

## Understanding Academic Grit: A Philosophical Study of Existence, Truth, and Values in Education

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**Abstract**

Academic grit has become an important construct in education as students increasingly face academic pressure, learning loss, motivational decline, and difficulties in maintaining perseverance toward long-term educational goals. However, most previous studies have examined grit through quantitative measurement, while its deeper philosophical meaning remains insufficiently explored. This study aims to analyze academic grit from the perspectives of ontology, epistemology, and axiology in order to understand its existence, the construction of its truth, and its value orientation in education. A qualitative Systematic Literature Review approach was employed using the PRISMA 2020 framework. Data were collected from relevant publications indexed in Scopus, Google Scholar, Garuda, and SINTA, focusing on studies published between 2020 and 2025 concerning academic grit, education, philosophy, qualitative inquiry, and collectivist culture. The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. The findings show that academic grit is not merely a psychological trait, but a mode of being reflected in students' perseverance during academic challenges. Epistemologically, grit is constructed through experience, failure, reflection, and social interaction. Axiologically, grit embodies values such as responsibility, purpose, patience, and commitment. This study concludes that academic grit should be understood as a philosophical, cultural, and educational phenomenon.

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### INTRODUCTION

Currently, the world of education, both at the national and international levels, faces challenges related to students' ability to maintain perseverance, resilience, and internal motivation during the learning process. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data for 2022 shows that almost half of learners in OECD countries, including Indonesia, have difficulty maintaining personal motivation to complete academic tasks at least once a week (OECD, 2023, in Parahita et al., 2023, as cited in Jurnal Didaktika, 2026). In Indonesia, this condition is further complicated by the impact of learning loss that emerged following the COVID-19 pandemic. This phenomenon is reflected in the decline in students' interest in learning and their low levels of active engagement in various school learning activities. This reality encourages academics and education practitioners to pay greater attention to the non-cognitive factors believed to support students' long-term academic success (Garcia, 2016; Shek et al., 2023; Tucker-Drob & Harden, 2017).

Over the past decade, grit has become one of the psychological constructs that has received considerable attention across various studies. Duckworth et al. (2007) define grit as a combination of perseverance and consistency of interest in the pursuit of long-term goals. This concept is built on two main components: consistency of interest and perseverance of effort. Various subsequent studies have shown that grit is associated with increased academic achievement, continuity of studies at educational institutions, and the psychological well-being of students (Datu, 2021). In addition, grit is considered to have greater predictive power for learning success than standard test results and cognitive intelligence alone, particularly when students face repeated challenges and obstacles (Sulla et al., 2022). Although the concept of grit has been widely applied in educational research, studies that examine the fundamental meaning of grit based on students' own experiences and perspectives remain relatively limited. Understanding how students interpret the process of persisting in the face of academic demands is an important aspect that warrants deeper exploration (Entwistle, 2018; Tekkumru Kisa & Stein, 2015; Tolman & Kremling, 2023).

Studies on academic grit in Indonesia have to date largely focused on quantitative approaches centered on measurement and instrument testing. The findings of Andrianie et al. (2024) show that most students across various Indonesian educational institutions have a grit level in the moderate category, indicating that there is still room to develop these characteristics more optimally. Research conducted in Makassar also found that grit functions as a negative predictor of academic dishonesty, such that individuals with higher grit levels tend to demonstrate greater integrity and responsibility in the educational process. Meanwhile, data on dropout rates in Indonesia indicates that low learning readiness, weak commitment to completing education, and the onset of academic burnout are among the main factors that lead students to discontinue their studies (Nurmalitasari et al., 2023). These findings suggest that the effectiveness of intervention programs depends not only on efforts to improve academic behavior, but also on a deeper understanding of how students construct and interpret academic perseverance and motivation in their daily lives.

When examined through the lens of educational philosophy, the concept of grit in the academic context is closely related to the three main foundations of philosophy: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. From an ontological perspective, grit is not only understood as a personality trait measurable through psychological instruments, but also as a mode of being that reflects the way an individual responds to the various challenges encountered in life. From an epistemological standpoint, understanding how students construct belief in the importance of perseverance opens space to examine the formation of subjective knowledge derived from continually evolving learning experiences. From an axiological perspective, grit is related to the values that are lived and internalized by students throughout their education, such as hard work, commitment, and orientation toward life goals. Kuruveettissery et al. (2023, in Parahita et al., 2026) assert that grit contains elements of goal-oriented resilience that are inherently tied to specific goals and values. This multidimensional character demonstrates that grit cannot be comprehensively understood if analyzed solely through a quantitative approach relying on statistical scores and linear measures (Ackerson, 2025; Climer, 2017; Nachtsheim III, 2025).

Cross-cultural research suggests that the concept of grit developed within Western individualistic societies may not be entirely appropriate when applied to collectivist societies in Asia, including Indonesia. Datu (2021) highlights the possibility of cultural bias in the early

grit model, calling for further research that incorporates elements of local culture to achieve a deeper understanding of grit. The findings of Kuruveettissery et al. (2025) support this view by showing that in a collectivist society such as India, grit is formed through a combination of positive psychological characteristics encompassing perseverance, goal aspiration, goal-orientedness, active patience, and psychological adaptability — elements not entirely consistent with the two-dimensional model introduced by Duckworth. In the Indonesian context, cultural values such as the spirit of perseverance, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and orientation toward collective success have the potential to shape a conception of grit that differs from the original model. This further underscores the importance of philosophical and cultural inquiry in understanding grit more contextually within the Indonesian educational environment.

Most previous research on grit has focused primarily on statistical relationships between grit and various indicators of individual performance, such as academic achievement, retention rates, and attainment of specific targets. Muchna (2025) is among the researchers who employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how nursing students develop resilience through first-hand experience of academic and non-academic challenges. However, research that specifically examines the existential dimension, the foundations of knowledge, and the values embedded in grit within the Indonesian student context remains relatively limited. Datu (2021) has recommended the need for qualitative and mixed-methods research to understand the social, psychological, and emotional mechanisms linking grit to psychological well-being and academic success. These limitations point to the urgent need for research that focuses on lived experiences and the meaning-making processes of students in greater depth.

The qualitative approach offers the advantage of explaining phenomena that cannot be fully captured through statistical figures. Muchna (2025) explains that qualitative research provides researchers with the opportunity to understand students' subjective experiences within the context of their own lives through the exploration of narratives and personal perspectives, without being constrained by rigid frameworks of external variables. In the study of educational philosophy, phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches allow researchers to trace structures of consciousness and the fundamental meaning underlying students' efforts to sustain their studies. Lee and Park (2024) confirm that the dimensions of perseverance and consistency of interest within grit contribute significantly to the formation of mastery approach goals that are highly personal and shaped by the context of individual life. These goals cannot be comprehensively understood without examining the real experiences that students have lived. This study therefore employs a qualitative approach as a means of exploring participants' experiences in depth while uncovering the philosophical meaning that underlies their grit.

Based on the foregoing, this study aims to examine the characteristics of academic grit through a philosophical perspective by focusing on three main dimensions: ontology as the study of the essence of existence, epistemology as the study of the nature of knowledge, and axiology as the study of the essence of values as directly experienced by students during the educational process. The focus is directed at understanding how students interpret grit within the learning experiences they encounter daily. Through this approach, the research aims to fill gaps in the literature that have been more oriented toward quantitative measurement, in which aspects of meaning, subjective experience, and students' depth of reflection on grit have not received adequate attention.

Theoretically, this research is expected to broaden the development of the grit concept by introducing a philosophical perspective that remains relatively underexplored in previous studies. Furthermore, the results have the potential to serve as a conceptual basis for developing a grit model that is more responsive to the cultural characteristics underlying students' experiences. In the practical realm, the findings can serve as a reference for educators, guidance and counseling teachers, and education policy designers in developing academic character development programs that are not only applicable, but also relevant to the real needs and experiences of Indonesian students. Programs designed on this basis are expected to reflect the authentic conditions of students while supporting the strengthening of grit in a more meaningful and contextually appropriate manner.

The concept of grit was first introduced by Duckworth et al. (2007) in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. In that study, grit is described as a combination of perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Conceptually, grit is built on two main dimensions. The first is perseverance of effort — the ability of individuals to maintain effort and commitment despite facing difficulties, failures, and setbacks. The second is consistency of interest, which refers to the ability to maintain focus on and engagement with the same goal over an extended period of time. These two dimensions distinguish grit from other psychological constructs, such as talent, intellectual intelligence, and general resilience. In the context of education, various studies show that grit is a consistent predictor of academic success, and in some conditions contributes more strongly than individual cognitive abilities (Datu, 2021). To support the measurement of this construct, Duckworth developed two psychological instruments: Grit-O, consisting of 12 items, and Grit-S, consisting of 8 items. Both instruments have undergone validation and adaptation processes in various countries, including Indonesia (Kisdayani & Setyowibowo, 2024).

The theoretical foundation of this research rests on three main dimensions of the philosophy of science: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Pretorius (2024) explains that ontology concerns the nature of reality as the basis of scientific understanding, epistemology focuses on how knowledge is obtained and justified, and axiology addresses the role of values in the research process. Within the interpretivist paradigm that underlies qualitative research, reality is understood as a social construct that is plural, subjective, and inseparable from individual experience. Research therefore does not depart from the assumption of a universal truth that can be measured objectively, but rather seeks to understand the meaning constructed by individuals based on their lived experiences. From this perspective, grit is ontologically understood not as an innate trait, but as a form of existence reflected in the way a person navigates various academic experiences. Epistemologically, understanding grit is constructed through interaction between researcher and participants via in-depth interviews, reflection, and interpretation of the experiences shared. Axiologically, grit is understood as a phenomenon inseparable from the values derived from students' beliefs, culture, and future orientation (Pretorius, 2024).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Ryan and Deci (2000) and further elaborated in Ryan and Deci (2020), provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding grit. Within the SDT framework, motivation is divided into two main forms: intrinsic motivation, which arises from personal interest and satisfaction in an activity, and extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external consequences or rewards. One important concept

within this theory is autonomous motivation — a form of extrinsic motivation that has been deeply internalized so as to feel like an expression of personal will. SDT also identifies three basic psychological needs that must be fulfilled: autonomy, competence, and social connectedness. The fulfillment of these three needs is believed to encourage students to engage more meaningfully in learning and to sustain academic effort over time (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The relationship between SDT and grit rests on the assumption that long-term effort can only be sustained if the individual perceives their academic activities as personally valuable and aligned with their own goals, rather than driven solely by external pressure. In this context, the consistency of interest dimension of grit can be understood as a manifestation of the motivational internalization process described in SDT.

Applying the concept of grit within collectivist societies, including Indonesia, requires a theoretical foundation that takes into account local cultural characteristics. Datu (2021) notes that most research on grit remains dominated by Western individualistic perspectives, potentially carrying cultural biases that limit understanding of the meaning of perseverance within collectivist societies. Qualitative research findings by Kuruveettissery et al. (2025) show that grit in collectivist cultures encompasses not only perseverance and goal aspiration, but also the dimensions of purpose, patience, and psychological flexibility. Furthermore, external factors such as family support and socioeconomic conditions have been shown to exert considerable influence in shaping long-term resilience among learners in developing countries. In the Indonesian context, cultural values such as the spirit of perseverance, respect for parents, and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) have the potential to constitute additional elements not yet accommodated in Duckworth's theoretical model of grit, underscoring the need to develop a conception of grit that is more responsive to the local cultural context.

A number of previous studies have also provided the foundation for this research. First, Muchna (2025) conducted a descriptive qualitative study with 22 nursing students in the United States and found that grit is not an innate ability but a capacity that develops through strategies individuals actively build throughout the educational process. Students who persist in the face of high academic demands were found to employ various strategies, such as building social support, managing time in a disciplined manner, and reframing experienced failures. The findings indicate that subjective experience when facing challenges is an important element in the formation of grit and is more appropriately understood through a qualitative approach.

Second, Kuruveettissery et al. (2025) employed a qualitative content analysis approach involving 48 participants consisting of students and positive psychology practitioners. The results show that the structure of grit in a collectivist society has complexity that extends beyond the original model proposed by Duckworth. The study identified four relatively stable components — perseverance, passion, purpose, and patience — as well as one dynamic component in the form of psychological flexibility. These findings challenge the assumption of the universality of grit theory while reinforcing the need for similar research across non-Western cultural contexts, including Indonesia.

Third, Kisdayani and Setyowibowo (2024) adapted the Academic Grit Scale (AGS) for use with Indonesian students through a quantitative approach. The results demonstrate that the instrument has an adequate level of validity and reliability for use within the Indonesian educational context. However, the study also acknowledges that scale-based measurement approaches have not been able to explain in depth how and why students maintain their

academic perseverance, including the underlying values that sustain it. Collectively, these three studies indicate that although the quantitative research foundations on grit in Indonesia have developed, qualitative studies seeking to understand the meaning and essence of students' academic experiences remain very limited.

Based on the findings of the literature review, several research gaps can be identified, both theoretically and empirically. First, most research on grit continues to focus on quantitative approaches that emphasize the measurement of individual grit levels, and has therefore been unable to explain the deeper meaning experienced by research subjects. Datu (2021) has recommended the need for qualitative research to address this limitation. Second, the study of grit has not been widely integrated with perspectives from educational philosophy encompassing the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions. As a result, understanding of grit tends to remain limited to the psychological dimension without addressing the more fundamental dimensions of meaning and value. Pretorius (2024) emphasizes that research that neglects philosophical foundations risks producing superficial understandings with insufficient methodological consistency. Third, qualitative research on grit among Indonesian students that explores lived experiences, internalized values, and the meaning of academic existence remains very rare. These three gaps constitute the primary justification for conducting this research.

Based on the theoretical review above, this study employs an integrative conceptual framework combining three interrelated dimensions of analysis. The first draws on the theory of grit introduced by Duckworth (2007) and further developed by Datu (2021) as the main psychological foundation, with particular emphasis on aspects of perseverance relevant to the collectivist cultural context. The second adopts Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as proposed by Ryan and Deci (2020) as a basis for understanding the motivational dimension, particularly in relation to the factors and mechanisms that enable students to sustain enthusiasm and steadfastness throughout the academic process. The third positions the interpretivist paradigm and its three underlying dimensions of the philosophy of science — ontology, epistemology, and axiology (Pretorius, 2024) — as a methodological framework guiding how researchers understand reality, construct knowledge, and interpret the role of values throughout the research process.

These three dimensions form a mutually complementary and reinforcing relationship. Self-Determination Theory explains the motivational conditions that underlie the emergence of grit, while grit theory provides the substantive focus of the study. At the same time, the interpretivist paradigm serves as a methodological guide for exploring and understanding the deepest dimensions of students' experiences in sustaining their studies. By integrating these three perspectives, this research aims to produce a more comprehensive understanding of grit — not only from a psychological standpoint, but also from the philosophical and cultural dimensions that underlie the experiences of students in the Indonesian higher education context.

## **METHODS**

This research employed a qualitative research design using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine the concept of academic grit from philosophical perspectives, particularly ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The data population in this

study consisted of scholarly publications discussing academic grit, grit in education, perseverance, motivation, philosophical studies in education, and grit within collectivist cultural contexts. The research sample included selected journal articles, conceptual papers, and relevant academic publications published between 2020 and 2025. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, whereby sources were selected based on their relevance to the research focus, publication quality, methodological suitability, and contribution to the discussion of academic grit. The inclusion criteria covered studies that examined grit in educational or personal development contexts, employed qualitative, conceptual, or philosophical approaches, and were published in Scopus-indexed journals, Google Scholar-indexed sources, or nationally accredited journals indexed in at least SINTA.

The research instrument used in this study was a literature review matrix developed to organize and evaluate the selected articles systematically. The matrix included several analytical categories, such as author name, year of publication, research objective, theoretical framework, research method, key findings, philosophical relevance, and contribution to the understanding of academic grit. As this study did not employ a questionnaire or psychometric scale, validity and reliability were ensured through source credibility, systematic article selection, transparent inclusion and exclusion criteria, and consistency in the coding process. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the analysis, data triangulation was applied across different academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, Garuda, and SINTA. In addition, repeated reading and cross-checking of themes were conducted to reduce researcher bias and ensure that the findings were grounded in the reviewed literature.

Data collection was carried out through a structured literature search using keywords such as "academic grit," "grit and education," "grit and philosophy," "grit and qualitative research," "perseverance and passion," "grit and collectivist culture," and "ontology epistemology axiology in education." The research procedure followed the PRISMA 2020 framework, beginning with identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of relevant studies. Reference management and article organization were supported using Mendeley or Zotero, while Microsoft Excel was used to classify and map the reviewed literature. The data analysis technique applied was reflexive thematic analysis, following the stages of familiarization with data, initial coding, theme construction, theme review, theme definition, and interpretation. Through this process, the selected literature was analyzed to identify how academic grit is philosophically understood as a form of existence, a construction of knowledge, and an expression of values in the educational process.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The literature review process collected in this study identified three main categories of interrelated points. The three points include: (1) academic grit as integrity and presence in the educational process (ontological dimension); (2) academic grit as knowledge constructed from experience (epistemological dimension); and (3) academic grit as an expression of values and life goals (axiological dimension). Below is an in-depth explanation of each category of findings.

### **Academic Grit as Integrity and Presence in the Educational Process (Ontological Dimension)**

Academic grit cannot be understood solely as psychological characteristics that a person has or does not have. More than that, this concept reflects how individuals display their existence in the context of the educational environment. Various studies show that students who have a high level of grit tend to show positive involvement in the learning process. They not only focus on completing academic tasks and achieving adequate evaluation results, but also view every challenge faced as an integral part of the process of self-development and maturation.

Thus, grit is understood to have an ontological dimension that places academic struggle as part of the integrity of individual existence. The process of facing various academic difficulties is not separated from personal identity, but is lived as a means of self-formation. A corresponding finding was reported by Kuruveettissery et al. (2025), who identified that academic grit in learners is reflected through internal strengths that allow them to persevere in the face of challenging conditions. The phenomenon describes the manifestation of a strong self-presence within the framework of local cultural values and cannot be reduced simply as a psychological construct that stands in isolation. In this context, cross-cultural studies also confirm that grit contains an existential dimension that cannot be fully represented through the score of measurement instruments. The ontological essence of grit is rooted in meaningful struggle, which is when various difficulties are understood not as obstacles that stop an individual's steps, but as an existential condition that shapes their identity. The findings are reinforced by research on the relationship between grit and the meaning of life, which shows a positive and significant correlation between the various dimensions of grit and the way individuals interpret their existence and lives (Shah & Deshpande, 2022, in Harpaz, 2024).

### **Academic Grit as Knowledge Constructed from Experience (Epistemological Dimension)**

From an epistemological perspective, grit is related to the way students form an understanding of their ability to survive various challenges. This understanding develops through a process of reflection on the experience of failure and various difficulties that have been experienced. Diverse research results show that an individual's belief in his or her endurance capacity does not arise automatically from the start, but rather is formed gradually through direct involvement with actively interpreted empirical experiences. Muchna (2025) explained that one of the main cognitive strategies used by students to maintain grit is the reframing process, which is an effort to change the way of looking at failure from something that is considered threatening to a source of valuable information and supports the process of self-development.

Basically, the epistemological concept represents the formation of subjective knowledge about oneself as an individual who has competence and resilience in facing challenges. Datu (2021) emphasized that the psychological mechanisms that explain the relationship between grit and various positive achievements are still not fully understood, so further research is needed to uncover how and why students build persistence in themselves. The results of this study contribute to this gap by showing that the epistemological dimension of grit is composed of at least three main components, namely: (a) self-evaluation of the experience of failure and the development that has been achieved, (b) reconstruction of the identity narrative from the

position of the passive individual as a victim to the active individual as an agent, and (c) the integration of the experience of failure into the knowledge used to develop strategies survive. Kuruveettissery et al. (2025) also confirm that in the context of collective culture, the understanding of resilience strategies is not solely formed individually, but develops through interaction with families, educators, and the surrounding social community. The findings show that the epistemology of grit in a society with a collective pattern has an intersubjective nature, so that the process of knowledge formation takes place through mutual involvement and not only centered on personal experience.

### **Academic Grit as an Expression of Life Values and Goals (Axiological Dimension)**

From an axiological perspective, the findings of this study reveal a diverse and rich discussion space containing strong cultural and philosophical dimensions. The literature analyzed consistently shows that grit cannot be understood in isolation from the value system that forms the foundation of students' lives. Students' decisions to persist in the face of academic challenges are not solely determined by high grit scores, but are more fundamentally shaped by the existence of reasons considered valuable and meaningful as the basis of their struggle. Kuruveettissery et al. (2025) found that in societies with particular cultural backgrounds, purpose orientation and patience in the face of difficulties emerge as independent dimensions of grit, neither of which is captured in the theoretical model developed by Duckworth. This goal orientation is generally rooted in social relationships, such that students' efforts are often directed toward fulfilling family expectations, contributing to the social environment, or realizing the cultural and spiritual values they hold.

These findings suggest that the axiological foundation underpinning perseverance in a collectivist perspective does not rest on individualistic values such as self-oriented personal achievement or interpersonal competition. On the contrary, perseverance is more deeply grounded in moral obligation and the desire to give back in return for the support received from the family environment. In the Indonesian context, values such as the spirit of perseverance and commitment to fulfilling parental expectations often carry an equally strong motivational force, one that can surpass motivation arising from individual academic ambition. This is consistent with characteristics of Indonesian culture, which views the family as a collective unit in which family dignity and honor are also shaped by the success achieved by each member. Harpaz (2024) further reinforces these findings by demonstrating that grit has a significant relationship with personal growth and students' subjective well-being, both of which are strongly influenced by the degree of meaningful value underlying each individual's academic struggle. Thus, the axiological dimension of grit fundamentally concerns the goals to be achieved and the parties that constitute the primary orientation when an individual decides to persevere in the face of challenges.

In general, the findings of this study confirm that grit is a phenomenon of greater complexity than can be represented by a two-dimensional construct measured through linear scale instruments. The integration of the three groups of themes identified — the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of grit — presents a philosophical perspective that has not been explicitly articulated in previous studies. Based on these results, the following discussion seeks to interpret the findings by connecting them to the theoretical framework and the results of prior research. In addition, this discussion aims to identify conceptual similarities

and differences, as well as to articulate the significant implications that can be drawn for both the theoretical and practical domains of education.

Findings related to the ontological dimension of grit reinforce the critique put forward by Datu (2021), who argues that the initial conceptualization of grit focused excessively on the assessment of character as a fixed attribute while paying insufficient attention to the dynamic process of self-identity formation. This study offers a broader perspective by explicitly incorporating the ontological dimension into the framework for understanding grit. When grit is understood as a manifestation of an individual's existence rather than merely as a personality trait, the implications for educational practice become fundamental. In this context, it is not sufficient for educators to measure students' level of resilience and then encourage them to become more resilient; they must also create learning experiences that allow students to interpret struggle as part of the process of self-formation. This finding is consistent with the views of Ryan and Deci (2020) within Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that autonomy in learning does not mean freedom from obstacles, but rather the individual's capacity to find and value the meaning of the struggle undertaken. Therefore, when the learning environment is able to support students' needs for autonomy and competence, students are better able to internalize their academic goals and view challenges as part of their identity rather than as external threats.

Findings related to the epistemological dimension offer an expanded perspective on how individuals construct knowledge about their own capacity for perseverance. In contrast to quantitative research approaches that generally treat persistence as an inherent characteristic requiring only measurement, this study demonstrates that grit is a construction of knowledge that continues to evolve and is reshaped through the subject's experiences. The process of reinterpreting failure, as identified in Muchna's (2025) research, aligns with the concept of a growth mindset in educational psychology. However, the present study reveals a broader dimension by showing that the reconstruction of meaning does not occur solely as an individual cognitive process, but is also formed through social interaction and interpersonal relationships, particularly in collectivist societies. This finding represents an important distinction from previous quantitative studies that positioned grit as a variable existing prior to experience, rather than as an outcome constructed through accumulated experience. In the Indonesian context, the epistemological process carries a strong communal character, as students often develop confidence in their ability to persevere through the internalization of success narratives from parents, teachers, and community leaders introduced from an early age. This phenomenon is consistent with the findings of Kuruveettissery et al. (2025), who explain that grit is formed through social capital and interpersonal relationships, not solely through individual will.

The findings on the axiological dimension represent one of the most significant contributions of this study. A number of prior studies, including those of Datu (2021) and Kuruveettissery et al. (2025), have shown that the consistency of interest dimension within Duckworth's grit model faces reliability limitations when applied to non-Western cultural contexts. This study offers a philosophical explanation for this phenomenon by demonstrating that in collectivist societies, grit is not primarily rooted in the stability of individualistic intrinsic interests. Rather, perseverance is more strongly constructed through consistency in fulfilling moral responsibilities toward the individuals and groups that give meaning to the subject's life — such as family, social communities, and the value systems they adhere to. This

distinction reflects a fundamental axiological shift: from an orientation based on personal preference for an activity, to one grounded in moral obligation perceived as important to fulfill. These findings provide an alternative perspective to certain assumptions within Ryan and Deci's (2020) SDT framework, which positions personal internalization as the most authentic form of motivation. In the context of Indonesian culture, the drive arising from social responsibility should not be regarded as a form of extrinsic motivation lacking in value, but rather as an authentic expression of collectivist values that have been integrated into individual identity. The application of the SDT framework to Indonesian students therefore requires an interpretation that is sensitive to cultural context and the social dynamics underlying it.

Viewed from a critical perspective, the findings of this study also expose the limitations of treating grit as a standalone construct. Datu (2021) and other critical researchers have demonstrated that grit overlaps conceptually with conscientiousness and has not adequately accommodated the influence of structural factors and the social environment. This study reinforces that critique by offering a more in-depth philosophical standpoint. If grit is understood without considering the fundamental purpose that motivates the individual to persist (axiology), the process through which beliefs about one's capacity to face difficulties are formed (epistemology), and the way the experience of struggle becomes integrated with one's identity (ontology), then the measurement of grit captures only a fraction of what is in reality a far more complex psychological phenomenon. The practical implications of these findings suggest that grit development efforts should not focus solely on technical or procedural diligence training. Educational programs need to create space for students to explore their value systems, understand the meaning of the life goals they aspire to achieve, and construct positive self-identity narratives as an integral part of the overall learning process.

In conclusion, this study proposes at least three important directions for future research. First, ethnographic and phenomenological studies are needed within the Indonesian context to explore the direct experiences of students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Such approaches have the potential to yield a conceptualization of grit that is more responsive to local realities without relying entirely on theoretical frameworks derived from Western traditions. Second, longitudinal research that follows students' academic journeys from the beginning to the end of the educational period should be developed in order to understand how the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of grit change and evolve over time. Through this approach, the dynamics of perseverance formation can be mapped more comprehensively based on individuals' real experiences. Third, there is a need to develop psychological instruments that are more attuned to the characteristics of Indonesian culture by incorporating dimensions of relational goals and moral responsibility into the measurement process. Such efforts are important to ensure that grit assessment is not limited to consistency of interest and perseverance of effort, but is also capable of representing the values that are alive within Indonesian society more accurately. In this way, the research contributes not only to the theoretical development of grit, but also opens possibilities for the emergence of a more inclusive, culturally oriented, and humanistic conceptual model for understanding learning persistence among students in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This research yielded three main conclusions that are interrelated. First, from an ontological perspective, grit cannot be understood simply as a personality characteristic measurable through psychological instruments. Grit is more appropriately understood as a mode of being that reflects the way students interpret and integrate various academic challenges into the ongoing process of forming their own identity. In this context, the difficulties encountered during the educational process are not perceived as obstacles hindering the achievement of goals, but rather as conditions that help shape and develop an individual's identity within the academic environment. Second, from an epistemological perspective, grit is the product of a knowledge construction process that develops through the experience of facing failure and various forms of difficulty. Grit is not an innate characteristic present from the outset, but is formed through a continuous process of reframing and self-reflection. In collectivist societies, the process of knowledge formation does not occur solely at the individual level, but also develops through social interaction, the transmission of collective narratives, and relational support from families and communities. Third, from an axiological perspective, grit represents a value system and life orientation that extends beyond the goal of academic achievement alone. In the Indonesian context, the value of moral responsibility toward the family, the spirit of perseverance, and orientation toward the collective good are important foundations that sustain students' persistence, yet these have not been adequately accommodated in the two-dimensional model proposed by Duckworth et al. (2007). Furthermore, the dimensions of purpose orientation and patience in the face of difficulties found by Kuruveettissery et al. (2025) in collectivist societies in India show strong relevance for consideration in the Indonesian context, although their application remains shaped by distinctive cultural characteristics.

Theoretically, this research makes two important contributions. First, it expands the scope of grit theory as developed by Duckworth by integrating philosophical perspectives that encompass ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions as a more comprehensive analytical framework. The integration of these three dimensions produces a conceptual framework that views grit not merely as a measurable variable, but as a phenomenon that learners experience, construct, and interpret in their daily lives. Second, this study reinforces the argument for critically examining cultural bias in the development of grit theory. As argued by Datu (2021), the concept of grit originating from a Western individualistic perspective cannot be assumed to apply universally across all cultural contexts. The findings of this study demonstrate that in collectivist societies, including Indonesia, motivation rooted in moral responsibility and relational goals should not be regarded as a form of extrinsic motivation lacking in value. Rather, it is an authentic expression of cultural values that have been deeply internalized within the individual. This finding also responds to the recommendations of Ryan and Deci (2020), who emphasize the importance of applying Self-Determination Theory contextually in accordance with the cultural characteristics of each community, rather than through a universal and uniform approach.

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