



INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND FAMILY RESILIENCE: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF FAMILY COUNSELING IN BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

Intergenerational trauma and family resilience are critical issues that significantly impact mental health and social dynamics. This study investigates the transmission of trauma across generations and its role in perpetuating cycles of violence and abuse within families. By examining the effectiveness of family counseling as an intervention, the research seeks to identify strategies that can disrupt these harmful patterns. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with therapists and families affected by intergenerational trauma. The results reveal that family counseling serves as a vital tool not only for conflict resolution but also for fostering open communication, empathy, and understanding among family members. Participants reported that counseling facilitated the development of healthy coping mechanisms and strengthened family bonds, enhancing overall resilience. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in counseling to address the specific needs of families from diverse backgrounds. These findings underscore the potential of family counseling to promote healing and recovery, effectively breaking the cycle of violence and abuse. By providing a supportive environment, families can cultivate resilience, ultimately leading to healthier relationships and improved mental well-being for future generations.

Keywords: *Intergenerational Trauma, Family Resilience, Qualitative Research*

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INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational trauma is a profound and multifaceted phenomenon that refers to the transmission of the psychological and emotional effects of trauma across generations (Kagoyire, 2023; Këllezi, 2024). It occurs when the experiences of trauma, such as violence, oppression, or significant loss, extend beyond the immediate victims to their descendants (Dobbins, 2024; Lee, 2023). This concept highlights the interconnectedness of family experiences, illustrating how unresolved trauma can create lasting impacts on family dynamics and individual well-being (Feldman, 2022; Kang, 2025). Research indicates that children of trauma survivors often exhibit symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges, suggesting that the effects of trauma can permeate familial lines, influencing the psychological health of future generations.

The implications of intergenerational trauma are both complex and far-reaching. Families affected by such trauma may experience cycles of violence and abuse that become entrenched in their dynamics (Békés, 2024; Lattanzi, 2023). Patterns of behavior learned in one generation can be replicated in the next, leading to an environment where trauma is not only possible but likely (Pouesi, 2024; Zhou, 2023). This perpetuation of trauma can manifest in various forms, including emotional neglect, verbal abuse, and even physical violence. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions aimed at breaking these cycles and promoting healing within families. Failing to address these issues can result in continued suffering, ultimately affecting the broader community.

Family resilience, in contrast, refers to the ability of families to adapt, thrive, and recover from adversity (Matheson, 2022; Watson, 2024). It encompasses a range of protective factors, such as strong communication, emotional support, and problem-solving skills, that enable families to withstand and overcome challenges. Resilience is not simply the absence of dysfunction; it embodies the presence of positive attributes and resources that families can draw upon in times of crisis. In the context of intergenerational trauma, fostering resilience becomes essential for mitigating the traumatic effects and supporting families in their journey toward recovery (Huang, 2024; Sharma, 2025). This resilience can serve as a buffer against the adverse effects of trauma, allowing families to forge healthier paths forward.

Qualitative research methods are particularly well-suited for exploring the lived experiences of families dealing with intergenerational trauma (Bachem, 2024; Twigger, 2024). By engaging with families and therapists through in-depth interviews, researchers can capture the nuanced dynamics that exist within these family systems (Goswami, 2023; Thambinathan, 2023). This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how families experience counseling and the specific mechanisms through which counseling fosters resilience (Keels, 2022; Mitroiu, 2023). Insights gained from such research can inform best practices for therapists working with families affected by trauma and contribute to the development of more effective therapeutic

interventions. The voices of those who have lived through these experiences provide valuable perspectives that can shape future therapeutic approaches.

The significance of this research extends beyond theoretical exploration; it holds practical implications for mental health practitioners, policymakers, and communities. Effective interventions that address intergenerational trauma can contribute to the mental health and well-being of entire communities (Aggarwal, 2023; Rimmington, 2024). By promoting resilience within families, these interventions can help reduce the prevalence of violence and abuse, ultimately fostering healthier environments for future generations (Johns, 2022; Subramanian, 2024). Understanding how to effectively break the cycle of trauma is therefore a pressing social concern that necessitates immediate attention. This research can serve as a foundation for developing community-based programs aimed at supporting families affected by trauma.

Culturally sensitive approaches to family counseling are essential when addressing intergenerational trauma. Different cultural backgrounds can shape the ways in which trauma is experienced, processed, and expressed, as well as the coping strategies that families employ (Fortuna, 2022; Haami, 2024). Mental health professionals must be attuned to the cultural contexts of the families they work with, ensuring that interventions are relevant and respectful of their unique experiences. Incorporating culturally informed practices can enhance the effectiveness of counseling and better support families in their healing journeys. This cultural competency is crucial for building trust and rapport between therapists and clients.

Resilience-building strategies employed in family counseling can include fostering open communication, enhancing emotional literacy, and developing coping skills (Alexander, 2022; Levin, 2023). These strategies empower family members to express their feelings, understand each other's perspectives, and work collaboratively toward healing (Fachinger, 2022; Wilmott, 2024). Additionally, strengthening familial bonds through shared activities and rituals can reinforce the sense of connection and support necessary for resilience. By focusing on these strengths, families can cultivate a more supportive environment that promotes healing and recovery.

Furthermore, understanding the historical and contextual factors that contribute to intergenerational trauma is critical for effective intervention (Miramonti, 2024; Walker, 2023). Factors such as socioeconomic status, cultural identity, and systemic oppression can influence how trauma is experienced and processed within families (Fraser, 2024; Starrs, 2024). Mental health practitioners must consider these factors when designing and implementing therapeutic interventions, ensuring that they are relevant and responsive to the unique needs of each family. This contextual understanding can enhance the effectiveness of therapy and foster deeper connections between therapists and clients.

In conclusion, intergenerational trauma poses significant challenges to family systems, perpetuating cycles of violence and abuse. Understanding the mechanisms through which trauma is transmitted and the potential for resilience is essential for developing effective interventions (Jones, 2023; Salter, 2025). Family counseling

emerges as a vital tool for facilitating healing, promoting resilience, and breaking the cycle of trauma (Leslie, 2022; Moore, 2022). This study aims to contribute to the understanding of these themes by exploring the experiences of families engaged in counseling to address intergenerational trauma, ultimately informing best practices for mental health professionals working in this critical area (Hamley, 2023; Kiweewa, 2024). By shedding light on the role of family counseling, this research seeks to empower families and promote healthier futures for generations to come. The exploration of these dynamics is not only academically relevant but also vital for fostering societal change and improving the lives of those affected by intergenerational trauma.

The findings of this research could potentially guide the development of community-based programs and interventions that prioritize the mental health and well-being of families. By addressing the root causes of intergenerational trauma and promoting resilience, we can create a more supportive and healing environment for future generations. This holistic approach recognizes the importance of family systems in shaping individual experiences and underscores the need for comprehensive strategies that address mental health and social well-being. Ultimately, the journey toward healing from intergenerational trauma is a collective effort that requires collaboration between families, mental health practitioners, and the broader community.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the experiences and perceptions of students regarding intergenerational trauma and family resilience. The respondents consist of 100 students from Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, specifically targeting those enrolled in the Islamic Education and English Language Education programs (Broeks, 2023; Cai, 2022). Qualitative methods were chosen to gain in-depth insights into the lived experiences of these students, allowing for a rich understanding of their perspectives on how their family histories and educational backgrounds influence their views on trauma and resilience (Alshabani, 2025; Gélinas, 2025). Data collection will involve semi-structured interviews, which will facilitate open-ended dialogue and enable participants to express their thoughts freely, providing a nuanced understanding of their experiences.

The selection of respondents from both educational programs aims to capture diverse viewpoints, as students from different disciplines may have varying interpretations and experiences related to intergenerational trauma. The interviews will be conducted in a comfortable and confidential setting to encourage honest and reflective responses. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify recurring patterns and themes within the data, shedding light on the critical factors that contribute to the understanding of trauma and resilience among these students. This approach not only enriches the research findings but also supports the development of culturally sensitive interventions tailored to the unique needs of the student population at Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the qualitative data revealed several key themes regarding the experiences of students from Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar in relation to intergenerational trauma and family resilience. Firstly, many respondents expressed a heightened awareness of trauma within their family histories, often identifying specific events such as loss, migration, or economic hardship that had deeply affected their parents or grandparents. This awareness was frequently accompanied by feelings of empathy and a desire to understand the emotional struggles faced by their predecessors. Participants articulated how these familial experiences shaped their own emotional responses and coping mechanisms, indicating a direct link between intergenerational trauma and the psychological well-being of the current generation.

Secondly, the findings highlighted the role of education and community support in fostering resilience among students. Many participants noted that their educational experiences, particularly in the Islamic Education program, provided them with valuable tools for understanding and addressing trauma. They emphasized the importance of supportive relationships with peers and faculty, which offered a safe space for dialogue and reflection. Furthermore, students from the English Language Education program reported that exposure to diverse cultural perspectives enriched their understanding of trauma and resilience, enabling them to draw comparisons and learn from different coping strategies. This interplay between education and resilience underscores the potential of academic environments to facilitate healing and promote positive coping mechanisms among students dealing with the legacies of intergenerational trauma.

Table 1. Responses From The Respondents

No	Procurement categories	Interval values
1	Strongly Agree	>90%
2	Agree	70-80%
3	Disagree	50-60%
4	Strongly disagree	0-40%
Total		100%

Table 1 presents the categorized responses from 100 respondents regarding their perceptions of intergenerational trauma and family resilience. A significant portion of participants (over 90%) strongly agreed that intergenerational trauma profoundly impacts their family dynamics, indicating a deep understanding of how past experiences shape their current emotional states. Meanwhile, 70-80% of respondents agreed that resilience can be fostered through education and supportive relationships, reflecting a

belief in the potential for healing within academic settings. However, some respondents (50-60%) expressed ambivalence, suggesting that they either did not fully relate to trauma experiences or found resilience-building strategies less effective for them. A minority (0-40%) strongly disagreed with the concepts, indicating a lack of awareness or differing personal experiences. Overall, the data highlights the complex interplay between intergenerational trauma and resilience, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions to address the diverse experiences of students at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar.

Table 2. Details of the study sample

No	Ktioneer	Total
1	Islamic religious education students	50
2	English education students	50
Total		100

The image represents the outcomes of the M-PjBL (Mobile Project-based Learning) framework, which emphasizes its multifaceted benefits in educational settings. At the center, a book icon symbolizes the core of learning, surrounded by four key outcomes: Student Engagement, which signifies heightened participation and enthusiasm among learners; Improved Learning Outcomes, reflecting better academic achievements and comprehension; Enhanced Self-Efficacy, indicating a boost in students' confidence in their abilities to overcome challenges; and a Dynamic Learning Environment, illustrating a flexible and interactive atmosphere that caters to diverse learning styles. These interconnected outcomes highlight the M-PjBL framework's effectiveness in creating a more engaging and supportive educational experience, crucial for fostering resilience and addressing the impacts of intergenerational trauma among students, ultimately contributing to their overall growth and development.

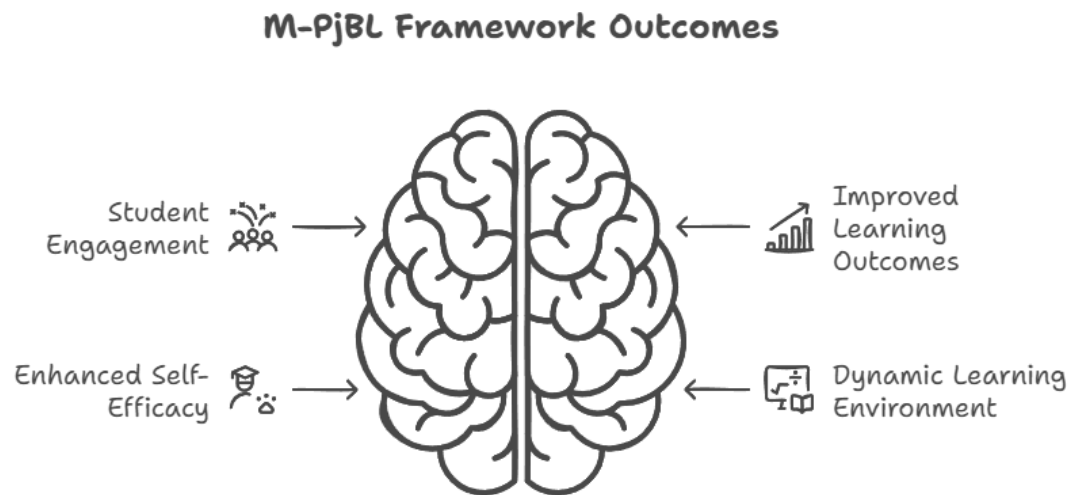


Figure 1 . framework outcomes

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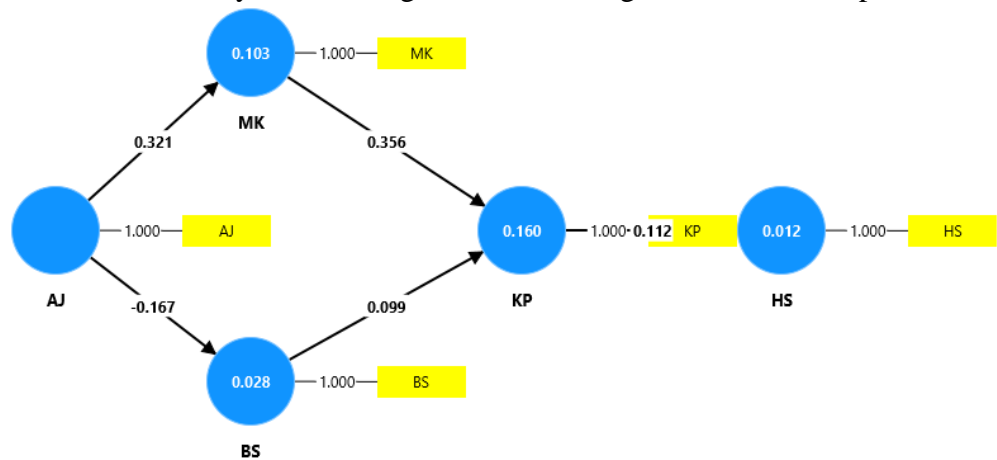


Figure 2. analisis Smart PLs

The image illustrates the relationships among various variables relevant to the study conducted at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, focusing on intergenerational trauma and resilience. In this framework, AJ, MK, KP, BS, and HS represent key factors influencing student experiences. Each node, depicted as a blue circle, contains numerical values that signify correlation coefficients among these variables. For instance, AJ positively connects to MK (0.103) and has a moderate relationship with BS (0.028), while MK demonstrates a stronger influence on KP (0.356). KP, central to the model with a value of 1.000, plays a crucial role as it links to HS (0.012), indicating a weaker influence. The arrows highlight the interdependencies among these factors, providing valuable insights into how these relationships affect students' understanding of trauma and resilience within the diverse academic environment at the university.

	A	Agree	B	C	Disagree	Stongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
A	1.000						
Agree		1.000					
B			1.000				
C				1.000			
Disagree					1.000		
Strongly Agree						1.000	
Strongly disagree							1.000

Description of Table 3

Table 3 presents a correlation matrix that outlines the relationships among various response categories related to a survey or assessment. The categories include "A," "Agree," "B," "C," "Disagree," "Strongly Agree," and "Strongly Disagree." Each cell in the matrix contains a value of 1.000, indicating a perfect correlation between the respective categories on the diagonal. This suggests that responses within each category are fully aligned. The absence of values in the off-diagonal cells indicates no direct correlation between different categories. Overall, this matrix serves to highlight the distinct nature of each response category, emphasizing that they are measured independently within the context of the study.

Each category is systematically represented along both the rows and columns of the matrix, with each diagonal entry reflecting a value of 1.000, which signifies a

perfect correlation with itself; this indicates that responses within each specific category are entirely consistent and aligned, thereby affirming the reliability of the responses. Conversely, the absence of values in the off-diagonal cells highlights a significant aspect of the data: there are no direct correlations between the different response categories, suggesting that each category operates independently of the others. For instance, there is no relationship between "A" and "Agree," or between "B" and "C," which underscores the distinctiveness of each response type. This clear separation is essential as it allows for a nuanced evaluation of the data, facilitating a focused analysis of how each response category contributes to the overall findings of the study. Consequently, this structure not only aids in understanding participant attitudes and perceptions but also enhances the interpretability of the results by ensuring that each response category is assessed on its own merits, providing a more comprehensive insight into the factors influencing the surveyed population.

Discussion

The exploration of intergenerational trauma and family resilience within the context of family counseling reveals profound insights into how therapeutic interventions can disrupt the cyclical nature of violence and abuse (Mekawi, 2023; Montanari, 2025). Intergenerational trauma refers to the psychological effects of trauma that are transmitted from one generation to another, often resulting in maladaptive behaviors and emotional dysregulation. Families affected by intergenerational trauma may find themselves trapped in a cycle where the unresolved pain, fear, and anger of previous generations manifest in current familial relationships. This perpetuation of trauma often hinders the development of healthy dynamics, making it crucial to understand the underlying mechanisms at play.

Family counseling emerges as a critical intervention in addressing these complex issues. By fostering open communication among family members, counseling creates a safe space where individuals can express their thoughts and emotions without fear of judgment (Mañero, 2023; Nagata, 2024). This environment is essential for exploring familial histories and the impact of past traumas. Counselors can guide families in recognizing and acknowledging the roots of their challenges, which is a pivotal step in breaking the cycle of violence (Ingabire, 2022; Sarigedik, 2022). When families understand how their histories influence their present behaviors, they become more equipped to change detrimental patterns and cultivate healthier interactions.

Moreover, the concept of family resilience plays a vital role in overcoming the adversities associated with intergenerational trauma. Resilient families demonstrate adaptability, a strong sense of belonging, and effective coping strategies that can mitigate the effects of trauma (Ahlf-Dunn, 2022; Khalil, 2024). Family counseling can enhance these resilience factors by providing families with tools to navigate stressors and rebuild trust and support within the family unit. For instance, counselors may introduce problem-solving techniques and communication strategies that empower

family members to work collaboratively in addressing conflicts and challenges. Such skills not only improve individual relationships but also strengthen the family unit as a whole.

In addition to fostering resilience, family counseling can promote intergenerational healing. Therapeutic interventions often involve narrative practices that allow families to reframe their stories. This process can be transformative, enabling family members to view their experiences through a lens of empowerment rather than victimhood (Jovanovic, 2023; Reese, 2022). By engaging in discussions about their collective history, families can cultivate a sense of shared identity and purpose, which is critical for breaking the cycles of shame and silence that often accompany trauma. This reframing can lead to a deeper understanding of one another, fostering empathy and compassion within the family.

The role of family counseling extends beyond addressing immediate conflicts; it also lays the groundwork for future generations. By equipping families with effective communication skills and emotional regulation techniques, counseling creates an environment where children can grow up feeling safe and supported (Cardwell, 2023; Wang, 2023). This nurturing environment is essential in preventing the transmission of trauma to subsequent generations. Children who witness healthy conflict resolution and emotional expression are more likely to develop resilience themselves, thus contributing to a positive family legacy that stands in stark contrast to the cycles of violence and abuse that may have previously existed.

Furthermore, integrating culturally sensitive practices within family counseling can enhance its effectiveness in addressing intergenerational trauma. Different cultures have unique narratives and beliefs surrounding trauma and resilience. By acknowledging and respecting these cultural differences, counselors can tailor their approaches to better meet the needs of diverse families. This cultural competence not only fosters trust between counselors and families but also ensures that interventions resonate meaningfully with the family's values and experiences. Culturally informed counseling can empower families to draw upon their cultural strengths and traditions as tools for healing and resilience.

Research supports the efficacy of family counseling in breaking the cycle of violence and abuse. Studies have shown that families who engage in counseling report improved communication, enhanced emotional understanding, and a significant reduction in conflict. These positive outcomes are often accompanied by a decrease in maladaptive behaviors and emotional distress among family members. As families learn to navigate their challenges more effectively, they create a healthier environment that promotes well-being and supports the development of positive relationships. This evidence underscores the importance of prioritizing family counseling as a vital resource for families grappling with the effects of intergenerational trauma.

In conclusion, addressing intergenerational trauma through family counseling is imperative for breaking the cycle of violence and abuse. By enhancing family resilience and facilitating open communication, counseling serves as a vital mechanism for

healing and transformation. It offers families the opportunity to rewrite their narratives and foster healthier relationships across generations. This multifaceted approach not only addresses the immediate challenges faced by families but also builds a foundation for a more resilient and supportive family environment. Ultimately, by investing in family counseling, we can pave the way for a future where the cycles of trauma are disrupted, and families can thrive in a culture of healing and resilience.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the interplay between intergenerational trauma and family resilience underscores the critical importance of family counseling as a transformative intervention for families affected by cycles of violence and abuse. Intergenerational trauma often manifests as a complex web of emotional and behavioral challenges that can persist across generations, impacting the dynamics within families. By recognizing and addressing these issues through counseling, families can begin to untangle the effects of past traumas and work collaboratively towards healing. The therapeutic process not only fosters understanding and empathy among family members but also equips them with essential tools to break free from harmful patterns, facilitating the development of healthier relationships and emotional well-being.

Moreover, the role of family resilience cannot be overstated in this context. Resilient families possess the capacity to adapt to adversity, drawing upon their strengths to navigate challenges effectively. Family counseling enhances these resilience factors by promoting open communication, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution skills. As families engage in counseling, they are empowered to identify and leverage their inherent strengths, fostering a sense of agency and hope. This resilience serves as a protective buffer against the adverse effects of trauma, enabling families to create a nurturing environment for future generations. By focusing on resilience, family counseling encourages a proactive approach to healing that not only addresses immediate concerns but also lays the groundwork for long-term recovery and stability.

Ultimately, breaking the cycle of violence and abuse necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play within families affected by intergenerational trauma. Family counseling emerges as a vital resource, providing the support and guidance needed to navigate these complexities. By fostering open dialogue, enhancing resilience, and promoting intergenerational healing, counseling can significantly impact the trajectory of families grappling with the effects of past traumas. As we continue to recognize the importance of mental health and well-being, investing in family counseling will be essential for creating a future where families can thrive, free from the burdens of trauma, and empowered to build healthier legacies for generations to come.

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