indicated a significant positive impact of positive psychological capital on teachers' emotional literacy ($\beta = .891, p < .000$). The final measurement model revealed that approximately 67 percent of changes in teachers' emotional literacy was accurately predicted by their L2 grit and positive psychological capital. This emphasizes the substantial explanatory capacity of the model in understanding and forecasting emotional literacy in teachers.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examined whether there is a relation between three variables (EFL teachers' grit, their PPC, and their emotional literacy) and whether two of those variables (EFL teachers' grit and PPC) have a predictive role in the third one (emotional literacy). It was found from SEM analysis that both grit and PPC could predict 67% of changes in teachers' emotional literacy. This finding verifies the theoretical foundations of the study, considering the connections among teachers' psycho-emotional factors and their personality traits. More precisely, the results showed the need for posing a more structured agenda for the application of PP in L2 research (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2019), and it corroborates the urgency of systematically focusing on teachers' emotionality and emotional literacy in L2 education to improve their psychological states and capitals in the face of challenges common in the field (Mercer, 2020). Additionally, this result resonates well with SCT, which posits the reciprocal influence of human affective factors on each other in social contexts. The findings indicate the duality of the relationship between grit and emotional literacy. To be gritty means that teachers have to face setbacks bravely. To do so, they need skills to recognize and manage their own as well as others' emotions. Without such literacy, they would easily succumb to the coming challenges of L2 teaching. Empirically, the results concur with Duckworth *et al.* (2021), who argued that grit is the outcome of an interplay of inner resources and emotions (e.g., passion, perseverance, resilience, self-efficacy etc.) and external factors (context, relations, culture, facilities etc.). This result is also consistent with Zhao's (2023) claim that grit can significantly affect educators' emotional resources. An explanation for this could be EFL teachers' sufficient knowledge of PP constructs, especially L2 grit, and its conceptualization and practice. It seems that the participants of this study had a clear understanding of the idea that grit is, *per se*, an emotion, which, in turn, bonds with emotional literacy. In other words, grit has been perceived as a predictor of emotional literacy, probably because being emotionally literate is a precondition for becoming gritty. Without being able to detect and regulate emotions involved in teaching English, it would be difficult to remain tough in the face of emotionally complex situations in the classroom. The virtuous cycle of mutual nourishment between grit and emotional literacy may not be triggered unless the EFL teacher is literate enough to identify and regulate emotions. Another justification can be the participants' high PPC in that grit and emotional literacy could be fostered by teachers' PPC, as supported by prior research (e.g., Tösten & Toprak, 2017). It is also likely that the affective nature of teaching an L2 in EFL contexts had made the participants consider grit and emotional literacy as correlated.

The results of this study also revealed that EFL teachers' PPC was a significant predictor of their emotional literacy. This supports the theoretical link between these two constructs posited in PP and the emotional literacy model (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2019; Steiner & Perry, 1997). In light of PP, the result verifies the interconnection among positive emotions in education in that PP constructs may stimulate other constructs. For example, being able to recognize and manage self and others' emotions can develop one's psychological capital (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). When EFL teachers are emotionally aware, they are more likely to detect and utilize intellectual resources available to them. Similarly, the emotional literacy model buttresses this finding by its emphasis on the contribution of emotional literacy to

personality traits' development (e.g., grit) and professional growth (pedagogical efficacy). Hence, it can be claimed that an EFL teacher who is emotionally literate has a higher PPC. To understand and apply PPC, teachers need to detect, regulate, invest, and direct their own feelings in the first place. This is empirically in line with previous studies (e.g., Alemdar & Anilan, 2020), which highlighted the role of PPC in shaping teachers' emotions and capital. The results also reflect those of Wu and Kang (2023), who ran a quantitative study in China and argued that psychological capital engenders achievement emotions and success in English language education.

One possible reason behind the results of the present study could be the participants' high emotional intelligence as the driving force beneath emotional literacy (Haddon *et al.*, 2005; Kliueva & Tsagari, 2018). They may have had a high emotional intelligence, but not tested in this study. This result also confirms the underlying factors of emotional literacy, especially '*emotional awareness*' and '*self-regulation*' (Steiner, 2003). It is possible that the participants' positive mentality and psychological awareness in L2 education made them aware of personality traits (e.g., grit) and emotions. This is supported by Ke *et al.*'s (2009) study, in which it was contended that teachers' mentality influences their perceived emotions. Another justification for the findings of this study can be the EFL teachers' high work engagement, signified by consistency of interest and perseverance of effort in their job. This involvement may have led them to immerse in the pedagogical and psycho-emotional aspects of their profession. This finding can be further justified by the idea that many of the sub-components of PPC are by nature emotion-based (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism, sense of trust, psychological resilience, and hope), which, in turn, tap into teachers' awareness and competency to understand emotions. Simply put, these emotional factors beneath PPC theoretically constitute one's emotional literacy. It is illogical to talk about emotional literacy without understanding and regulating such positive emotions. Therefore, the participants of this study seem to be cognizant of the connection among their emotions, personality traits, and psychological factors.

This study is not without limitations; the model used did not take into account teachers' demographic and educational differences, so it is logical to argue, for example, that university education, teaching experience, proficiency, and qualifications of the participants may have affected their responses. Furthermore, the conclusions inferred by quantitative data and SEM analysis could have been triangulated with qualitative data for greater generalizability. Qualitative data would have helped to point out other factors affecting the predictive power of the three constructs examined in this article for which the current study provides no information. Therefore, it would be better to delineate intervening factors in the structural model proposed in this study.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the results of this quantitative study, it can be concluded that EFL teachers' emotional literacy level is affected by several other psycho-emotional constructs, such as L2 grit and PPC. Because emotional literacy covers a broad range of literacies for several psychological constructs, it is warranted to assert that grit and PPC play a part in its establishment. Moreover, someone is unlikely to be regarded as an emotionally literate teacher

without knowing the conceptualization and manifestation of grit and PPC in L2 education. Drawing on these conclusions, we can claim that the present study has implications for the theory and practice of L2 education. Theoretically, this research enriches previous theories and models of PP, SCT, and emotional literacy by elucidating the correlation among three psycho-emotional variables, which have been overlooked by L2 researchers. It also provides more information regarding the correlates of emotional literacy as an emerging construct in educational psychology. Additionally, it can be asserted that the results of this study influence the theoretical literature on L2 teacher emotionality and PP by elaborating on the question of whether positive emotions can lead to other positive emotions or not. In other words, the study lends further support to the contagious nature of emotions highlighted in the PP school of thought.

Practically, the results of this study can help EFL teachers grow their knowledge and awareness of the psycho-affective dimension of L2 education. The results also inform them of the importance of being gritty and able to use psychological resources (e.g., grit, PPC, emotional literacy) in the classroom to reduce emotional labor and generate success. This positive personality trait can also contribute to their identities and professional teacher selves. Furthermore, staff development units or in-service training units can use these results to integrate teacher-research projects, lesson studies, and bottom-up professional development approaches to raise teachers' awareness and grow related competencies. They can also focus on the psycho-affective dimension of L2 education in such programs. Relatedly, supportive programs can be suggested to EFL teachers by creating a school culture that promotes the emotional literacy of the teachers and their students.

Moreover, the results obtained in this study can be of value to EFL teacher educators in that they can be afforded a sample picture of 'emotions in L2 education'. Therefore, they can develop courses in which EFL teachers are supplied with both pedagogical and psychological supports in the form of training programs before entering the actual classroom. Likewise, teacher trainers can design practical techniques by which EFL teachers' sense of grit and emotional literacy is enhanced under the influence of using PPC. School managers are the next group that can benefit from the results. They can provide a positive working environment for EFL teachers in which their feelings are taken into consideration in a way that they can nourish their grit despite the difficulties of teaching an L2. Finally, educational psychology researchers and L2 scholars may find this study useful in that they can gain fresh insight into the interaction among three under-explored PP constructs in EFL contexts.

7. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future scholars can focus on the limitations of this study and, by bridging the gaps, advance this area. For example, this study only used a pure quantitative design in a single context. Hence, future scholars can run qualitative and mixed-methods explorations in different educational settings to enhance the scholarly impact of their research. Further research can also be done by refining the theoretical frameworks and employing more diverse sampling strategies that secure external validity and generalizability to broader EFL contexts. Cross-cultural and multi-national studies are also recommended to reach deeper and more generalizable findings. It is crucial to extend this investigation to languages other

than English, as the challenges faced by teachers of such languages are different and may result in a different ratio in the relation of the three variables. Moreover, the present inquiry has exclusively evaluated the predictors of EFL teachers' emotional literacy skills. Future investigations can assess the determinants of this variable in ESL classrooms to locate any discrepancy in the outcomes. Furthermore, the mediating role of participants' age, gender, teaching experience, proficiency level, emotional intelligence, and academic degree was disregarded in this research. Therefore, future studies need to assess whether situational variables can mediate the associations between teachers' grit, PPC, and emotional literacy skills. Additionally, since the data of this study were self-reported and one-time via surveys, further research could use observational and longitudinal techniques. This would reduce the risk of self-overestimation in the participants' responses. Future researchers are also invited to use innovative approaches to PP research such as time series analysis, idiodynamic method, and latent profile analysis, to capture the complexity and dynamism of PP constructs in L2 education (Derakhshan, 2022; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2023). Future research could also go in the direction of unmasking the impact of EFL teachers' emotions and emotional literacy on their various professional identities, especially in online contexts (Derakhshan & Nazari, 2022).

8. REFERENCES

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