



Teacher Resilience Strategies Between Theory and Practice in Tanzanian Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Teacher resilience is critical for educational quality, particularly in resource-constrained environments where educators face substantial systemic challenges. This study examined teachers' perceptions of effective resilience strategies in challenging educational contexts within secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. Employing a pragmatic mixed-methods convergent parallel design, data were collected from 236 participants comprising 234 teachers (selected through simple random sampling) and 2 key informants (purposively sampled). Quantitative data were gathered using validated Likert-scale questionnaires, while qualitative insights emerged from semi-structured interviews. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data, with subsequent integration of findings. The findings revealed significant skepticism toward organizational resilience strategies, with 67.9% of responses rating them as inadequate, contrasting with 55.5% rating practical pedagogical strategies as adequate. Teachers expressed particular doubt about creating positive school culture (39.8% disagreement) and fostering collegial relationships (30.3% disagreement), while valuing concrete approaches such as positive verbal reinforcement (60.2% agreement) and interactive learning (59.8% agreement). Qualitative data emphasized the importance of professional learning communities, mentorship networks, and self-care practices. The disconnect between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation suggests that resilience interventions must be contextually adapted, resource-conscious, and embedded within daily teaching practices. The study highlights critical policy gaps requiring comprehensive teacher support systems integrating professional development, mentorship, and wellness initiatives tailored to local contexts.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected and rapidly evolving global landscape, education serves as a fundamental pillar for sustainable development and societal advancement. Quality education systems depend critically on the resilience and effectiveness of their teaching workforce, particularly in contexts where educators face substantial environmental and systemic challenges (Day & Gu, 2010; Mansfield et al., 2016). Teacher resilience, defined as the capacity to maintain commitment and adapt effectively despite adverse conditions, has emerged as a crucial determinant of educational quality and student outcomes (Beltman et al., 2011; Li et al., 2021). Research demonstrates that resilient teachers positively influence students' engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Brunetti, 2006; Day, 2008), while teacher well-being directly correlates with instructional quality and classroom management effectiveness (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Gratacós et al., 2021). However, understanding how teachers perceive and experience resilience strategies in challenging educational environments remains an underexplored area, particularly in sub-Saharan African contexts where systemic constraints often compound individual stressors.

The teaching profession worldwide is increasingly recognized as one of the most demanding occupations, characterized by high workload intensity, emotional labor, and complex interpersonal dynamics (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Yuan, 2018). In Tanzania and other sub-Saharan African countries, these challenges are amplified by contextual factors including inadequate infrastructure, limited teaching



resources, and unfavorable student-teacher ratios that frequently exceed international standards (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2021; Mulkeen et al., 2007). Educational institutions in developing contexts often operate under severe resource constraints, with teachers managing classrooms where student numbers can reach 60 to 80 or more per class, far exceeding the UNESCO-recommended ratio of 40:1 for primary and 25:1 for secondary education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016, 2020). These conditions create an environment where traditional pedagogical approaches become difficult to implement, potentially compromising both teaching effectiveness and educator well-being (Marais, 2016; Palm, 2020). Teachers in Uganda and Tanzania report experiencing heavy workloads, undisciplined students, inadequate salaries, and poor working conditions that contribute significantly to occupational stress and potential attrition (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Mbunda et al., 2021). Despite policy commitments to universal quality education, the practical realities facing Tanzanian teachers reveal significant gaps between educational aspirations and institutional capacity to support teaching staff adequately.

Existing research on teacher resilience has predominantly focused on developed country contexts, with limited empirical investigation into how resilience operates within resource-constrained African educational settings (Wabule, 2020; Zadok-Gurman et al., 2021). While scholarship acknowledges resilience as a multidimensional construct influenced by personal attributes, social relationships, and organizational factors (Gu & Li, 2013; Richards et al., 2016), there remains insufficient understanding of how these dimensions interact within specific cultural and institutional contexts. Previous studies have examined general resilience frameworks but have not adequately addressed the unique combination of challenges that characterize Tanzanian secondary education, including inadequate professional development opportunities, insufficient technological integration, and limited psychosocial support systems. This knowledge gap is particularly significant given that resilience is not merely an individual trait but emerges through dynamic interactions between personal capacities and environmental affordances (Ungar, 2011, 2013). Research indicates that resilience develops through ecological processes involving multiple interacting systems at individual, relational, and institutional levels (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; Ungar et al., 2013).

The theoretical understanding of resilience has evolved from viewing it as a static personal characteristic to recognizing it as a developmental process shaped by ecological contexts and cultural influences (Clarà, 2017; Masten, 2001). Contemporary frameworks emphasize that resilience develops through ongoing interactions between individuals and their social environments, with particular attention to how resource availability and management influence adaptive capacity (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Hobfoll, 2001). In educational settings, this perspective suggests that teacher resilience depends not only on individual coping mechanisms but also on institutional structures, collegial relationships, and access to material and psychological resources (Mansfield et al., 2016; Yonezawa et al., 2011). However, there remains limited empirical evidence examining how Tanzanian teachers themselves perceive the effectiveness of various resilience-building strategies, and whether their perceptions align with theoretical propositions or international best practices developed primarily in Western contexts.

Addressing this knowledge gap holds substantial practical and theoretical significance. From a practical standpoint, understanding teacher perceptions of resilience strategies can inform more culturally responsive and contextually appropriate professional development programs, potentially improving teacher retention, job satisfaction, and instructional quality (Mansfield et al., 2012, 2016). Theoretically, examining resilience in the Tanzanian context contributes to broader discussions about the transferability of Western-derived resilience frameworks to non-Western settings and enhances understanding of how sociocultural factors shape resilience processes (Ungar, 2008). Furthermore, given that teacher effectiveness directly

influences student learning outcomes, strengthening teacher resilience represents a strategic intervention point for improving educational quality at scale (Day & Gu, 2014; Sammons et al., 2007). The World Bank emphasizes the importance of investing in teacher support systems as a means to enhance their well-being and educational outcomes (World Bank, 2020), while UNESCO underscores the need for integrating mental health support and resilience-building strategies into educational frameworks (UNESCO, 2018).

This study investigates teachers' perceptions of effective resilience strategies in challenging educational environments within secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. Specifically, it examines which resilience-building approaches teachers perceive as most relevant and effective for their context, explores the factors influencing these perceptions, and identifies potential barriers to implementing resilience strategies. By centering teacher voices and experiences, the research seeks to generate actionable insights that can inform policy development, professional support systems, and institutional practices aimed at fostering educator resilience. The findings contribute to the limited but growing body of literature on teacher resilience in African contexts while providing empirical evidence to guide educational reforms that prioritize teacher well-being alongside instructional improvement. Through systematic investigation of these perceptions, this study addresses a critical gap in understanding how to support teachers working in challenging environments, ultimately advancing both theoretical knowledge and practical applications in educational development.

METHODS

This study employed a pragmatic philosophical approach combined with a mixed-methods convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), enabling simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively examine teachers' perceptions of resilience strategies in challenging educational environments. The pragmatic paradigm was selected for its emphasis on practical outcomes and real-world applications, allowing researchers to focus on addressing complex research problems through multiple methodological lenses (Morgan, 2014). The convergent parallel design facilitated data triangulation by merging both data types at various analytical stages (Creswell, 2014; Fetters et al., 2013), thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of findings through complementary insights from different data sources. This design was particularly appropriate for exploring the multifaceted nature of teacher resilience, as it allowed for concurrent data collection while maintaining the integrity of each methodological tradition (Bryman, 2006).

The research was conducted across eight secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania, involving 236 participants comprising 234 teachers and 2 key informants. Teachers were selected through simple random sampling, a probability technique ensuring each member of the target population had an equal chance of selection, thereby enhancing sample representativeness and minimizing selection bias (Etikan et al., 2016; Sharma, 2017). Following established protocols, researchers obtained complete lists of teachers from school administrators and randomly selected participants proportional to the desired sample size (Taherdoost, 2016). This approach adhered to the principle of statistical regularity, which posits that randomly selected samples tend to reflect the characteristics of the larger population (Singh & Masuku, 2014). Key informants, including six school heads and the Municipal Education Officer, were purposively selected based on their administrative roles and expertise relevant to the study objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). Purposive sampling was appropriate for these participants as their positions provided unique insights into institutional resilience strategies and policy implementation (Etikan et al., 2016). The principle of data saturation guided the determination of sample adequacy for qualitative components (Guest et al., 2006).

Data collection employed multiple instruments adapted from existing literature and refined through pilot testing to ensure contextual appropriateness and methodological rigor. The primary quantitative instrument was a structured questionnaire incorporating five-point Likert scales to measure teachers' perceptions of various resilience strategies. Likert scales are widely recognized for their effectiveness in capturing attitudinal data in educational research, with five-point scales demonstrating adequate reliability and validity coefficients while minimizing respondent confusion (Kusmaryono et al., 2022; Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The instrument demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), indicating that scale items reliably measured the intended constructs. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with key informants, allowing for flexible exploration of emerging themes while maintaining focus on research objectives (Kallio et al., 2016). All instruments underwent pilot testing with 20 participants prior to main data collection, enabling identification and correction of ambiguities or technical issues (Kim, 2011; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). This preliminary phase enhanced instrument validity and ensured cultural and linguistic appropriateness for the Tanzanian context.

Data analysis proceeded through parallel yet integrated processes aligned with the convergent design methodology. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including frequency distributions, percentages, chi-square tests, and regression analysis to examine relationships between variables and test research hypotheses (Creswell, 2014). Responses to Likert scale items were categorized into "adequate" (ratings 4-5) and "inadequate" (ratings 1-3) to facilitate interpretation and comparison of perceptions across different resilience strategies. Qualitative data from interviews underwent rigorous thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, which included familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This systematic approach ensured analytical rigor and transparency in identifying patterns of meaning within the data (Nowell et al., 2017; Xu & Zammit, 2020). The thematic analysis was both inductive, allowing themes to emerge from the data, and deductive, informed by existing theoretical frameworks on teacher resilience (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Following separate analysis of quantitative and qualitative data strands, results were merged through a process of convergence assessment, comparing and contrasting findings to identify areas of agreement, complementarity, or divergence (Fetters et al., 2013). This integration enhanced the comprehensiveness of interpretations and strengthened the overall validity of conclusions by leveraging the strengths of both methodological approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Teachers' Perceptions of Resilience-Enhancing Strategies

The first research question examined teachers' perceptions regarding strategies that could potentially enhance their professional resilience in challenging educational environments. Respondents evaluated ten distinct resilience-building strategies using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Table 1 presents the distribution of responses across all strategies, revealing considerable variation in how teachers perceived the effectiveness of these approaches.

The data in Table 1 reveals a predominant pattern of neutral responses across most strategies, with substantial proportions of teachers expressing disagreement or strong disagreement regarding the effectiveness of several proposed resilience-enhancing approaches. Notably, creating a positive school culture received the highest level of disagreement, with 39.8% of respondents rating this strategy negatively (combining strongly disagree and disagree categories). This finding was unexpected, given that

organizational culture is frequently cited in literature as a fundamental factor in workplace well-being. Similarly, fostering positive relationships among teachers garnered 30.3% negative ratings, suggesting skepticism about the practical implementation or relevance of these interpersonal strategies in the local context.

Table 1. Teachers' Perceptions of Resilience-Enhancing Strategies (N=234)

Strategy	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Creating positive school culture	25 (10.7%)	68 (29.1%)	72 (30.8%)	48 (20.5%)	21 (9.0%)
Fostering positive relationships among teachers	19 (8.1%)	52 (22.2%)	91 (38.9%)	61 (26.1%)	11 (4.7%)
Encouraging time management strategies	14 (6.0%)	58 (24.8%)	87 (37.2%)	53 (22.6%)	22 (9.4%)
Fostering growth mindset	7 (3.0%)	48 (20.5%)	93 (39.7%)	69 (29.5%)	17 (7.3%)
Providing coaching and mentoring skills	21 (9.0%)	49 (20.9%)	88 (37.6%)	58 (24.8%)	18 (7.7%)
Setting boundaries between work and personal life	12 (5.1%)	49 (20.9%)	91 (38.9%)	73 (31.2%)	9 (3.8%)
Flexibility and adaptability	13 (5.6%)	51 (21.8%)	91 (38.9%)	61 (26.1%)	18 (7.7%)
Providing social support	11 (4.7%)	42 (17.9%)	93 (39.7%)	78 (33.3%)	10 (4.3%)
Providing opportunities for professional development	24 (10.3%)	39 (16.7%)	89 (38.0%)	61 (26.1%)	21 (9.0%)
Promotion and motivation mechanisms	8 (3.4%)	63 (26.9%)	86 (36.8%)	66 (28.2%)	11 (4.7%)

To facilitate more nuanced analysis, responses were recategorized into two primary groups: "adequate" (comprising ratings of 4 and 5, indicating agreement with the strategy's effectiveness) and "inadequate" (encompassing ratings of 1 through 3, reflecting skepticism or disagreement). This dichotomization enabled calculation of aggregate perceptions across all ten strategies. When aggregating all responses across the ten strategies, 67.9% (1,589 of 2,340 total responses) were classified as inadequate, while only 32.1% (751 responses) were deemed adequate. This substantial imbalance indicates that the majority of participating teachers did not perceive the tested strategies as sufficiently effective for enhancing resilience in their specific working contexts. The predominance of inadequate ratings across multiple dimensions suggests either a fundamental disconnect between theoretical resilience frameworks and teachers' lived experiences, or significant implementation gaps that have undermined confidence in these approaches.

An unexpected finding emerged in the relatively high proportion of neutral responses across all strategies (averaging 37.3%). This pattern may indicate uncertainty or ambivalence among teachers regarding resilience concepts, potentially stemming from limited exposure to formal resilience training or unclear understanding of how these strategies might be operationalized in Tanzanian secondary schools. The neutral response pattern was particularly pronounced for strategies involving growth mindset (39.7%), social support provision (39.7%), and professional development opportunities (38.0%), suggesting these concepts may require more contextual adaptation and clearer communication to resonate with teachers' practical experiences.

Resilience Strategies Employed in Challenging Teaching Environments

The second research question explored specific strategies that teachers utilize when confronting challenging teaching environments. Respondents evaluated eleven practical teaching strategies using the same five-point Likert scale. Table 2 presents the distribution of responses for each strategy.

Table 2 demonstrates a markedly different pattern compared to Table 1. The majority of strategies received predominantly positive evaluations, with agreement ratings (combining agree and strongly agree)

ranging from 49.6% to 60.2% across most items. Positive verbal reinforcement emerged as the most highly rated strategy, with 60.2% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing on its effectiveness, followed closely by encouraging interactive learning processes (59.8%) and developing individual learning skills (59.4%). These findings suggest that teachers recognize and value pedagogical strategies that directly engage students and foster supportive learning environments.

Table 2. Resilience Strategies Used in Challenging Environments (N=234)

Strategy	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Use of remedial programs to accomplish syllabus	7 (3.0%)	31 (13.2%)	69 (29.5%)	92 (39.3%)	35 (15.0%)
Positive verbal reinforcement mechanisms	3 (1.3%)	22 (9.4%)	68 (29.1%)	99 (42.3%)	42 (17.9%)
Encouraging interactive learning processes	6 (2.6%)	27 (11.5%)	61 (26.1%)	89 (38.0%)	51 (21.8%)
Assigning group work to students	17 (7.3%)	26 (11.1%)	58 (24.8%)	81 (34.6%)	52 (22.2%)
Assigning tasks through class monitors	29 (12.4%)	28 (12.0%)	53 (22.6%)	79 (33.8%)	45 (19.2%)
Providing skills for individual learning	13 (5.6%)	19 (8.1%)	63 (26.9%)	78 (33.3%)	61 (26.1%)
Creating conducive teaching environment	22 (9.4%)	23 (9.8%)	58 (24.8%)	75 (32.1%)	56 (23.9%)
Handling classroom with great care	22 (9.4%)	23 (9.8%)	62 (26.5%)	71 (30.3%)	56 (23.9%)
Using student feedback on instructions	27 (11.5%)	31 (13.2%)	51 (21.8%)	83 (35.5%)	42 (17.9%)
Using paired-share discussion and gallery work	26 (11.1%)	35 (15.0%)	57 (24.4%)	66 (28.2%)	50 (21.4%)
Using lecture method occasionally	9 (3.8%)	20 (8.5%)	54 (23.1%)	84 (35.9%)	67 (28.6%)

However, certain strategies received more mixed responses. The use of class monitors for task assignment generated the highest level of disagreement (24.4% combined), possibly reflecting concerns about delegation effectiveness or student capability. Similarly, paired-share discussion and gallery work received relatively lower endorsement (49.6% agreement), which may indicate implementation challenges in large classroom settings or insufficient training in these collaborative techniques.

The aggregate pattern for practical teaching strategies reveals a more balanced distribution compared to resilience-enhancing strategies. Of the 2,574 total responses across eleven strategies, 55.5% (1,426 responses) were classified as adequate, while 44.5% (1,148 responses) were deemed inadequate. This positive shift indicates that teachers perceive greater practical utility in concrete pedagogical strategies compared to broader organizational and personal resilience-building approaches. The finding suggests that when resilience strategies are operationalized as specific teaching methodologies rather than abstract principles, teachers demonstrate increased confidence in their effectiveness and applicability.

An interesting observation emerged from the qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with key informants. One head of school articulated the importance of collaborative support:

"Teachers can significantly reduce their stress levels by establishing robust support networks that include colleagues, mentors, and school administrators. When teachers collaborate within professional learning communities, they can share their experiences and teaching resources, which helps to create a sense of community and reduces the isolation that many educators feel. Regular participation in professional development sessions also provides teachers with updated skills and innovative strategies, which enhances their confidence and professional effectiveness when addressing various classroom challenges" (Respondent 8, June 26, 2023).

Another key informant emphasized the critical role of self-care practices:

"It is essential for teachers to integrate self-care practices into their daily routines as a fundamental strategy for stress management. Teachers need to prioritize their psychological well-being through various approaches such as mindfulness exercises, regular physical activity, and establishing clear boundaries between their professional responsibilities and personal life. When teachers dedicate time to pursuing

hobbies and engaging in relaxation activities, they can effectively recharge their energy levels and prevent the accumulation of chronic stress. By recognizing and valuing self-care, teachers not only improve their own well-being but also model healthy coping mechanisms for their students, thereby contributing to a more positive and supportive classroom environment" (Respondent 4, August 22, 2023).

These qualitative insights complement the quantitative findings by highlighting the multidimensional nature of teacher resilience, encompassing both professional support systems and personal wellness practices. The interviews revealed that while teachers may express skepticism about formal resilience programs, they recognize the value of practical, immediately applicable strategies that address both professional and personal dimensions of their work.

Discussion

The findings from this study reveal a complex and nuanced landscape regarding teachers' perceptions of resilience strategies in challenging educational environments within Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. The results indicate a significant gap between theoretical resilience frameworks and teachers' practical experiences, with most educators expressing skepticism about the effectiveness of generalized organizational strategies while demonstrating greater confidence in specific pedagogical approaches. These findings align with the theoretical frameworks guiding this study, particularly Pelidores' Resilience Theory and Conservation Resource Theory, while also raising important questions about contextual adaptation of resilience interventions.

The substantial proportion of teachers rating organizational resilience strategies as inadequate (67.9%) suggests that current approaches to building teacher resilience in Tanzanian secondary schools may not sufficiently account for the unique challenges educators face in resource-constrained environments. This finding resonates with recent research indicating that resilience is not merely an individual trait but emerges through dynamic interactions between personal capacities and environmental affordances (Ungar, 2011, 2013; Zadok-Gurman et al., 2021). The high levels of neutral and negative responses to strategies such as creating positive school culture and fostering collegial relationships may reflect implementation failures rather than inherent flaws in these approaches. Research has consistently demonstrated that positive school culture significantly impacts teacher morale, retention, and effectiveness (Zin et al., 2023), yet the transformation of theoretical principles into practical reality requires sustained leadership commitment, adequate resources, and systemic support structures that may be lacking in many Tanzanian schools.

The skepticism toward organizational strategies contrasts sharply with the more positive reception of specific pedagogical techniques, with 55.5% of responses rating practical teaching strategies as adequate. This pattern aligns with findings from Chilean educational contexts, where teachers demonstrated greater resilience when supported through concrete, context-specific interventions rather than abstract organizational initiatives (Gratacós et al., 2021). The preference for strategies such as positive verbal reinforcement (60.2% agreement), interactive learning (59.8%), and individual skill development (59.4%) reflects teachers' recognition that resilience in challenging environments often manifests through effective pedagogy that maintains student engagement despite structural constraints. This finding supports Conservation Resource Theory's emphasis on the importance of preserving and effectively utilizing available resources, as teachers appear to focus their resilience efforts on instructional strategies that can be implemented with minimal additional resources while maximizing educational impact (Hobfoll, 2001).

The substantial proportion of neutral responses across both categories of strategies (averaging 37.3% and 25.3% respectively) represents an unexpected finding that warrants careful interpretation. This pattern may indicate inadequate knowledge or understanding of resilience concepts among Tanzanian

teachers, as suggested by limited exposure to formal resilience training or professional development in this area. Research emphasizes that resilience skills can be developed through targeted interventions and continuous professional learning (Mansfield et al., 2016; Stavrou & Piki, 2024), yet the prevalence of neutral responses suggests that many teachers may lack sufficient familiarity with these concepts to form definitive opinions. Alternatively, the neutral responses might reflect genuine ambivalence arising from discrepancies between theoretical promise and practical implementation, or from experiences with resilience initiatives that were poorly adapted to local contexts. This interpretation aligns with research highlighting the importance of culturally responsive and contextually appropriate resilience interventions (Ungar, 2008; Wabule, 2020).

The qualitative data from key informants enriches our understanding by highlighting dimensions of resilience that extend beyond formal organizational strategies. The emphasis on professional learning communities, mentorship networks, and self-care practices reflects growing recognition in global literature regarding the multifaceted nature of teacher resilience. Research demonstrates that comprehensive induction and mentoring programs addressing emotional, psychological, and professional needs are crucial for developing resilient teaching workforces (Berger et al., 2022; Cook et al., 2017). The reference to self-care and work-life balance aligns with empirical evidence showing that teachers who engage in regular self-care practices, including mindfulness and stress management techniques, demonstrate higher levels of resilience and job satisfaction (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Jennings et al., 2013). These qualitative insights suggest that effective resilience strategies must address both the professional dimensions of teaching and the personal well-being of educators, supporting an integrated approach rather than siloed interventions.

When examined through the lens of Pelidores' Resilience Theory, the findings underscore that resilience develops through ongoing processes shaped by social interactions and environmental contexts rather than as fixed individual characteristics (Clarà, 2017; Masten, 2001). The relatively higher endorsement of collaborative and interactive teaching strategies compared to organizational culture initiatives may reflect the immediate and tangible nature of classroom-based resilience practices, which teachers can control and implement directly. This aligns with the theory's emphasis on ecological and developmental perspectives, suggesting that resilience interventions must be embedded within the daily practices and contexts that teachers navigate rather than imposed as external programs disconnected from their lived experiences (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Masten & Cicchetti, 2016).

Conservation Resource Theory provides additional interpretive power by highlighting how resource scarcity shapes resilience perceptions and strategies. The preference for pedagogical strategies that require minimal additional resources reflects pragmatic adaptation to resource-constrained environments characteristic of many Tanzanian schools. When material resources, infrastructure, and institutional support are limited, teachers naturally gravitate toward resilience strategies that leverage existing capacities—such as verbal reinforcement, interactive engagement, and adaptive teaching methods—rather than strategies requiring substantial organizational investment. This finding corroborates research demonstrating that effective resource management and access to both material and psychological resources are critical determinants of teacher resilience in challenging contexts (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Yonezawa et al., 2011).

The findings also reveal important policy gaps that must be addressed to enhance teacher resilience in Tanzania. Currently, educational policies often emphasize student outcomes and curriculum implementation without adequately addressing the well-being and professional support needs of teachers themselves. The World Bank (2020) and UNESCO (2018) have emphasized the importance of investing in comprehensive teacher support systems as a means to enhance both educator well-being and educational quality. Yet the present findings suggest that such investments remain insufficient in Tanzanian contexts,

with many teachers reporting inadequate access to mentorship, professional development, and institutional support structures. This policy gap is particularly concerning given that teacher effectiveness directly influences student learning outcomes (Day & Gu, 2014; Sammons et al., 2007), making teacher resilience not merely an individual concern but a systemic educational priority.

International frameworks offer valuable guidance for addressing these gaps. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 advocates for quality education and emphasizes the need for well-trained, supported teachers capable of adapting to diverse challenges. Regional frameworks, including the East African Community Education Strategy, similarly stress the importance of teacher well-being as foundational to educational effectiveness (UNESCO, 2019). Aligning Tanzanian educational policies with these global and regional standards requires developing comprehensive support systems that include structured mentorship programs, continuous professional development focused on resilience skills, accessible mental health resources, and organizational cultures that prioritize teacher well-being alongside student achievement. Research from diverse contexts demonstrates that when such systems are implemented effectively, they contribute to improved teacher retention, job satisfaction, and instructional quality (Mansfield et al., 2012, 2016).

This study contributes to resilience theory by demonstrating that the effectiveness of resilience strategies is highly context-dependent and mediated by implementation quality and resource availability. The findings challenge assumptions about universal applicability of Western-derived resilience frameworks, highlighting the need for culturally and contextually adapted approaches. The substantial disconnect between organizational strategies and teachers' perceptions suggests that resilience theory must better account for resource-constrained environments where structural barriers significantly limit the feasibility of comprehensive institutional interventions. Additionally, the findings support an integrated view of resilience that encompasses both professional and personal dimensions, reinforcing theoretical models emphasizing the interplay between individual capacities, social relationships, and organizational contexts.

From a practical standpoint, the findings indicate several priorities for educational authorities and school administrators. First, professional development programs should focus on building practical, immediately applicable resilience skills rather than abstract concepts, with particular emphasis on pedagogical strategies that teachers can implement with existing resources. Second, mentorship networks and professional learning communities should be formally established and supported, as these collaborative structures appear to resonate more strongly with teachers' experiences than top-down organizational initiatives. Third, self-care and well-being practices should be explicitly integrated into professional development and school culture, with recognition that teacher resilience depends not only on professional competence but also on personal wellness and work-life balance.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design captures perceptions at a single point in time, preventing examination of how resilience perceptions evolve over teachers' careers or in response to interventions. Second, the study focused exclusively on Morogoro Municipality, potentially limiting generalizability to other Tanzanian regions with different socioeconomic and educational contexts. Third, while the mixed-methods approach provided valuable insights, the qualitative component involved only key informants rather than the broader teacher sample, potentially missing important nuances in teachers' lived experiences. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, expand geographic scope, and incorporate extensive qualitative exploration of teachers' resilience experiences across diverse contexts.

This study illuminates critical gaps between theoretical resilience frameworks and the lived experiences of Tanzanian secondary school teachers working in challenging educational environments. The findings demonstrate that while teachers recognize the value of specific pedagogical strategies for

managing difficult teaching conditions, they express considerable skepticism about broader organizational approaches to resilience building. This disconnect likely stems from implementation failures, resource constraints, and insufficient contextual adaptation rather than fundamental flaws in resilience theory itself. The research underscores the imperative for educational policies and practices that prioritize teacher well-being alongside student achievement, recognizing that sustainable educational quality depends fundamentally on resilient, supported, and effective educators. By developing comprehensive support systems that integrate professional development, mentorship networks, resource provision, and wellness initiatives—all adapted to local contexts and constraints—Tanzanian education authorities can cultivate more resilient teaching workforces capable of delivering quality education despite ongoing challenges. The value of this research lies in its contribution to understanding resilience as a practical, context-dependent phenomenon requiring targeted, multifaceted interventions rather than generic programmatic solutions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined teachers' perceptions of effective resilience strategies in challenging educational environments within secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. The findings reveal a significant disconnect between theoretical resilience frameworks and teachers' lived experiences, with 67.9% of respondents rating organizational resilience strategies as inadequate, while 55.5% perceived practical pedagogical approaches as effective. This disparity underscores that resilience-building interventions must be contextually adapted, resource-conscious, and embedded within teachers' daily practices rather than imposed as abstract organizational programs. The research contributes to resilience theory by demonstrating that effectiveness of resilience strategies is mediated by implementation quality, resource availability, and cultural context, challenging assumptions about universal applicability of Western-derived frameworks in resource-constrained African settings.

The study's implications are multifaceted. Educational policymakers should prioritize developing comprehensive teacher support systems that integrate targeted professional development, structured mentorship networks, accessible mental health resources, and organizational cultures valuing educator well-being. Schools must focus on implementable strategies that leverage existing capacities while gradually building institutional infrastructure for broader resilience initiatives. The findings align with global frameworks emphasizing teacher support as foundational to educational quality, highlighting urgent need for policy reforms addressing current gaps in Tanzanian education system.

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The cross-sectional design limits understanding of how perceptions evolve over time, while geographic focus on Morogoro Municipality constrains generalizability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs across diverse Tanzanian regions, incorporate extensive qualitative exploration of teachers' resilience experiences, and examine effectiveness of specific interventions through controlled studies. Additionally, investigating the relationship between teacher resilience and student outcomes would strengthen the empirical case for investing in comprehensive educator support systems. Despite these limitations, this study provides crucial insights for developing contextually appropriate, practically viable resilience-building initiatives that can enhance both teacher well-being and educational quality in challenging African educational contexts.

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