

Teacher resilience in remote English teaching: A narrative inquiry in Indonesian Madrasah Tsanawiyah

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Abstract

English teachers in Indonesian Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), Islamic lower-secondary schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, adapted to emergency remote teaching during and after the COVID-19 disruption. Against this backdrop, this study uses Clandinin's three-dimensional narrative inquiry to examine how resilience is shaped through time, relationships, and place. Drawing on five teachers' diaries, fortnightly reflective essays, and public portal commentaries, it conceptualises resilience as a shifting capacity emerging from the interplay of individual effort, social support, and local constraint. Over time, teachers moved from confusion to more settled routines as trial and error produced workable hybrid timetables. Socially, peer mentoring, parental cooperation, and patient students sustained lessons and eased fatigue. In the place dimension, accounts reveal responses shaped by local school and community conditions, with teachers in low-connectivity sites substituting bandwidth-heavy platforms with familiar low-tech options such as voice-note instruction. Findings are presented as five illustrative case narratives, not as statistically representative patterns. Within these limits, the study contributes a situated account of resilience in non-Western, religious lower-secondary schooling, and points to context-sensitive directions for professional development and infrastructure-aware policy in resource-constrained ELT.

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Introduction

Across the pandemic period since March 2020, when the first COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Indonesia and provincial authorities began suspending face-to-face schooling, schools in many systems were pushed into improvised arrangements for classroom management and assessment (Azhari & Fajri, 2022; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021), yet the promise of remote language teaching remained uneven, strongly mediated by local socioeconomic conditions and the reliability of digital infrastructure (Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2021; Tao & Gao, 2022). Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) refers to the rapid, unplanned shift of in-person classroom activity to online or distance modes during a crisis and is conceptually distinct from purpose-built distance education (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges & Fowler, 2020). Following this shift, survey and interview work in Indonesia (Cahyadi et al., 2022; Kusuma, 2022; Muhaji et al., 2023) shows English teachers struggling to sustain an interaction-based pedagogy when connectivity was unstable, devices were shared within families, or only basic applications were available. These conditions disrupted well-established classroom routines and scripts.

In that context, teachers often turned not to specialist platforms but to tools already woven into students' everyday communication, using WhatsApp groups, YouTube clips, and Google Forms to keep in touch, track participation, and design forms of assessment that were workable within these constraints (Kusuma, 2022). Muhaji, Suherdi, and Purnawarman (2023) report that teachers who already possessed experience with digital pedagogy, or who displayed a pronounced willingness to experiment with new tools, managed the transition with greater confidence and control. These teachers commonly organised their online teaching around short, focused synchronous sessions, complemented by low-bandwidth asynchronous activities. This pattern accommodated shared access to devices and frequent problems with internet connectivity. Nevertheless, access to high-quality provision remained strongly shaped by local funding and infrastructure, with rural schools and less affluent communities exceptionally constrained (Cahyadi et al., 2022; Muhaji et al., 2023).

Five years on, the pandemic operates less as an event and more as a stress test whose findings now shape post-pandemic ELT in Indonesia. Persistent gaps in connectivity, device equity, and teachers' digital pedagogy remain visible in current madrasah practice (Jamalullel & Nasehudin, 2025). Clandinin's (2006) three-dimensional narrative inquiry, including temporality, sociality and place, provides a useful frame for interpreting teachers' accounts of this period. The dimension of temporality illuminates the movement from relatively stable pre-pandemic routines, through phases of emergency improvisation, towards more deliberately planned forms of hybrid teaching. Sociality brings into focus relationships with students, parents, and colleagues as central to sustaining motivation and a sense of care. The dimension of place, in turn, highlights the contrast between urban schools with reliable connectivity and rural schools that struggled to sustain religious and character education in an online format. Across these dimensions, the literature frames teacher resilience as emerging from the interplay between institutional support, material conditions, and individual professional agency during disruption.

Objectives

This study investigates how English language teachers working in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), Islamic lower-secondary schools under Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, narrate and make sense of their professional resilience during and following the period of emergency remote teaching. Using narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006) as its frame, the study moves past hardship-only narratives. Across the five participating teachers' narratives, the analysis traces how each teacher revised classroom routines as local rules changed, drew on peer support circles, and aligned decisions with the religious ethos of the madrasah. Patterns are reported as cross-case echoes within this small purposive sample, not as findings generalisable to Indonesian Madrasah Tsanawiyah teachers as a population. The study traces resilience as a process in which teachers revisited taken-for-granted beliefs, renegotiated responsibilities, and reworked online lessons throughout the prolonged disruption. The principal research questions are presented as follows:

1. How do English language teachers in Indonesian Madrasah Tsanawiyah narrate and make meaning of their professional resilience during emergency remote teaching?
2. How do these narrated experiences of resilience develop across time (temporality), unfold through relationships and interactions (sociality), and become situated within specific contexts and settings (place)?

Literature review

Teacher resilience in crisis contexts

In this study, we follow Zhang and Luo (2023) in defining teacher resilience as the capacity to recover from setbacks and adapt to demanding or unstable conditions, allowing teachers to sustain their psychological health during emergencies. Resilience in studies combines psychological resources such as self-efficacy and empathy with workplace support, helping teachers manage workloads, keep students engaged, and maintain quality when schooling is disrupted by COVID-19 closures (Fu & Zhang, 2024). Recent work by Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al. (2024) suggests that resilient teachers are more likely to plan coherent lessons, regulate their emotions under pressure, and sustain a positive outlook, outcomes that relate to lower burnout and stronger long-term commitment to teaching. Resilience has also been linked to teachers' willingness to experiment with new pedagogical approaches and to maintain classroom routines that offer continuity and stability for students and their families when schools operate under unstable or resource-poor conditions (Fu & Zhang, 2024). Developing teacher resilience, therefore, depends on ongoing professional learning, collegial networks, and supportive leadership that are aligned with teachers' personal circumstances and organisational demands, enabling them to protect their mental health while continuing to provide contextually relevant education in crisis conditions.

From distance learning to emergency remote teaching

Distance learning has evolved from early correspondence models to digitally mediated systems that now sit at the centre of institutional provision. Contemporary approaches privilege structured educational arrangements in which teachers and students are separated in time and space but remain connected through interactive telecommunications that integrate participants and learning resources within a formal organisational framework (Moore et al., 2011; Simonson et al., 2019). Students' knowledge construction is shaped by autonomy, peer interaction, and the strategic use of external resources, so academic self-direction involves drawing on collaborative networks and digital tools to address problems and extend understanding (Shearer & Park, 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, this infrastructure underpinned the rapid shift to Emergency Remote Teaching, a crisis response that transposed classroom activities online without the iterative design cycles characteristic of purpose-built distance programmes (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges & Fowler, 2020). Although researchers warn against collapsing Emergency Remote Teaching into distance education, this article treats it as a practical outgrowth of routine classroom work, because both arrangements pursue flexibility, mediated interaction, and student agency through online technologies. The rapid uptake of emergency online teaching has made regular engagement with digital platforms routine, thereby hastening the evolution of distance education.

Persistent constraints on remote and hybrid EFL provision in Indonesia

Connectivity gaps, device scarcity, and uneven digital pedagogy in Indonesian English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction predate the pandemic. The closures amplified rather than created these conditions, and they continue to shape hybrid practice today. Since 2022, the national rollout of Kurikulum Merdeka has repositioned digital literacy as a curricular pillar rather than an emergency add-on, with annual policy iterations moving from infrastructure provision in 2020 to digital-based supervision by 2024 (Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024). Madrasah systems have followed suit, and over half of Islamic lower-secondary schools now report some adoption of digital learning platforms alongside the new curriculum (Wicaksono et al., 2025). Beneath these headline gains, the structural baseline remains uneven. Rural bandwidth is still patchy, household device sharing remains common in lower-income communities, and quiet study space is scarce in multi-generational homes (Hamilaturroyya & Adibah, 2025). Teacher readiness lags hardest in madrasah, where roughly a third of staff have completed comprehensive Kurikulum Merdeka training and where targeted in-service support for digital pedagogy stays thin outside Java (Taufik & Rusdi, 2024). The gap between national digital ambition and classroom-level capacity therefore frames the present study, positioning emergency remote teaching not as a closed 2020 episode but as an ongoing test of how madrasah English teachers improvise pedagogy under enduring constraint.

Uneven infrastructure, unreliable internet, and device shortages in rural and underfunded areas disrupted day-to-day EFL teaching and widened opportunity gaps (Cahyadi et al., 2022). Even in better-resourced districts, frequent connection failures and limited digital materials constrained practical language work. Many teachers were required to rework schemes of work at short notice without professional development, producing uneven approaches that strained student engagement, while heightened stress and the erosion of classroom relationships under restricted physical

interaction deepened these effects (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021). Although Indonesia formally authorises distance education, implementation in primary and secondary schooling remains fragmented and teacher-centred (Azhari & Fajri, 2022; Yusuf et al., 2024), so remote EFL provision is constrained as much by organisational readiness and household circumstance as by connectivity itself.

Narrative inquiry in educational research

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative methodology in educational research that centres on lived experience, collecting and interpreting personal stories to understand how teachers and students make sense of their work over time (Barkhuizen et al., 2024). Rather than treating narratives as neutral descriptions, it approaches classroom stories, policy texts, and assessment scripts as products of institutional rules, social norms, and shifting power relations that shape what can be said and heard (Howe, 2022; Pratt & Rosiek, 2021). Meanings are co-produced through dialogue; therefore, narrative inquiry treats research as a joint sense-making process in which participants and researchers revisit their experiences and negotiate interpretations together (Wei, 2021). Identity labour is therefore seen as integral to educational practice, as participants narrate how they teach, learn, and position themselves within particular classrooms and systems. Used carefully, narrative inquiry can counter marginalisation by eliciting student and teacher accounts in settings marked by structural inequality and placing those accounts on the analytic record. Practically, it links local stories to broader institutional practices through interviews, field notes, and document analysis, while remaining sensitive to school ecology, role expectations, and material and temporal resources. It connects personal accounts to systemic implications and clarifies where policy, leadership, and curriculum interventions may support more just forms of educational practice.

Research methodology

Madrasah Tsanawiyah, often shortened to MTs, are Islamic lower-secondary schools in Indonesia for students aged about 12 to 15. They are run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and sit alongside the general SMP schools run by the Ministry of Education. Pupils study the normal national subjects but also learn Quranic studies and Arabic. Five MTs took part in this study, one in each of these places: urban Surabaya in East Java, suburban Curup in Bengkulu, semi-urban Bantul in Yogyakarta, provincial Palopo in South Sulawesi, and remote Masohi in Central Maluku. These places are very different in terms of internet speed, mobile signal, how many devices each family owns, and how much digital training the teachers have had. Five teachers from these schools voluntarily shared their stories of teaching from home. Rasyid, a male teacher with twelve years of service in Surabaya, used Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp with school devices. Nilam, a female teacher with eight years in Curup, used short YouTube clips and a flexible timetable. Sri, a female teacher with fifteen years in Bantul, kept records of IGI webinars. Rahmat, a male teacher with ten years in Palopo, asked pupils to send photos of their work because the signal was weak. Ode, a male teacher with seven years in remote Masohi, used Handy Talky walkie-talkie audio when other tools failed.

To gather the stories, the study used a tool made for this project called the Narrative Artefact

Elicitation Pack (NAEP). It builds on the idea of teacher resilience from Beltman, Mansfield, and Price (2011) and on the three ideas of time, people, and place from Clandinin (2006). The NAEP was selected over semi-structured interviews because it captures pedagogic decisions as they unfold rather than retrospectively, and over single-instrument diary studies because it triangulates private and public writing. Each teacher kept a journal of lessons, tools, problems, and pupil responses, wrote a short reflective essay every two weeks about tricky moments, and shared posts on Indonesia's national education portal, giving 217 posts in total. Because they wrote during the lockdown rather than long afterwards, their memories stayed fresh. The teachers gave permission for both private and public writing to be used, could pull out at any time, and all names and school details were removed. Materials were collected at two points during the lockdown term in April 2020 and afterwards, then saved on encrypted drives. The posts were sorted into four phases: first attempts, better strategies, timetable changes, and voice-note teaching for low bandwidth. All the writing was put together in one big set of texts, kept in time order for each teacher, and split into smaller story episodes. Analysis followed Clandinin's three-part narrative inquiry, looking at time, people, and place. The first round of coding picked out small, repeated moves, such as choosing tools, redesigning tasks, and managing deadlines. The second round grouped these into a story for each teacher and then compared the five stories. Private journals were checked against public posts to see whether teachers' plans actually happened in class, and the final findings were written up as detailed vignettes that protect the teachers' identities. Throughout the Results, evidence is attributed to the specific NAEP component from which it was drawn, namely the structured journal, the fortnightly reflective essay, or the portal commentary, together with the relevant teacher pseudonym.

Results

Three teacher-voiced conceptions of resilience

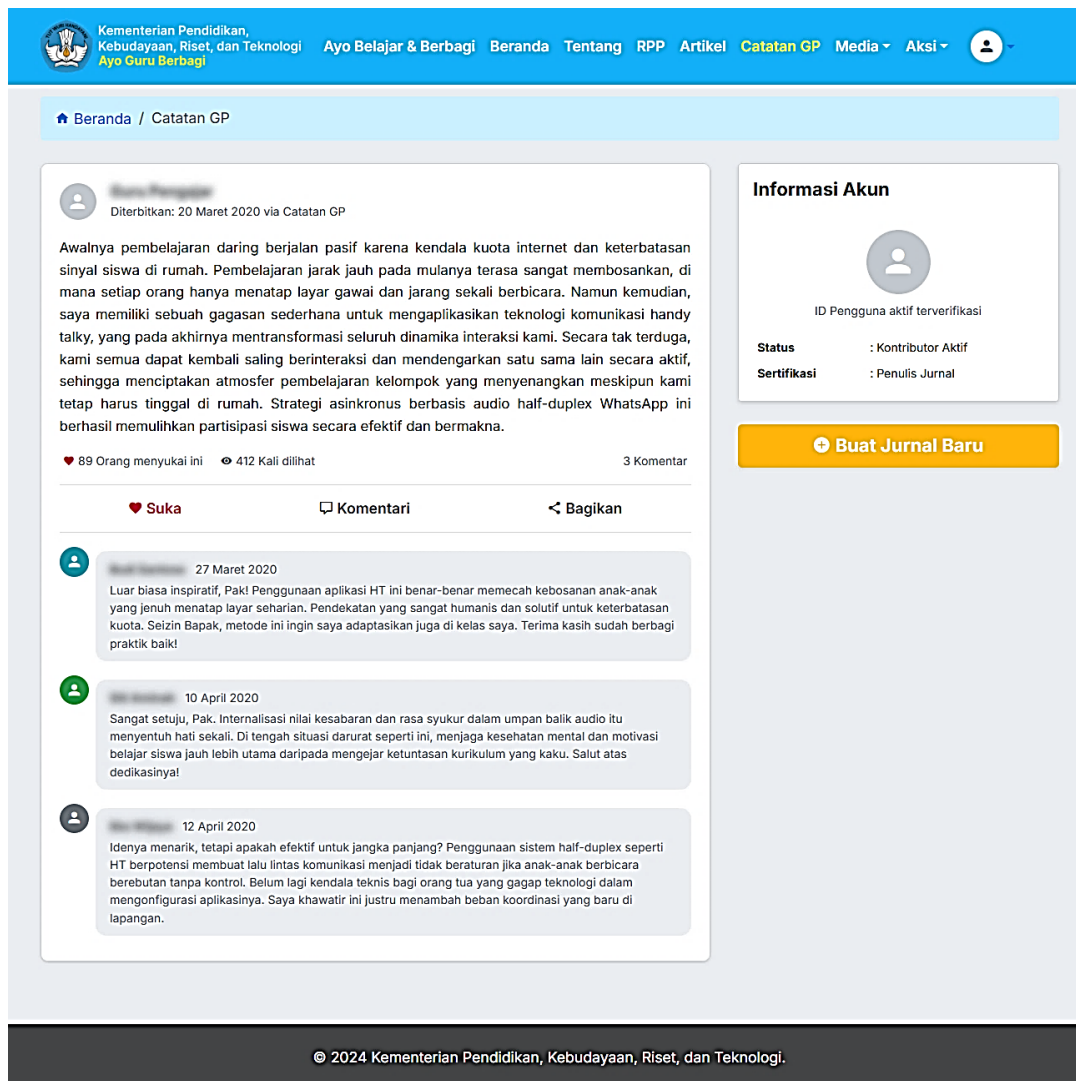


Figure 1. Screenshot of Ode's public portal post, illustrating public narration of the Handy Talky intervention (retrieved from guruberbagi.kemdikbud.go.id).

Resilience as patience and gratitude. The first conception frames resilience in religious terms, as patience under hardship and gratitude for limited resources. Ode's reflective essay records this framing in the teacher's own words. "Resilience is not winning against the network. Resilience is patience when the signal drops, and gratitude that one bar is enough to send a voice note to a child who is waiting" (Ode).

The framing draws Islamic ethical vocabulary directly into the definition of professional capacity, recasting resilience as a moral disposition rather than a technical or psychological trait. Ode negates a technical frame, resilience is not winning against the network, before affirming a moral one, so the definition is built by rejecting the terms the sector supplies. The success condition then shifts from bandwidth to the child who is waiting, relocating professional achievement in relational obligation.

Gratitude for one bar reframes scarcity as sufficiency, which sustains effort where infrastructural improvement lies outside the teacher's control.

Resilience as practical experimentation. A second conception treats resilience as iterative trial and error rather than dispositional strength. Nilam's reflective essay records the teacher's own definition.

Resilience for me is trial and error. I try one thing on Monday, it fails on Tuesday, I change it on Wednesday, and by Friday the children are working. Resilience is the willingness to keep changing the lesson until it fits the week (Nilam).

The framing positions resilience as a learnable craft sustained through small, recursive design adjustments, locating it in the teacher's lesson-design routines rather than in any inner trait.

Resilience as collegial dependency. A third conception locates resilience outside the individual teacher, in the collegial networks that make adaptation possible at all. Sri's reflective essay records the framing through her work with the Indonesian Teachers Association (IGI). "I cannot be resilient on my own. The IGI webinar gives me three new ideas on Saturday and by Monday I have tried two of them. Without the webinar I would only have my own mistakes to learn from" (Sri). The framing recasts resilience as collegial dependency, in which the unit of analysis is the professional network rather than the individual psyche.

Temporality – resilience through time

During Indonesia's first lockdowns, English teachers in madrasah faced a rupture in routine, moving into digital pedagogy with little training, unclear expectations, and weak institutional support. In Maluku, Ode replaced classroom talk with Handy Talky push-to-talk audio, a low-bandwidth half-duplex channel that kept turn-taking possible when internet access was scarce. In Bengkulu, Nilam used short YouTube clips to replace live explanations and preserve teacher presence when lessons repeatedly dropped out. Peer coaching, self-study, and small trials then built basic technical confidence, unevenly and over time. Access still depended on device availability and household bandwidth, so uptake varied within and across schools. After early problems with Google Classroom, Rahmat matched platform functions to pedagogic aims, using it for materials, scaffolded discussion, and assessments with explicit criteria and feedback. As practice moved from improvisation to timetables, shared resource banks, and manageable asynchronous tasks, students could work around unstable connections. In Surabaya, Rasyid relied on brief videos, short exercises, and quick synchronous check-ins rather than long meetings, while others blended TikTok, YouTube Shorts, Facebook videos, and student-made spoken artefacts to support accuracy, fluency, creativity, and assessment for learning. In one of Nilam's reflective essays, she describes how simple recordings of household procedures in English enabled rehearsal, self-review, and peer feedback tied to observable performance, shifting from one-way delivery to guided autonomy shaped by family routines and rural connectivity. Ode's journal entries record that the push-to-talk protocol, paired with WhatsApp check-ins, suited shared devices and intermittent access, and the resulting steadier participation supports a relationship-centred explanation for improved engagement. The five teachers' journal entries also flag limits: extra hours, cross-class coordination, uneven participation where access and

home support differ, and evidence that remains descriptive rather than causal.

As emergency remote teaching moved from crisis management to more settled routines, teachers used ongoing feedback from students and families to adjust their methods so that participation grew and access to learning broadened. Rasyid combined independent offline study with scheduled live sessions in a modular timetable that mixed non-digital tasks with real-time online teaching to work around bandwidth limits, shared devices, and the need for quiet space at home. Within this structure, varied tasks and wide submission windows provided a degree of planned flexibility, so students with weak or unstable internet links could demonstrate learning without being penalised for late work. Rahmat introduced staggered submission periods and more elastic deadlines that acknowledged both the uneven spread of digital skills within families and the childcare or domestic duties that many students carried in extended households. Drawing on Islamic educational principles, Ode threaded ideas of resilience, patience, and gratitude through lesson designs and audio replies, while also naming explicitly the psychological strain of students' daily isolation and their continuing uncertainty. Across the journal entries from all five teachers, the narratives describe a shift from viewing remote provision as a temporary stopgap towards using it as a situated arena for revising pedagogy and building professional learning, exemplified in Rahmat's journal entries that record trialling WhatsApp-based tasks in parallel with short live lectures. Read within the temporal dimension of narrative inquiry, the journal entries and reflective essays connect inherited routines, improvised adaptations, and tentative future plans, indicating that the way teachers sequence and pace their actions shapes both their sense of resilience and the professional identities they are able to sustain.

Remote teaching was incredibly boring, with everyone just staring at screens and barely speaking. But then, I had a simple idea to use a handy talky app, which completely changed everything for us. Suddenly, we were all actually talking and listening to each other again, making learning fun even when we were still stuck at home (Ode).

Ode's reflective essay records the turn from screen-fatigue to participation. The shift is read here as a place-driven adaptation in which a low-bandwidth oral channel restored the turn-taking that fixed-line video could not sustain. Ode subsequently designed low-bandwidth channels for students, including WhatsApp voice notes, push-to-talk exchanges, and staggered task cycles, under conditions of device sharing, data constraints, and unpredictable connectivity. Nilam described the period as one that reshaped her sense of what it means to be a teacher, prompting more deliberate reflection, greater flexibility, and closer attention to students' differing needs in planning, feedback, and assessment for both online and home-based learning. Read alongside one another, the reflective essays of Ode and Nilam suggest that steady effort, modest but deliberate self-study, and small cumulative advances can support teachers' sense of agency and shape their professional identity, provided that mentoring, shared materials, and reasonably prompt feedback are available.

Read through Clandinin's temporality dimension, the five accounts trace a shared movement from rupture to recalibration: pre-pandemic routines were broken, improvisation produced a workable repertoire, and that repertoire was then thinned and codified into modular timetables. Resilience here is not a stable trait but a sequenced practice in which earlier failures functioned as design data for later iterations.

Sociality – relationships that sustained teaching

Online instruction strained teacher–student relations, as sustaining engagement without face-to-face contact proved difficult. Indonesian language teachers therefore turned to WhatsApp, Google Classroom, YouTube, and other synchronous and asynchronous tools to approximate classroom immediacy and maintain participation. In Rasyid’s journal entry, he records using Microsoft Teams for live collaborative activity, while WhatsApp maintained informal exchanges and supported students’ sense of continuity. Alongside academic work, Nilam prioritised emotional connection by engaging with students’ ambitions and psychosocial concerns, easing their sense of isolation. To cope with unstable connections, Ode set up a low-bandwidth voice system that worked rather like a walkie-talkie, which in this class raised participation and made short, individualised, real-time feedback more manageable. Across the five participating teachers, the reflective essays linked students’ continued effort to how often teachers could offer patient, one-to-one contact, which seemed especially important for students with few resources at home or irregular adult supervision. In this context, everyday sociability worked both as a teaching move and as a practical way of holding learning and care together in a mostly online classroom.

Partnerships between parents and school communities were crucial for narrowing the home–school divide, particularly when students had to regulate their studies independently without direct supervision. Recognising this, Nilam regularly updated families on students’ progress, promoted structured routines at home, and used WhatsApp groups to share deadline reminders and practical guidance on how parents could support their children’s learning. To ease the psychological strain of remote instruction, Ode organised online parent–teacher meetings that addressed both academic performance and students’ emotional wellbeing. Parents sometimes helped to steer peer talk in the arrangements developed by Rahmat, as students worked towards joint goals and group tasks at home. The reflective essays of Nilam, Rahmat, and Ode indicate that these arrangements worked most effectively where pre-pandemic relationships had already fostered trust and regular communication, so teachers could draw on parents’ assistance more readily once teaching moved fully online. School leaders added support through coordinating timetables, distributing printed packs to students, and organising follow-up contacts to limit disengagement. Across the five teachers, these overlapping collaborations between teachers, families, and senior staff illustrated how social networks underpinned continuity of learning and encouraged an understanding of resilience in remote provision as a produced practice rather than an individual trait.

Little we did know, the Local Education Agency had been quietly training our teachers for months on how to use Office 365, getting us ready for a crisis we could not have predicted. On 16 March 2020, the city implemented its social distancing policy, and the world changed overnight. Thanks to that early training, however, our lessons did not have to stop, and we could continue learning online from home (Rasyid).

Rasyid’s reflective essay exhibits the institutional foundation of the transition. The Surabaya district’s prior Office 365 rollout converted what other settings experienced as rupture into a manageable extension of existing practice, illustrating sociality and place operating in concert. Peer support and mentoring networks among teachers played a vital role in the social dimension of resilience, influencing the effectiveness of remote language teaching during the pandemic. Teachers viewed peer collaboration as an informal yet vital resource for managing professional and emotional strain amid

rapid and uncertain technological change. Through online forums and WhatsApp groups, including those used by Rasyid, colleagues exchanged materials, discussed pedagogy, and shared technical advice, forming self-initiated professional learning communities. In Surabaya, prior municipal adoption of Office 365 enabled veteran teachers to mentor newer staff, easing the transition to online lessons. In several settings mentoring extended beyond individual schools through centrally coordinated initiatives and benchmarking, as Sri used Indonesian Teachers Association (IGI) webinars to record and circulate local teaching innovations. Across the five reflective essays, collaborative networks helped sustain the emotional resilience of teachers and students and supported working identities marked by perseverance and practical flexibility, while ties between students, caregivers, peers, and teachers formed a social infrastructure that, in these conditions, made continued instruction possible.

Within Clandinin's sociality dimension, these accounts position resilience as a relationally distributed achievement. Teacher–student rapport, parent partnership, and peer mentoring did not merely support an individual teacher's coping; they constituted the practice itself. Where pre-existing relational capital was thin, no platform substitution recovered it.

Place – Contextual realities shaping resilience

In remote language teaching in Indonesian MTs, local context shaped teachers' resilience, as geography and infrastructure set firm limits on what classroom work was possible. In Masohi, Maluku, unstable internet and electricity prevented Ode from running synchronous lessons, so Ode adopted Handy Talky, a low-bandwidth walkie-talkie application that allowed students with basic handsets to stay involved through audio-only support. By contrast, Rasyid in an urban school addressed students' early struggles with Google Classroom through step-by-step demonstrations, and used WhatsApp as the routine, familiar entry point that drew students into more formal online spaces. Where parental support was limited and access to smartphones uneven, Nilam combined YouTube for explaining content, WhatsApp for keeping in touch, and Google Classroom for shared discussion, while shortening live meetings and allowing flexible participation when data and devices were to hand, which helped to ease connectivity and bandwidth constraints. Across the journal entries of Ode, Rasyid, and Nilam, local geography, infrastructural capacity, and household composition all influenced pedagogical decision-making, and the three teachers responded by selecting tools already present in their communities to preserve a sense of continuity, keep students involved, and align language learning with Islamic values and students' ongoing personal development.

Remote instruction was difficult and obstructive at home, undermining pedagogy. Rahmat observed that many students from modest-income households shared smartphones with siblings, necessitating asynchronous tasks and adjusted deadlines. Rahmat accepted photographs of written work or short voice messages via the class platform because inflexible forms would have excluded limited-access students. Rasyid reported pausing lessons at intervals because of household noise and interruptions while teaching from a small bedroom shared with family members. Even in this informal space, Rasyid tried to follow a consistent timetable to signal reliability and routine to students. The overlap of household and classroom spaces made it harder for students to concentrate, especially in cramped rooms or where duties at home increased. Across Rahmat's and Rasyid's journal entries, the

overlapping constraints prompted continual revisions to teaching approaches, aiming to ensure that students' participation was shaped by more than the availability of devices and stable connections.

I was aware that our lessons were so boring that we would completely zone out and lose focus. I noticed that my students were all addicted to watching short, engaging videos online. So, I started making my own lessons, creating incredible, episodic videos that always left us wanting more. I found they were actually excited for the next part of the story, and nobody got bored (Nilam).

Nilam confesses a pedagogic redesign anchored in students' digital habits. The move repositions the teacher as a designer who reads the local media ecology and rebuilds tasks to fit it. Drawing on cognitive load principles, Nilam used short quizzes and brief reflection pauses to sustain attention in MTs classrooms. In rural districts, however, domestic duties, particularly for girls, squeezed available study time and shifted schoolwork into irregular, late-evening slots. Teachers therefore set flexible, low-bandwidth activities that could be completed offline and uploaded once connections returned, so that tasks fitted around shifting household routines, shared devices, and inconsistent adult supervision. The patterns recorded across the five teachers' reflective essays indicate that resilience in remote provision rested as much on local social and cultural arrangements as on the digital platforms themselves, with teachers negotiating parental involvement alongside tightly organised tasks and schedules that tried to blend empathy with workable techniques. Platform use largely followed everyday access and habit, so Ode depended on familiar audio messaging and voice notes to manage weak signals and crowded evening routines. By contrast, Rasyid used WhatsApp threads to send reminders, share links, and keep a space open for brief questions. During the same period, better-connected classes in urban schools in Surabaya and Yogyakarta relied on Office 365, Google Meet, Kahoot, and Quizizz for shared presentations, quizzes, and occasional whole-class discussions. In other sites, teachers used live check-ins, modest asynchronous tasks, and short TikTok or Instagram clips to hold students' attention. Without formal training, many teachers proceeded through small trials, adapting colleagues' suggestions and refining solutions that felt workable, sustainable, and aligned with their particular classroom conditions.

Through Clandinin's place dimension, the data show pedagogy folding to context. Tool selection followed local affordances rather than pedagogic preference: a low-bandwidth audio channel was not a workaround but the lesson. Resilience in place terms is therefore the capacity to read the local infrastructure, household ecology, and cultural setting accurately and to redesign provision to fit.

Discussion

How Madrasah teachers narrated resilience under crisis

The first finding is that madrasah English teachers narrated resilience in three distinct registers: as religious patience and gratitude, as iterative practical experimentation, and as collegial dependency on professional networks. Ode's patience-and-gratitude framing aligns with Zhang and Luo's (2023) account of resilience as situated meaning-making, while pushing it into a faith-based occupational ethic that Indonesian EFL scholarship has rarely surfaced. Islamic ethical categories operate here not

as decoration around a generic psychological construct but as the construct itself, which carries direct implications for how resilience is operationalised in madrasah-based teacher development (Beltman et al., 2011). Nilam's practical-experimentation framing is consistent with Weidlich and Kalz's (2021) account of instructional resilience as an acquired capacity, qualifying popular framings of resilience as an inner trait by locating it in weekly lesson-design routines, and extending Cahyadi et al.'s (2022) finding on the redeployment of everyday media by showing that the redeployment was governed by an explicit logic of trial, failure, and revision rather than by ad hoc improvisation. Sri's collegial-dependency framing extends Barkhuizen and Consoli's (2021) account of narrative inquiry as a site for distributed professional learning, echoes Baguri et al.'s (2022) treatment of relational capital as a precondition rather than an output of crisis adaptation, and pushes back against Fu and Zhang's (2024) primarily psychological framing by relocating the analytic centre of gravity from the individual teacher to the professional network. Read jointly, the three conceptions indicate that resilience in this corpus is a vocabulary teachers select from rather than a unitary construct, and policy framings premised on a single, individualised account are likely to misread how madrasah teachers narrate their capacity.

Temporality, sociality, and place as sites of resilience practice

In Indonesian MTs, uneven bandwidth, shared phones, and crowded homes influenced lesson length, timing, and contact, with teachers' narratives shifting, in Clandinin's temporal terms, from pre-pandemic routines to emergency improvisation and then to more deliberate cycles of planning (Clandinin, 2006). Ode's move to WhatsApp voice notes when video failed and Nilam's short YouTube tasks with prompts framed resilience as a learned and supported capacity, consistent with Indonesian work on agency under constraint (Cahyadi et al., 2022; Tao & Gao, 2022). Over time, improvised fixes evolved into hybrid timetables, staggered deadlines, printed packs, and Rasyid's structured use of Google Classroom, which signalled a shift from a transmission role to a facilitation role and supported claims that disruption can trigger innovation (Weidlich & Kalz, 2021). Social relations became central scaffolds, as peer mentoring, parent-school coordination, and WhatsApp check-ins provided academic guidance and reassurance, echoing evidence that social support buffers burnout and sustains engagement (Zhang & Luo, 2023). Ode's online parent-teacher meetings similarly stabilised participation and shared responsibility for coursework. Where institutional provision was thin, grassroots activity, including Indonesian Teachers Association webinars, enabled collective problem-solving and teacher resilience-building (Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021). In regions with unstable connectivity, teachers in this study drew on context-responsive pedagogy, illustrated by Ode's Handy Talky style voice exchanges in Maluku and Rahmat's reliance on asynchronous photo-based tasks in Palopo, which together suggest that remote instruction is more workable when tailored to local conditions than when rolled out as a single, standardised digital template (Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2021). These practices cast teachers as cautious pedagogical innovators and ethical custodians who wove Islamic values, such as resilience and gratitude, into classroom tasks and the feedback offered to students. Households newly configured as learning spaces demanded sustained empathy for students negotiating schoolwork alongside domestic responsibilities, which brings the sociocultural foundations of resilience into view in this context (Savage, 2020). The findings extend prior work by indicating that relational commitment and contextual improvisation, rather than top-down support, operated as drivers of resilience in resource-constrained environments. This qualifies Bozkurt and

Sharma's (2020) portrayal of remote teaching as inherently inferior, reframes it as an adaptive extension of distance learning traditions, and highlights the importance of policies that foster grassroots innovation and more equitable resource distribution in future crises (Muhaji et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Across this five-case corpus, resilience is treated as a negotiated practice developing over time within constraints, rather than as a fixed personal trait. The five participating teachers adapted lesson design by recalibrating activity types, pacing, and assessment to fit disrupted online conditions. Sustained learning depended on local relationships, where routine contact with students, parents, and colleagues via calls and messages supported engagement despite weak connectivity and limited devices. Teachers worked within scarcity by using WhatsApp for coordination, setting flexible tasks, and organising peer support in ways aligned with students' sociocultural and technological circumstances. Rural–urban differences in internet reliability, device sharing, and institutional support bounded what forms of remote pedagogy were feasible in each madrasah. Teacher resilience in crisis is therefore conceptualised as situated, relational, and time-sensitive, produced through interdependent professional conditions rather than individual will or system provision alone. Framed in this way, the argument contributes to debates on remote pedagogy and signals a need for policy and staff development that address the lives of Indonesian teachers and students in under-resourced schools.

In the Indonesian cases examined here, the five-case evidence is consistent with the argument that responsibilities should be differentiated across the education system. National and provincial policymakers in particular need to extend equitable digital infrastructure and to develop workable emergency preparedness plans that respond directly to the pandemic-exposed gaps in technological access between comparatively well-resourced schools and those located in rural or marginalised provinces such as Maluku and South Sulawesi (Cahyadi et al., 2022; Muhaji et al., 2023). Within teacher education, the narrative accounts suggest that pre-service programmes should embed digital literacy and crisis-responsive pedagogy more systematically, because teachers such as Ode and Nilam relied on self-directed experimentation and peer support to work with platforms such as WhatsApp and Google Classroom, revealing structural weaknesses in the formal preparation provided for remote teaching (Weidlich & Kalz, 2021). At school leadership level, the data point to the value of cultivating practical collaborations, including peer support circles, structured engagement with parents, and formal partnerships with technology providers, for sustaining teacher wellbeing and enabling pedagogical innovation, as evidenced in Rasyid's Surabaya case where access to Office 365 licences alongside biweekly mentoring programmes tangibly supported the shift towards hybrid learning models (Baguri et al., 2022). Looking beyond the present sample, the study invites future work to carry narrative inquiry into a wider span of educational sites, including non-Islamic and explicitly secular institutions, so that context-sensitive nuances in resilience strategies can be traced and the tendency to homogenise global debates on emergency remote teaching is challenged, in turn clarifying how local sociocultural and infrastructural conditions pattern adaptive practice (Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021; Tao & Gao, 2022). At system level, these points call for education to be rethought as a living, dynamic network in which policy, pedagogy, leadership, and research work together to address digital inequalities, support teacher agency, and manage the pressures of crisis response, so that resilience is understood both as a personal capacity and as a shared, system-wide commitment

grounded in equity and collective responsibility.

Three limitations frame the present claims. First, the corpus rests on five teachers in five provinces, so theoretical rather than statistical generalisability is intended. Second, the bulk of the data was produced during the 2020 lockdown, so present-day applicability depends on the follow-up wave and on continuing structural similarity in madrasah connectivity. Third, narrative artefacts are partial accounts shaped by what teachers chose to record, which the analysis cannot fully offset, even with triangulation across journal, reflective essay, and portal commentary. Future studies could extend the Narrative Artefact Elicitation Pack into longitudinal designs across one academic year, recruit larger and more diverse madrasah cohorts including SMK (vocational higher-secondary school) and pesantren-affiliated sites, and pair narrative artefacts with classroom video to test the link between resilience narratives and observable pedagogy. Comparative work across Islamic and secular lower-secondary contexts would test whether the religious framing of resilience reported here is context-bound or transferable.

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