

TEACHERS' RESILIENCE IN DEALING WITH PHYSICAL VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN ALPHA GENERATION STUDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of the tendency to commit physical violence committed by the Alpha Generation is a big challenge for teachers in creating a conducive learning environment. This study aims to describe teachers' resilience experiences in dealing with this behavior with resilience supporting factors as the main focus. This study used qualitative methods and a phenomenological approach to understand teachers' experiences in managing conflict and work pressure. Data were collected through interviews with 5 teachers at SMP X school. Data analysis was conducted using thematic techniques to identify patterns of resilience that emerged. The results showed that teachers rely on emotion regulation, impulse control, optimism, empathy, and analytical skills to understand the root of student problems. Self-efficacy and social support from colleagues, school, and family are also important factors in building emotional resilience. This study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of teacher resilience literature and offer practical recommendations for schools to provide training and support programs that strengthen teacher resilience in facing challenges in the school environment, especially physical violent behavior in Alpha Generation at the junior high school level.

Keywords: teacher resilience, physical violent behavior, alpha generation

1. PREFACE

Generation Alpha refers to those born between 2010 and 2025, with over 2.5 million babies born weekly (McCrindle, 2021). The name originates from the Greek alphabet's first letter, signifying a new beginning. This generation is predicted to be smarter than previous ones, aided by digital technology (Athika, 2019). However, this poses challenges for adults guiding them in the fast-paced technological era (Santosa, 2015). Children, as they grow, develop better motor coordination, cognitive, and emotional skills. By 11, they enter puberty and spend more time with peers, becoming more curious and active. Adolescence involves changes in emotions, body, interests, values, and social roles (Hurlock, 1978). While cognitively they improve abstract thinking, some immature behaviors persist (Papalia, 2009). Generation Alpha tends to favor gadgets and online games over outdoor activities (Jha, 2020), which can lead to risks such as exposure to inappropriate content or online interactions (Unicef, 2017). Based on research done by Apaydin and Kaya (2020), this generation also shows a rise in violent tendencies, selfishness, and limited social communication among this group. Violence in schools, especially among junior high students, is rising. A 2024 report noted 15 cases in Indonesia, with 40% happening in junior high schools and 53.3% involving peer violence (Mashabi, 2024). Teachers play a crucial role in preventing such violence, yet they often face stress and emotional exhaustion, especially in schools where violence is normalized (Benbenisti & Astor, 2005). Steffgen & Ewen (2007) state that teachers with resilience handle stress better and maintain a supportive learning environment.

When an individual can adapt, has high empathy, optimism, the ability to analyze problems and find solutions, confidence, and self-efficacy, it means they possess good resilience (Parasian & Adiputra, 2021). Reivich and Shatté (2002) describe resilience as the ability to adapt and face

difficult situations, and every individual has the potential to develop this capability. Other research highlights that resilience is related to personal competence, self-control, positive acceptance of change, tolerance for negative influence, and spiritual factors (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Luthar et al. (2000) describe resilience as a dynamic process where individuals positively adapt to challenges.

Teacher resilience is the ability to handle challenges, adapt to modern developments, and use technology collaboratively. Ebersöhn (2014) emphasizes that resilience is crucial for teachers, with studies showing that teachers with high resilience positively impact student learning outcomes. Research by Nastasia and Rinaldi (2022) shows that resilience significantly reduces work stress among teachers. Resilience protects individuals from stressors that cause pressure (Sarrionandia et al., 2018). Teachers who receive resilience training exhibit increased patience when dealing with work-related issues, such as complaints from students and parents, and better self-control under pressure (Pristiarawati et al., 2021).

Based on this, the researcher concludes that teachers play a crucial role in guiding Generation Alpha students, but stress factors can put them under pressure. Therefore, teacher resilience is essential. The researcher aims to further study the resilience of junior high school teachers, using the seven resilience-building skills proposed by Reivich & Shatté as the framework.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Samples

The sampling method in this research uses purposive sampling with a snowball sampling approach. The researcher selects and determines subjects relevant to the topic, subject criteria, and research objectives. The subjects of this study are junior high school teachers. The required characteristics of the subjects in this study are as follows: (a) Actively employed as junior high school teachers; (b) Have handled cases of physical violence among students for at least the past year. Beyond these characteristics, the researcher does not impose additional restrictions on the subjects. A total of 5 subjects are needed for this study. The limitation on the number of subjects is intended to allow the researcher to analyze each individual more thoroughly.

Measurement

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological research approach. This type of research allows the researcher to achieve the desired research objectives. In this study, the phenomenological method helps the researcher explore and understand the resilience experiences of teachers in dealing with physical violence among Generation Alpha students at the junior high school level.

Data collection and analysis

After completing the data collection, the researcher processed the data by transcribing the interview recordings into verbatim form. At this stage, the researcher only extracted key points relevant to the research objectives. The researcher also conducted coding to describe the setting, categories, and topics analyzed. The data were then presented in narrative form according to the theory used in the study. The researcher used this phase to process the information obtained from the participants by applying the research theory. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions that presented the research findings. At this stage, the researcher concluded and fulfilled the research objectives.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1

Summary of Participants' Backgrounds

Identity	1 st Subject	2 nd Subject	3 rd Subject	4 th Subject	5 th Subject
Initial	HS	EST	AHW	MWW	MDS
Age	53 years	45 years	28 years	45 years	55 years
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female
Education	Bachelor of forestry	Bachelor of psychology	Bachelor of counseling	Bachelor of church music	Bachelor of culinary education
Job Position	Math teacher & vice principal for student affairs	Counseling teacher & vice principal for curriculum	Counseling teacher	Homeroom teacher & music teacher	Counseling teacher
Years of Experience	20 years	17 years	5 years	16 years	29 years

Table 2

Summary of Participants' Resilience Factor

	Emotion Regulation	Impulse Control	Optimism	Causal Analysis	Empathy	Self-Efficacy	Reaching Out
HS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EST	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AHW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MWW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MDS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the five participants demonstrated a high level of resilience. This is evidenced by their ability to exhibit the seven resilience factors proposed by Reivich and Shatté (2002): emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy, and reaching out. These seven factors were consistently represented by the participants in addressing challenges, particularly physical violence among Generation Alpha students at the junior high school level.

a. Emotion Regulation

All participants were able to manage their emotions effectively, despite the pressure from students and the complexities of teaching. They understood the importance of managing emotions to prevent them from negatively impacting the classroom atmosphere. Participants employed various strategies to control their emotions, such as meditation, discussions with colleagues, or taking short breaks from stressful situations, demonstrating their ability to maintain emotional stability and focus on their responsibilities.

b. Impulse Control

The participants also displayed strong impulse control, particularly when feeling tired or frustrated. Instead of reacting emotionally to difficult situations, they diverted their attention to positive activities such as reading, exercising, or consulting with colleagues. This control helped them avoid hasty decisions and adopt more strategic approaches to resolving classroom conflicts.

c. Optimism

Optimism was a notable trait in how the participants approached challenges. They believed that with the right effort and strategies, difficult situations could be overcome. This optimism was reflected in their view of conflicts among students as opportunities to

teach values such as peace, tolerance, and conflict resolution. It provided motivation to continue trying new methods to support student development.

d. Causal Analysis

The ability to analyze causes and effects was another strength of the participants. They could identify the root causes of issues, such as students' family backgrounds, social pressures, or lack of supervision. With this understanding, they were able to design more effective solutions. This analytical skill also enabled them to develop preventive plans to avoid similar conflicts in the future.

e. Empathy

The participants exhibited a high degree of empathy toward their students. They sought to understand the emotional and psychological backgrounds of each student, especially those involved in physical conflicts. By placing themselves in the students' perspectives, the teachers were able to build stronger relationships and foster a safer, more comfortable learning environment.

f. Self-Efficacy

The participants showed confidence in their ability to address challenges, including managing physical conflicts among students. This belief gave them the courage to try new approaches to classroom management and dealing with problematic students. With their experience and skills, they were able to devise effective solutions while maintaining a conducive classroom atmosphere.

g. Reaching Out

All participants acknowledged the importance of seeking help when facing complex issues. They actively sought support from colleagues, communities, or family members to gain new perspectives. Additionally, the participants demonstrated the ability to share experiences with fellow teachers, which not only helped resolve issues but also alleviated emotional burdens.

Based on the research conducted, it can be observed that the five participants face various challenges as teachers who must deal with physical violence among Generation Alpha students, especially at the junior high school level. These teachers also experienced physical and mental fatigue, resulting from the many responsibilities and obligations as educators. This aligns with research conducted by Kapa & Gimbert (2020), which states that teachers who continually face problematic behaviors from students often feel emotional exhaustion. Kyriacou (2001) also stated that teaching disruptions, especially among students in the classroom, are the primary factors affecting teachers' health.

However, all five participants represented the seven resilience factors well, which aligns with the research of Steffgen and Ewen (2007). Their research found that teachers working in schools with a zero-tolerance policy for violence tend to have good resilience and better stress management. The five teachers also have good relationships with their students, both problematic and non-problematic ones. This positive relationship has a beneficial impact as emotional support for the teachers (De Cordova et al., 2019).

According to research conducted by Nastasia and Rinaldi (2022), it has been proven that resilience significantly affects work stress levels in teachers. This aligns with the researchers' findings, where the five participants already understand how to avoid being burdened by work stress. Instead, the five participants engage in activities they enjoy. This finding aligns with the research by Ebersöhn (2014), which states that teachers with low stress levels and good resilience also positively influence student learning outcomes.

Through this research, the five participants were observed to be capable of controlling their emotions, maintaining calmness, and managing the classroom in a conducive situation. This statement is supported by research conducted by Valente et al. (2022) and Hu (2023), which stated that teachers' ability to regulate emotions plays a crucial role in managing conflicts in the classroom. This is possible because emotional regulation helps teachers create positive emotional connections and handle conflicts constructively.

Regarding emotional regulation, all five participants also have good impulse control. Each subject understands how to avoid impulsive reactions. If a subject feels exhausted, they redirect their energy to other activities. This aligns with research conducted by Namaziandost & Heydarnejad (2023), which found that impulse control helps teachers avoid emotional or reactive responses to situations they face but instead respond in a more directed and strategic manner. This means teachers who can restrain themselves from undirected spontaneous reactions tend to handle pressing situations, such as physical violence among students, better.

Optimism is an essential factor in resilience because it provides emotional encouragement and motivation for teachers to keep trying new strategies in facing challenges (Wang, 2021). In a stressful environment, optimism helps teachers see conflicts as opportunities for growth rather than threats. This motivates teachers to adapt and learn from experiences, consistent with the findings of this study's five participants.

In the context of teaching, teachers with high self-efficacy believe they can maintain control in the classroom, including handling students prone to engaging in physical violence. Consistent with the findings in this research, self-efficacy boosts teachers' confidence to try new approaches in conflict management (Wang, 2021). Optimism and self-efficacy are two interconnected resilience factors (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Optimism mentally energizes teachers to persevere in facing challenges, while self-efficacy provides confidence that these challenges can be resolved using their skills.

Teachers with good empathy can identify the psychological, emotional, and social backgrounds that trigger students' negative behaviors, enabling them to design appropriate approaches. Teachers with high empathy tend to create comfortable relationships and conditions for students, forming the foundation for overcoming behavioral challenges (Zhang & Luo, 2023). Teachers with good resilience not only respond directly to students' negative behavior but also attempt to understand the root causes. This study proved that the five teachers could identify the root causes of students' problems.

Receiving support from colleagues or communities is essential for resilience because it helps teachers collaboratively cope with work pressures. Teachers who actively seek help when facing difficulties are more likely to maintain emotional balance and self-efficacy (Zhang & Luo, 2023; Doney, 2013). Support received through "reaching out" not only aids in directly resolving issues but also fosters a collaborative and empathetic work environment. This enhances teachers' psychological well-being and creates a supportive work environment. This study shows that the five participants already have good resilience because they meet the seven resilience factors proposed by Reivich and Shatté (2002). They also state each individual has the potential to develop resilience skills. Based on the explanations of each participant, it can be concluded that these seven factors play an essential role in building resilience.

For teachers dealing with cases of student violence, particularly involving Generation Alpha, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for developing resilience strategies to manage students' physical violent behavior. Examples include implementing stress management techniques or participating in emotional management training. Additionally, parents and the broader community are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of Generation Alpha's characteristics and collaborate with educational institutions, especially teachers, to address student behavior effectively and foster a more conducive learning environment.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. One significant limitation is the absence of input from other teachers, which restricts the breadth of perspectives captured. Consequently, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to represent the resilience abilities of all teachers. Therefore, it is essential to note that the results presented here do not comprehensively reflect the conditions of all teachers.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that the five participants demonstrate strong resilience in managing physical violence among Generation Alpha students, evidenced by their emotional regulation, problem-solving, empathy, and support-seeking behaviours. Despite challenges like fatigue, they maintain positive student relationships and use effective coping strategies, underscoring the importance of resilience for both teacher well-being and student success. However, the findings are specific to this group and may not generalize to all teachers. Further research is suggested.

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