Research article

Teachers' aggressive behaviors: what is considered acceptable and why?

Rangga Dewati Suryaningrat, Frieda Maryam Mangunsong [*], Corina D. Riantoputra

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Despite numerous criticisms of teachers' aggressive behaviors, there has been no consensus on which specific behaviors are considered unacceptable. Some legal regulations on this topic are perceived as unclear or are not enforced, which can lead to disputes between parents and teachers. This study investigated the acceptance of teachers' aggressive behaviors. The participants were 203 teachers and 293 parents of middle and high school students. The results are as follows: (1) parents and teachers tend to have similar perceptions of what constitutes physical aggressive behavior, (2) both groups perceive aggressive behavior as more acceptable when it is verbal compared to physical, and (3) ethnic culture and the level of a person's previous exposure to violence significantly influence the acceptance of teachers' aggressive behaviors. In addition to theoretical advancements, from a practical viewpoint, this study provides data that can serve as a basis for developing teacher training programs and reviewing school or government policies related to teacher violence.

1. Introduction

Research and Development Center for Public Health Efforts by the Health Research and Development Agency, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (Puslitbang Upaya Kesehatan Masyarakat, Badan Litbangkes, Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia) (2015) reported that 19.88% of boys and 7.5% of girls experienced some forms of physical aggression (e.g., slapping or hitting) from their teachers. Further, the Plan International and Plan Asia Regional Office, in collaboration with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) (Plan International, Plan Asia Regional Office, & International Center for Research on Woman (ICRW) (2015)), found that 33% of Indonesian school students experienced some type of violence from their teachers or administrative staff members. This trend is not unique to Indonesia, however; research shows that 30.7%–33% of Asian students experienced violence at school (Banzon-Librojo et al., 2017; Lee, 2015). The discrepancy between data from the Indonesian government in year 2015 and data from the Plan International, Plan Asia Regional Office & International Center for Research on Woman (ICRW) (2015) suggests that there may be differences in the definition of what constitutes violence or aggressive behaviors by school staff.

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2018) suggests that the Indonesia has committed to the prohibition of corporal punishment, as demonstrated through regulations related to the issue, such as the Indonesian Child Protection Laws, including: The law of Republic of Indonesia, number 35 year 2014, about the amendment to law number 23 year 2002 concerning child protection (Republik Indonesia, 2014); The regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia number 82 year 2015, about prevention and curative action of violence in the education unit (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2015; and the law of Republic of Indonesia, number 14 year 2005 about teachers and lecturers (Republik Indonesia, 2005). However, the international community still categorizes Indonesia, along with 68 other countries in the world, as a country that allows corporal punishment (Gershoff, 2017).

It seems that there is no clear definition of what constitutes an unacceptable punishment or crosses the line into inappropriate aggression. This confusion is evident from a case in Sidoarjo, where a teacher was sued by parents and sentenced to three months in prison for pinching a student as a form of corporal punishment (Tempo.co, 2016). This situation indicates that, from parents' point of view, such physically aggressive behaviors by teachers are unacceptable (Tempo.co., 2016).

1.1. Study objectives

The objective of this study is to identify (1) parents' and teachers' perceptions about the acceptability of teachers' aggressive behaviors, including any differences between the two groups; (2) parents' and teachers' views on both verbal and physical aggressive behavior, and which form, if any, is regarded more acceptable; and (3) any factors that

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influence these perceptions, namely, ethnic culture (i.e., Javanese or non-Javanese) and level of previous exposure to violence (i.e., little/no or high).

The first objective is set because, as the data and cases related to teachers' aggressive behavior suggest, there is a need to map the potential differences between teachers' and parents' perceptions about the acceptability of teachers' aggressive behavior.

The second aim concerns what forms of aggressive behaviors tend to be accepted by teachers and parents: verbal or physical. Previous research has demonstrated the negative impact of aggressive behaviors, both verbal and physical, on students (Brendgen et al., 2007; Deb et al., 2017; Fromuth et al., 2015; Gershoff, 2017; Lee, 2015; Longobardi et al., 2018; Riley et al., 2010). For example, Geiger (2017) showed that teachers' verbal aggressive behavior increased students' aggressive behavior, their tendency to withdraw from class participation, and ignoring their teachers. Few studies reflected the rejection of physical aggression rather than other forms of aggression (e.g., psychological aggression), since physically aggressive behaviors related to physical effect to the victim (e.g., bruises or scars) (Takash et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2012). Otherwise, the effect of other forms of aggression, including verbal aggression is less visible, however, verbal aggressive behavior may be more harmful than physically aggressive behavior (Williams et al., 2012). A study by Brendgen et al. (2007) showed that teachers' verbal aggression has long-term effect. Specifically, they found that experiencing teachers' verbally aggressive behavior during childhood, increased the emergence of problematic behaviors, barriers to continued education to a higher level, especially when the children become young adulthood. Therefore, empirical research is needed to explore the acceptance of physically versus verbally aggressive behaviors, especially on teachers to their students. To what extent teachers' physically and verbally aggressive behaviors are accepted, especially in countries that are categorized as allowing corporal punishment, such as Indonesia (Gershoff, 2017), is therefore studied here.

Third, this study aims to understand the factors influencing the tendency of parents and teachers to accept teachers' aggressive behaviors. Specifically, we focus on the role of ethnic culture (i.e., Javanese or non-Javanese) and level of previous exposure to violence. Researchers have argued that hierarchical cultures tend to make students more vulnerable to teachers' aggressive behavior because of the power imbalance between teachers and students (Chen and Wei, 2011; Lee, 2015). Geiger (2017) indicates that students were unwilling to report teachers' aggressive behavior because they believe that teachers' authority cannot be questioned. Thus, this power imbalance between teachers and students may enable teachers to engage in aggressive behaviors (Chen and Wei, 2011; Lee, 2015). In this study, ethnic culture is distinguished as Javanese or non-Javanese, where Javanese culture is recognized as hierarchical (Riantoputra and Gatari, 2017).

Another potential factor influencing the perceptions of teachers' aggressive behavior is previous exposure to violence. Prior research has demonstrated the impact of exposure to violence on children's aggressive behavior or on adult as a leader (e.g., Garcia et al., 2014; Guerra et al., 2003). However, few studies have investigated the impact of previous exposure to violence on adults' acceptance of teachers' aggressive behaviors. Therefore, understanding this factor is especially important in a hierarchical culture, such as Javanese culture (Irawanto et al., 2011) because teachers have a different hierarchical status than students (Hofstede et al., 2010). Therefore, previous exposure to violence may have a different impact.

1.2. Definition of teachers' aggressive behaviors

This study employs the term *teachers' aggressive behaviors*, which refers to "any behavior directed toward another individual that is carried out with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm" (Anderson and Bushman, 2002, p. 28) and which can be done either verbally or physically, and either reactively to express anger or proactively to achieve educational goals (Gershoff, 2017; Geiger, 2017; Guerrero, 1994; Lee, 2015; Infante et al., 1990; Marsee et al., 2011; Padmanabhanunni and Gerhardt, 2018; Raine et al., 2006; Riley et al., 2010). In general, verbally aggressive behaviors include swearing, teasing, threatening, attacks on background/physical appearance/competence/character, cursing, ridicule, and nonverbal behaviors (Infante et al., 1990). On the other hand, physical aggression is aggressive behaviors that include physical force (Gershoff, 2017; Lee, 2015; Padmanabhanunni and Gerhardt, 2018). Thus, in this research, verbally aggressive behaviors include yelling, as well as silent forms of communication such as expressing anger using the silent treatment or by staring sharply, while physically aggressive behaviors include violence such as slapping, and hitting a student.

Although this study uses the term teachers' aggressive behaviors, it is worth noting that the topic is usually discussed under several terms, such as *psychological maltreatment* and *emotional maltreatment*, which emphasize teachers' verbal aggressive behaviors and the effects of such behaviors on their students (Fromuth et al., 2015; Geiger, 2017; Longobardi et al., 2018); *school corporal punishment*, which focuses on physical aggression (Deb et al., 2017; Gershoff, 2017); *student maltreatment by teachers*, which encompasses teachers' physical and emotional aggression (Lee, 2015); and *teachers' aggression*, which focuses on teachers' verbal aggressive behaviors (Riley et al., 2010).

1.3. Acceptability of different forms of aggressive behaviors

To our knowledge, few empirical studies have started to uncover what type of teachers' aggressive behaviors are considered acceptable or unacceptable. For example, Romi et al. (2011) found that yelling in anger was perceived to be more disturbing for Australian students than for Israeli students. For students in grades 7 to 12, they also found that deliberate embarrassment was perceived as more of a distraction by Israeli students rather than by Australian or Chinese students. These results indicated that specific aggressive behaviors tend to be more acceptable depending on the country.

Previous studies have discussed the possibility that verbal aggression is perceived as more acceptable than physical aggression, but they have not empirically examined the issue as it relates to teachers' behavior. Padmanabhanunni and Gerhardt (2018) studied the acceptance of aggressive behavior with adolescents (n = 229), not teachers, and found that verbal aggression was perceived as more acceptable than physical aggression. The rejection of physical aggression, perhaps because physical aggression is perceived as more harmful since it causes physical damage (e.g., bruises or scars) (Gershoff, 2017; Takash et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2012). In their study, Takash et al. (2013) found that 65.2% of participants believed that family violence should be called violence only if it had physical effects. Although Takash et al. (2013) and Williams et al. (2012) did not arrive at a clear conclusion about differences in the acceptance of physical aggression versus verbal aggression, they concluded that physical aggression was perceived as more unacceptable, more abusive, and more aggressive compared to psychological aggression. Therefore, we set Hypothesis 1 as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors are more acceptable than teachers' physically aggressive behaviors.

1.4. Factors related to perceptions about the acceptance of teachers' aggressive behaviors

This study focuses on some factors that may influence the acceptance of teachers' aggressive behaviors, which are the participant's role (teacher or parent), ethnic culture, and level of previous exposure to violence.

1.5. Teachers versus parents: self-serving bias

The perceptions of aggressive behaviors are also susceptible to bias. Wallinius et al. (2011) demonstrated that violent offenders are more likely to be biased when interpreting their own behaviors. Their study on adult (offenders and non offenders) (n = 116) and adolescent (offenders and non offenders) (n = 248) showed that the offender participants tend to have a higher self-serving cognitive distortions rather than the non offender participants; and adolescent participants had a higher self-serving cognitive distortions than adult participants, which indicates that offenders and adolescents have a more inaccurate interpretation of their experiences (e.g., blaming others for negative experience or minimize the impact of their actions by assuming acceptability of their behaviors) (Wallinius et al., 2011). This situation illustrates the existence of self-serving bias, which is a cognitive-perceptual process based on the need to protect and increase one's self-esteem by attributing positive experiences to internal factors and negative experiences to external factors (Forsyth, 2008; Wallinius et al., 2011). In addition, Pronin et al. (2004) argued that people tend to trust their own introspection about their judgment, although they realize they might be biased compared to others' judgments.

Other research indicates a similar tendency of self-serving bias of aggressors (see Long and Li, 2020). In their study, Long and Li (2020) found that self-serving bias strengthened the emergence of aggressive behavior because people used aggressive behavior as a tool to relieve their insecurities about their social status. However, little is known about how this self-serving bias is related to perceptions of teachers' aggressive behavior. One possibility is that, when people deal with negative experiences, they tend to attribute their aggressive behavior to external factors (Forsyth, 2008) and to regard the aggressive behavior as "the right thing to do" in order to reduce their social status insecurity (Long and Li, 2020). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 2a. Teachers are more accepting of their physically aggressive behaviors compared to parents.

Hypothesis 2b. Teachers are more accepting of their verbally aggressive behaviors compared to parents.

1.6. Ethnic culture

Societies have different tendencies in accepting power imbalances and Indonesia is characterized as a high-power distance country (Hofstede et al., 2010), where people tend to accept differences of power in societies. The tendency to accept differences of power in society is pervasive in Javanese culture, since it has three class strata: *abangan* (low social status level), *santri* (people believed to have spiritual power), and *priyayi* (people related to royal family members) (Irawanto et al., 2011). The Javanese ethnic group also has a stratified language style, which can be categorized into two levels by most Javanese: *Kromo*, a highly polite style used to address strangers or those with higher social statuses; and *Ngoko*, the lowest and most informal style, which is commonly used by individuals with a higher social status when addressing those with a lower social status (Smith-Hefner, 1989). Social status and stratified language shape Javanese culture to embrace differences of power in society, with a tendency to highly respect authority (i.e., leaders' authority), especially teachers (Hofstede et al., 2010). In this kind of situation, people tend to accept the actions and wisdom of those in power (e.g., teachers), which may include accepting teachers' aggressive behavior (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Previous research in abusive supervision shows that people in high power distance cultures tend to be more receptive toward abusive supervision compared to people in low power distance cultures (Lian et al., 2012; Vogel et al., 2015; Hofstede et al., 2010). In their research, Samian Riantoputra and Budihardjo (2020) found that because of affective trust, Indonesian employees tend to be more tolerant with abusive leaders. Therefore, assuming that Javanese culture has a greater level of

high-power distance than non-Javanese culture, we propose Hypothesis 3 as follows:

Hypothesis 3a. Javanese participants are more accepting of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors compared to non-Javanese participants.

Hypothesis 3b. Javanese participants are more accepting of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors compared to non-Javanese participants.

1.7. Previous exposure to violence

Many studies have found that previous exposure to violence can make it difficult for individuals to interpret other people's goals and increases the tendency to believe that aggression is a normal and effective means of solving problems (Yen et al., 2015). Garcia et al. (2014) showed that a history of family aggression changes individuals' mindsets in perceiving whether or not aggressive behavior is reasonable. Using four studies that involved supervisor-subordinate pairs and parent-supervisor pairs, Garcia et al. (2014) found that childhood experiences of family violence led supervisors to repeat aggressive behavior to their subordinates due to the belief that aggressive behavior was an acceptable method. According to Garcia et al. (2014) and Anderson and Bushman (2002), previous exposure to violence can lead to an aggression-filled mindset that not only encompasses the acceptability of aggressive behaviors, but also the concept of aggression as a whole as it had been recorded in memory.

The acceptance of aggressive behavior was also explained by Guerra et al. (2003), who examined 4,458 children in Chicago. They found that there was a decrease in reports of violence by children with increasing age. This differences of the acceptance of aggressive behavior were explained by Guerra et al. (2003) and Huesmann and Guerra (1997), which argued that this was because the children considered violence as normal/acceptable behavior, so they were not aware of violence in their communities. This indicates that previous exposure to violence can cause individuals to be less sensitive to the consequences of aggressive behaviors and more likely to perceive such behaviors as acceptable (Garcia et al., 2014; Guerra et al., 2003; Huesmann and Guerra, 1997; Williams et al., 2012). Therefore, we set Hypothesis 4 as follows:

Hypothesis 4a. Participants with greater previous exposure to violence are more likely to view teachers' physically aggressive behaviors as acceptable compared with participants with little to no exposure to violence in their lives.

Hypothesis 4b. Participants with greater previous exposure to violence are more likely to view teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors as acceptable compared with participants with little to no exposure to violence in their lives.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

As presented in Table 1, the participants consisted of 203 teachers (40.9%) and 293 parents (59.1%) of junior/senior high school/equivalent students. The age range for teachers was 21–60 years old and for parents was 31–60 years old. From total participants, 17.1% teachers and 26.4% parents were Javanese. In term of level of education, most of the participants had bachelor's degree. Meanwhile, from total sample, 16.9% teachers and 26.2% parents had a high exposure to violence, and most of the participants in this study were female. Javanese and non-Javanese participants as well as teachers and parents, participants were equally distributed. This can be seen from the results of chi-square which was not significant (X^2 (df = 1, N = 496) = .39; p > .05).

2.2. Procedures

Using snowballing technique, self-reported questionnaires were administered in Bahasa Indonesia and distributed online through

Table 1. Frequency results by participant type.

	Variable	Teachers	Parents	Total	Percentage
		Frequency	Frequency		
1	Ethnic				
	Javanese	85	131	216	43.5
	Non-Javanese	118	162	280	56.5
2	Gender				
	Male	76	72	148	29.8
	Female	127	221	348	70.2
3	Previous exposure to violence				
	Little or no exposure to violence	119	163	282	56.9
	High exposure to violence	84	130	214	43.1
4	Age				
	35 years old and below	72	14	86	17.3
	36 sd 40 years old	36	47	83	16.7
	41 sd 45 years old	40	105	145	29.2
	46 sd 50 years old	32	83	115	23.2
	51 years old and up	23	44	67	13.5
6	Level of education				
	Associate degree or lower	0	49	49	9.9
	Bachelor degree	125	134	259	52.2
	Master and doctoral degree	78	110	188	37.9

N = 496.

WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and e-mail. The participants were informed of the objectives of the research, the privacy and anonymity of their data, and the voluntary nature of participation. More importantly, they were encouraged to answer truthfully since there were no incorrect answers. If the participants agreed to participate, they clicked an icon (informed consent) to proceed. This study was approved by the ethics review committee of the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia.

2.3. Measurement

The eight items on the acceptability of teachers' verbally aggressive behavior were measured using the Anger Expression Scale adopted from Guerrero (1994) and McPherson et al. (2003). An example item is "threatening a student." The answer choices ranged on a scale from 1 (unacceptable) to 6 (acceptable). In this study, the Cronbach's was .85.

We adopted the five items on the acceptability of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors from Lee's version of Student Maltreatment by Teachers Scale (Lee, 2015). An example item is "Teachers have hit me with stuff (such as a stick, a ruler)." For each item, the participants were asked to evaluate their acceptance of a specific physically aggressive behavior on a scale of 1 (unacceptable) to 6 (acceptable). The Cronbach's for current study was .82.

2.3.1. Participant characteristics

With regard to Javanese versus non-Javanese culture, this study used a single item that asked the participants to indicate their ethnicity (Javanese coded as 1; non-Javanese coded as 2).

2.3.2. Previous exposure to violence

A single questionnaire item was used to determine whether the participants had little to no exposure to violence (coded as 1) or high exposure to violence (coded as 2) throughout their childhood and adolescence, as assessed on a scale from 1 (never) to 6 (often). The statistical analysis was calculated by using IBM SPSS ver. 23 (IBM Corp, 2015).

3. Results

3.1. Hypothesis testing

Using a paired t-test and bootstrap, in general, teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors were considered more acceptable ($M = 2.07$, $SD = .96$) than their physically aggressive ones ($M = 1.39$, $SD = .71$, $t (495) = -16.70$, $p < .05$; two-tailed, $d = -.80$, $r = -.37$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Results from descriptive analysis showed that the aggressive behaviors that were regarded as more acceptable were expressing anger using the silent treatment ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.60$), expressing anger by staring sharply ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.56$), and yelling ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.45$). On the other hand, the behaviors that were perceived as more unacceptable included slapping ($M = 1.12$, $SD = .56$), hitting a student with a hand ($M = 1.22$, $SD = .72$), and hitting a student with a blunt object such as a stick, a ruler ($M = 1.30$, $SD = .83$).

One-way ANCOVA and bootstrap were used to measure the influence of teachers/parents group, Javanese/non Javanese group and exposure to violence group on teachers' physically and verbally aggressive behaviors while adjusting for gender, age and level of education.

Table 2 showed that there was no significant differences on the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors between teachers and parents group after controlling gender, age and level of education. Thus, Hypothesis 2a is not supported. On the other hand, significant differences on the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors were found between Javanese and non-Javanese group and between exposure to violence group, after controlling gender, age and level of education. As shown in Table 3, the Javanese participants were more likely to accept teachers' physically aggressive behaviors compared to the non-Javanese participants. Participants who had a high level of previous exposure to violence were also more accepting of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors rather than participants who had little to no previous exposure to violence. Thus, Hypothesis 3a and 4a is supported.

Meanwhile, our results showed a significant differences on the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors for teachers and

Table 2. ANCOVA Results for teachers/parents group, Javanese/non Javanese group, exposure to violence group while controlling gender, age and level of education on the acceptance of teachers' physically and verbally aggressive behaviors.

Source	SS	Df	F	MS	Partial η²	p
Teachers/parents group and the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors						
Gender	13.65	1	28.61	13.65	.06	.00*
Age	5.69	1	11.93	5.69	.02	.00*
Level of education	1.19	1	2.49	1.19	.01	.12
Teachers/parents group	1.33	1	2.78	1.33	.01	.10
Error	234.28	491		.48		
Javanese/non Javanese group and the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors						
Gender	12.69	1	26.82	12.69	.05	.00*
Age	4.63	1	9.78	4.63	.02	.00*
Level of education	1.74	1	3.68	1.74	.01	.06
Javanese/non Javanese group	3.29	1	6.95	3.29	.01	.01*
Error	232.32	491		.47		
Exposure to violence group and the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors						
Gender	12.10	1	25.54	12.10	.05	.00*
Age	4.25	1	8.96	4.25	.02	.00*
Level of education	1.34	1	2.82	1.34	.01	.09
Exposure to violence group	2.96	1	6.25	2.96	.01	.01*
Error	232.64	491		.47		
Teachers/parents group and the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors						
Gender	1.94	1	2.13	1.94	.00	.15
Age	10.26	1	11.26	10.26	.02	.00*
Level of education	.02	1	.02	.02	.00	.88
Teachers/parents group	4.89	1	5.37	4.89	.01	.02*
Error	447.37	491		.91		
Javanese/non Javanese group and the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors						
Gender	1.09	1	1.19	1.09	.00	.28
Age	6.96	1	7.66	6.96	.02	.01*
Level of education	.30	1	.33	.30	.00	.57
Javanese/non Javanese group	6.17	1	6.79	6.17	.01	.01*
Error	446.08	491		.91		
Exposure to violence group and the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors						
Gender	.68	1	.79	.68	.00	.38
Age	5.92	1	6.80	5.92	.01	.01*
Level of education	.02	1	.02	.02	.00	.90
Exposure to violence group	25.27	1	29.06	25.27	.06	.00*
Error	426.98	491		.87		

*p < .05.

parents group, Javanese and non Javanese participants and exposure to violence group, after controlling gender, age and level of education (Table 2). Parents had a higher score on accepting teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors rather than teachers (Table 3). This result contradicts our Hypothesis which stated that teachers were more accepting their verbally aggressive behaviors compared to parents. Thus, Hypothesis 2b is not supported.

Table 3 also presents that teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors were more accepted by the Javanese participants rather than the non-Javanese participants, and participants who had a high level of previous exposure to violence were also likely to accept teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors compared to those who had little to no exposure. Thus, Hypothesis 3b and 4b are supported.

3.2. Other interesting findings

Two-way ANCOVA, bootstrap and post hoc test (Bonferroni correction) was implemented to examine the the acceptance of teachers' physically and verbally aggressive behaviors for teachers/parents group by considering their level of education. We found that teachers' physically aggressive behaviors was perceived as more acceptable by parents with associate degree or lower ($M = 1.57$, $SE = .11$), followed by parents with master and doctoral degree ($M = 1.46$, $SE = .08$), teachers with bachelor degree ($M = 1.41$, $SE = .07$), parents with bachelor degree ($M = 1.36$, $SE = .06$), and teachers with master and doctoral degree ($M = 1.16$, $SE = .06$, $F(1, 489) = 6.65$, $p < .05$, partial η² = .01), after controlling gender and age. Thus, our current study showed that teacher with

Table 3. ANCOVA Table of Means for teachers/parents group, Javanese/non Javanese group, exposure to violence group while controlling gender, age and level of education on the acceptance of teachers' physically and verbally aggressive behaviors.

	Unadjusted*		Adjusted**		N
	M	SD	M	SE	
Teachers/parents group and the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors					
Teachers	1.38	.70	1.32	.05	203
Parents	1.39	.73	1.43	.05	293
Javanese/non Javanese group and the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors					
Javanese	1.47	.81	1.48	.06	216
Non Javanese	1.32	.62	1.31	.04	280
Exposure to violence group and the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors					
Little or no exposure to violence	1.31	.64	1.32	.04	282
High exposure to violence	1.49	.79	1.48	.05	214
Teachers/parents group and the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors					
Teachers	2.01	.91	1.94	.07	203
Parents	2.11	1.00	2.16	.07	293
Javanese/non Javanese group and the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors					
Javanese	2.19	1.03	2.20	.07	216
Non Javanese	1.97	.90	1.97	.05	280
Exposure to violence group and the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors					
Little or no exposure to violence	1.87	.80	1.87	.05	282
High exposure to violence	2.33	1.09	2.33	.07	214

* From descriptive statistics.
** From Estimated Marginal Means.

bachelor degree tend to have higher tolerance for teachers' physically aggressive behaviors rather than teachers with master and doctoral degree. There was no significant differences for teachers' and parents' level of education on the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors, $F(1, 489) = .86$, $p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$.

4. Discussion

The current study significantly contributes to the literature on teachers' aggressive behavior in at least four ways. First, it demonstrates that both teachers and parents tend to be more lenient toward verbally aggressive behavior (e.g., expressing anger using the silent treatment, expressing anger by staring sharply, and yelling) than physically aggressive behavior (e.g., slapping, hitting with a hand, hitting with an object). This may happen due to verbal aggressive behavior is considered as a common form of behavior and can be used as a tool to show power and to manage others (Rerkswattavorn and Chanprasertpinyo, 2019). Although a few studies have indicated this tendency (e.g., Gershoff, 2017; Padmanabhanunni and Gerhardt, 2018; Takash et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2012), rarely have investigated it in relation to teachers' aggression. However, the study findings should not be used as a justification for certain aggressive behavior; instead, they extend our understanding of the tendency so that intervention strategies can be developed.

Second, this study found that teachers and parents tend to have similar perceptions of teachers' physically aggressive behavior. Contrary to our Hypothesis, parents perceived teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors as more acceptable than teachers themselves. Thus, the current dataset did not show support for teachers' self-serving bias. One possible explanation for this is related to the collectivistic nature of Indonesian culture (Hofstede et al., 2010). In their study, Li et al. (2018) found that participants in China tend to take more responsibility for teams' failures. They suggest that the collectivistic nature of Chinese culture tends to limit self-serving bias. Therefore, it seems that, because of teachers'

perceptions of responsibility for their students, teachers tend to attribute their behavior to internal attributions, resulting in a loss of self-serving bias. Further, our current study found that the acceptance of teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors were higher in parents than teachers, after controlling gender, age and level of education. Age, is the only variable that significantly related to teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors. One of possible explanation, was because 46.8% of our participants were parents aged 41 years old and above. Guerra et al. (2003) and Huesmann and Guerra (1997), argued that with the increasing of age, the greater individual's acceptance of aggressive behavior. Therefore, in the absence of differences in perceptions between teachers and parents especially on the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors, training and socialization related to the aggressive behavior of teachers should be conducted in tandem for teachers and parents.

Third, the research demonstrated that individuals from Javanese culture tend to be more lenient in accepting teachers' aggressive behaviors. Although some scholars have discussed this topic (e.g., Chen and Wei, 2011; Lee, 2015), the current study provides empirical research supporting the existence of cultural differences in the acceptance of teachers' aggressive behavior. It should be noted, however, that, although a high power distance culture can potentially trigger the emergence of aggressive behaviors, it enables individuals with lower societal power to trust leaders without question (Endraswara, 2018; Geiger, 2017; Hofstede et al., 2010). Pasa (2000) suggested that high power distance cultures are prone to accepting granted power or authority and taking over responsibility approaches as strategies commonly adopted by leaders. Both strategies emphasize trust in interpersonal relations; for instance, the granted power or authority strategy encourages subordinates to depend on authority and trust their leaders (Schuder, 2017; Pasa, 2000). Meanwhile, taking over responsibility is a strategy in which leaders take responsibility for any mistakes/issues that occur and compel their subordinates to continue trusting them (Pasa, 2000). Therefore, it is not surprising that, in this study, the Javanese participants, who are indicated to have a high-power

distance culture (see Hofstede et al., 2010), were more tolerant than their non-Javanese counterparts of teachers' verbally and physically aggressive behaviors. The finding supports the likelihood that teachers perceive their aggressive behavior as a tool or strategy to improve students' behavior, although this strategy is considered ineffective (Gershoff, 2017). Knowledge of the roles of power distance should ideally be shared with teachers in class management trainings to promote teachers' awareness of potential effect on their behavior.

Finally, this study demonstrated that individuals with high exposure to violence were more likely to accept teachers' physically and verbally aggressive behaviors compared with those with little to no exposure to violence. Although previous research has indicated similar findings in other contexts (e.g., Garcia et al., 2014; Guerra et al., 2003), this study focuses on Indonesian teachers, and thus, provides valuable insights for teachers in Indonesia to become aware of and participate in countermeasures against aggressive practices. Hudley et al. (2001) found that teachers from communities exposed to violence tended to regard students' aggressive behavior as less aggressive than teachers from communities who had little experience of violence. Therefore, teachers must recognize the effects of their previous exposure to violence on their perceptions in order to mitigate any aggressive behaviors toward students as responses to the students' behavior.

4.1. Implications

One practical implication of this study is that the findings on perceptions about the (un)acceptability of teachers' verbally and physically aggressive behaviors can serve as a foundation for changing teachers' mindsets. To raise teachers' awareness of violence-related issues in classrooms/schools, they need to be aware of the viewpoints on acceptable and unacceptable aggressive behavior, including how cultural factors and one's own previous exposure to violence can shape the acceptance of aggressive behavior. Teachers should understand that using aggressive behavior as a strategy for disciplining students decreases their ability to treat students with dignity, to empathize with students, and to motivate students to perform better (Mohr, 2013). Although the acceptance and rejection of aggressive behavior is not always related to behavior, but this (un)acceptability can influence individuals to think of aggressive strategies (Peled et al., 2019). In their study, Peled et al. (2019) found that the acceptance of aggressive behavior can predict individuals to choose cyber aggression as an appropriate way.

To overcome this problem, Lester et al. (2017) and Romi et al. (2016) indicated that a training program (e.g., for teachers) is imperative to improve the quality of the relationship between teachers and students, and as a preventative measure, especially given the relative scarcity of programs aimed at preventing teacher violence in classrooms/schools. For example, in a teacher training program curriculum, teachers can be encouraged to use an approachable and agreeable communication style rather than verbally aggressive behavior, as a means of enriching the student-teacher relationship (Chory and Offstein, 2017). Using 85 villagers/parents as their participants, Rerkswattavorn and Chanprasertpinyo (2019), also found that using nonviolent parenting program was very useful to increasing parents' knowledge and attitude change to promote non-aggressive methods as a tool for disciplining children. This indicates that the same program can also be applied to improve the quality of teacher and student relationships.

A better understanding of the effects of previous exposure to violence can also be used to formulate teacher training programs aimed at preventing violence in classrooms/schools. Moreover, training programs based on the *multilevel approach* may be worth considering (Guerra et al., 2005). Teacher training programs in the aforementioned violence-prone areas can emphasize modifications to school policies that regulate teachers' treatment of students (Boxer et al., 2006).

As an additional exploratory, we found that teachers with bachelor degree significantly had a higher score on the acceptance of teachers' physically aggressive behaviors rather than teachers with master and doctoral degree. This result reflects the need to increase teachers' level of education, as one of the solution to anticipate the acceptance of teachers' aggressive behaviors.

Finally, it is concerning that this study found people to have lenient views on some aggressive behavior. This finding indicates the need for policies review related to such behaviors in classroom/schools environments. For example, verbally aggressive behavior should be more explored in the laws and regulations in Indonesia especially about child protection, since verbally aggressive behavior has been shown to be a part of psychological and emotional maltreatment (Fromuth et al., 2015; Geiger, 2017; Longobardi et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2012).

4.2. Limitations and recommendations for future research directions

This study includes several limitations that should be noted. Because of the current research use snowball sampling that is non-probability sampling procedure, its generalizability is limited (Kirchherr and Charles, 2018). Although the generalizability is limited, it does not reduce the value of this research since the goal of this research is to test the relationship among variables and to advance theory. In addition to cross-sectional data, the research employed self-reported questionnaires. As a result, there is a possibility of social desirability bias (Lee, 2015), even though we anticipated this by informing the participants that there were no right or wrong answers. Based on this limitation, future research should use other methodological approaches, such as probability sampling procedure and direct field observations or experimental research that can overcome such drawbacks.

Future research also needs to examine the prevalence of the use of teachers' reactive and proactive aggressive behavior in classrooms or schools, since previous studies have mentioned the function of aggressive behavior to promote educational goals (see Gershoff, 2017). In addition, it is important to explore the mechanisms and processes by which teachers develop aggressive behaviors.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the acceptance of teachers' aggressive behaviors. The results demonstrated that, teachers' verbally aggressive behaviors tend to be more accepted than their physically aggressive behaviors and that people from Javanese culture or those who have had a high exposure to violence tend to be more accepting of teachers' aggressive behaviors. It is suggested that teacher training programs be developed to increase teachers' awareness of their aggressive behaviors and that policies be reviewed to clarify the unacceptability of aggressive behavior.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

R. D. Suryaningrat: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

F. M. Mangunsong, C. D. Riantoputra: Conceived and designed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Competing interest statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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