

Conflict Management Strategies in Vocational Education: A Qualitative Case Study of a Faith-Based School in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal conflict between teachers and students is a common phenomenon in vocational schools, where diverse student backgrounds, academic pressure, and practice-oriented learning create complex interaction dynamics. Although conflict management in educational settings has been widely studied, limited research has examined how religious values shape conflict resolution strategies in faith-based vocational schools. This study investigates forms of teacher–student conflict and analyzes how Islamic values influence conflict management practices at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, Indonesia. This study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected from 15 participants, including students, teachers, the principal, guidance and counseling (BK) staff, and a parent. In-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis were conducted. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman’s interactive model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation of sources and methods to enhance validity. Findings indicate that the dominant conflict management strategies are collaboration and accommodation. Conflicts commonly arise from disciplinary issues, communication misunderstandings, academic pressure, and differences in values. Resolution processes emphasize dialogue, deliberation (*musyawarah*), and mutual understanding, supported by active mediation from BK staff and parental involvement. Islamic values such as patience, mutual respect, and moral responsibility function not only as ethical principles but also as operational frameworks guiding mediation and reconciliation. The integration of religious values strengthens relationship-oriented conflict management, fostering constructive resolution, character development, and a conducive learning environment. The study highlights the importance of contextualizing conflict management theory within faith-based educational settings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inherent part of human interaction, and educational institutions are no exception. Within schools, conflicts often arise due to differences in perspectives, goals, interests, and values among various stakeholders—students, teachers, administrators, and parents (Leeuwen et al., 2024). These conflicts can take many forms, from simple misunderstandings to complex disputes that impact the broader educational environment. Understanding the nature of these conflicts and the strategies used to manage them is essential for creating a safe and productive learning atmosphere.

Conflicts among students are perhaps the most visible and frequent in schools. These can be triggered by bullying, social competition, and unresolved personal grievances. Bullying, in particular, is a serious form of conflict involving an imbalance of power and can manifest through physical, verbal, or social abuse (Ma et al., 2022). Conflicts also emerge in the pursuit of social status, where students compete for popularity, leadership roles, or peer recognition, sometimes leading to exclusionary behavior or gossip (Khovivah et al., 2024). Additionally, minor misunderstandings, when left unaddressed, may escalate into personal feuds or group-based tensions (Alif et al., 2024; Vientianty, 2024).

Teachers are not immune to conflict either. Interpersonal disputes among educators often stem from divergent teaching philosophies, competition for leadership roles, and disagreements in workload distribution. Conflicts may emerge when educators hold contrasting views on curriculum design, classroom management, or disciplinary approaches. Such differences can strain collegial relationships and undermine collaboration (Wahidin, 2023). In competitive school environments, disputes over recognition, professional advancement, or decision-making authority may further contribute to a divisive atmosphere.

Teacher–student relationships, which are foundational to effective education, are also prone to conflict. According to Mammadov (2025), this relationship is one of the central pillars of student development, yet it is vulnerable to breakdowns due to discipline issues, unmet expectations, and communication failures. For example, students may feel unfairly treated when disciplined without a chance to explain, while teachers may view noncompliance as a lack of respect. These tensions often arise when expectations are misaligned or when communication lacks clarity and empathy (Mabunga & Mabunga, 2019). Differences in personal values and misunderstandings during instruction may exacerbate such conflicts, particularly when students perceive feedback as criticism or teachers interpret silence as defiance.

Beyond internal dynamics, conflicts between schools and parents are also prevalent. These often arise over disagreements regarding school policies, academic assessments, or the handling of student behavior. Parents may challenge school decisions on fees, uniforms, or curricula, while educators may struggle with parental expectations that conflict with institutional standards (Naima & Maria, 2020). Miscommunication between the school and home environments can lead to mistrust, particularly when disciplinary decisions or academic evaluations are perceived as unjust by families. Such conflicts, if unresolved, can negatively impact student motivation and disrupt the partnership needed for student success.

If not managed properly, conflict in schools can have severe consequences. Prolonged disputes divert attention from teaching and learning, reduce productivity, and harm relationships. For students, involvement in unresolved conflict—either as participants or observers—can lead to anxiety, trauma, poor academic performance, and disengagement (Ma et al., 2022). Teachers working in a tense environment may suffer emotional burnout, further diminishing the quality of instruction (Veen et al., 2020). A school climate marked by unresolved conflict can also foster a culture of fear, where students are reluctant to participate or engage in class discussions. In extreme cases, unresolved tensions may escalate into violence, vandalism, or other forms of destructive behavior, ultimately undermining the institution's reputation and public trust (Naima & Maria, 2020).

Given these risks, effective conflict management in schools is critical. Strategic, empathetic approaches to handling disputes can prevent escalation and contribute to a more harmonious learning

environment (Leeuwen et al., 2024). Successful conflict management not only resolves the immediate issues but also builds a foundation for trust, cooperation, and personal growth. Schools that invest in healthy communication, mediation structures, and collaborative problem-solving can enhance academic performance and student well-being (Wahidin, 2023).

Moreover, schools are ideal settings to cultivate conflict resolution skills that students will carry into adulthood. When students are taught to engage in dialogue, actively listen, and seek win-win solutions, they develop the emotional intelligence needed for interpersonal and professional relationships. Such training helps them mature into socially responsible and emotionally resilient individuals (Wiryatmo et al., 2022). Constructively resolved conflicts can also strengthen relationships within the school community. When students and teachers collaboratively resolve misunderstandings, mutual respect and trust are reinforced, creating a stronger educational culture. Furthermore, schools known for effective conflict management are more likely to retain public trust and attract both quality students and educators (Fatimatul Hasanah, 2024).

Vocational high schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* or SMK) in Indonesia present a distinctive context for conflict management due to their unique structure and mission. Unlike general academic institutions, vocational schools focus on equipping students with technical skills for the workforce, often through industry partnerships and practice-based learning. This distinctive orientation gives rise to specific types of conflicts not commonly found in general education settings (Suncaka, 2023). For instance, tension may arise between theory and practice: theoretical subject teachers might feel their time is marginalized, while practical instructors may view theory-heavy curricula as detached from industry needs. Students, too, may feel disconnected from theoretical content when their interests lie in hands-on work.

Additionally, SMK students often face pressure to meet workplace standards during internships or fieldwork programs, where discrepancies between school expectations and industrial realities can generate stress and conflict. For example, students might feel exploited during internships, or unprepared for the demands of the working environment, leading to tension with supervisors or frustration with the school (Suncaka, 2023). The diversity of student backgrounds, motivations, and socio-economic status in vocational schools also increases the potential for interpersonal conflict, particularly when students compete for limited resources, practice equipment, or prestigious internships.

Another important dimension of conflict in SMKs is the presence of faith-based values, particularly in institutions affiliated with religious organizations. In Indonesia, schools like SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang operate within an Islamic educational framework that emphasizes ethical conduct, spiritual development, and communal harmony. Religious values such as *musyawarah* (deliberation), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *amanah* (responsibility) are woven into the daily life of the school and can significantly influence how conflicts are perceived and resolved. In such contexts, conflict management cannot be fully understood without considering the normative role of religious teachings and how these values shape institutional practices and interpersonal behavior.

Despite the growing attention to conflict management in educational research, there remains a gap in studies that explore the intersection between conflict resolution and religious values in vocational school settings. Most existing literature focuses on psychological or managerial strategies that may not fully capture the normative and cultural dimensions present in faith-based schools. There is a need for context-specific studies that analyze how schools integrate spiritual teachings into conflict resolution strategies and how this integration affects outcomes in diverse, practice-oriented learning environments.

To address this gap, the present study investigates interpersonal conflict and conflict management strategies in SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, a faith-based vocational school in Indonesia. This school provides a unique case due to its religious foundation, student diversity, and active engagement with the industrial sector. Specifically, the study explores the forms of conflict that occur between teachers and students, the strategies used to manage those conflicts, and the extent to which Islamic

values inform and shape those strategies. By doing so, this research aims to contribute to both theory and practice by offering insights into value-based conflict resolution in vocational education contexts.

2. METHODS

The research methodology used in this study is a qualitative approach with the type of case study research (Amelia, 2025). The emphasis used is as follows: Qualitative Approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand phenomena in depth and comprehensively, not just to quantitatively measure data (Amelia, 2025). The objective is to describe and analyze how conflict management is applied in SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, as well as to understand the perceptions, experiences, and views of the parties involved (students, teachers, staff, etc.). Qualitative research allows researchers to dig into rich data from the perspective of participants. Type of Research: Case Study (Rostini & Amaly, 2023). This study uses a case study type because the focus is on one specific location, namely SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang. Case studies allow researchers to conduct an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon (conflict management) in a real and unique context within the school. Through case studies, researchers can collect data from a variety of sources to get a comprehensive picture of how conflicts are managed in those environments. The subjects of this research are individuals who have a key role in the dynamics of conflict at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, including: Students, as parties who experience conflict most often. Teacher: As a mediator and conflict manager in the classroom. Principal/Management: As a policymaker and determinant of the direction of conflict management in schools. Guidance and Counseling Staff (BK): As a party specifically responsible for handling student problems. Parents: As an external party involved in some type of conflict.

To collect relevant data, the study used the In-Depth Interview method: The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the research subjects to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences, views, and strategies in dealing with conflict. Participant Observation: Researchers directly observed interactions in the school environment, including how teachers manage conflicts in the classroom, interactions between students outside of class hours, or meetings between schools and parents. Then, with the Documentation Study method, the researcher collects and analyzes relevant documents, such as school regulations, student handbooks, Guidance and Counseling case records, or internal reports related to problem handling (Ma et al., 2022).

The collected data were analyzed through several systematic stages. First, data reduction was conducted by summarizing, selecting, and focusing the raw data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Next, the reduced data were presented in organized forms such as narratives, tables, and charts to facilitate clarity and understanding. Finally, conclusions were drawn by synthesizing the presented data, linking the findings to relevant theoretical frameworks, and providing an in-depth interpretation of how conflict management is implemented at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang. This analytical procedure ensures that the study offers an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the research topic within its specific context.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

The results of this study are described based on the analysis of data that has been reduced, and then concluded according to the formulation of the problem that has been determined. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies with research instruments involving students, teachers, principals/management, counseling guidance staff (BK), and parents.

Conflict is a social phenomenon that cannot be avoided in the educational environment, including in vocational high schools (SMK). In the context of schools, conflicts can arise due to differences in

perceptions, values, expectations, or interests between individuals and groups, especially between teachers and students. Although often viewed negatively, conflict can actually be a means to improve relationships, improve understanding, and strengthen a healthy communication culture if managed appropriately.

3.1.1. Conflict Forms and Resources Identification

The first step in understanding conflict management is to recognize its forms and causes.

a. Forms of Conflict

Based on the results of observations and interviews, several main forms of interpersonal conflicts occur between teachers and students at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, namely:

1) Conflicts due to violations of school discipline.

This form most often appears. For example, students arrive late, don't wear a full uniform, or don't do assignments. Teachers who reprimand students often get negative reactions, such as disrespectful answers or indifference. From there, a little interpersonal tension between teachers and students emerged. Teachers' reprimands for these violations often trigger negative responses from students. A teacher said:

"Most often, it is a matter of discipline, such as arriving late or not wearing a complete uniform. When reprimanded, some students answer in a disrespectful tone or are silent but show a defiant attitude." (Teacher 3)

From a student's point of view, reprimands are often seen as a form of injustice:

"Sometimes we feel like we have a reason, but we are still scolded in front of the class, so the emotions immediately rise." (Student 2)

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2) Conflict due to differences in perception of learning methods.

Conflicts also arise due to differences in views between teachers and students regarding learning methods. Some students feel that the method used by the teacher is not interesting or too fast, while the teacher assesses that the students lack motivation to learn. The results of the interview.

"Lessons are often delivered too quickly, and there are few discussions, so we have a hard time understanding and end up being lazy." (Student 5)

Instead, the teacher conveys a different perception:

"I feel that the material has been delivered well, but students lack focus and do not appreciate the teacher's efforts." (Teacher 1)

Some students feel that the teacher's teaching method is too fast, uninteresting, or lacks the opportunity to discuss. On the other hand, teachers feel that students do not appreciate their efforts or lack the motivation to learn. This difference in perception can cause disappointment and even emotional distance.

3) Emotional and personal conflicts.

Emotional conflict often arises as a result of personal misunderstandings outside of the academic context, such as reprimands made in public or perceptions of unfair treatment. One student explained:

"If you are reprimanded in front of your friends, it feels embarrassing and hurt, so the relationship with the teacher becomes strained." (Student 6)

The teacher also acknowledges that the emotional aspect affects long-term relationships:

"Sometimes the intention is just to reprimand, but because of the emotional atmosphere, students feel humiliated." (Teacher 4)

Sometimes it arises due to personal misunderstandings outside of learning activities. For example, the teacher reprimands the student in public so that the student feels humiliated, or the student thinks that the teacher is a favorite. This kind of conflict can affect long-term interpersonal relationships.

4) Conflicts due to ineffective communication.

The ineffectiveness of verbal and nonverbal communication is a significant source of conflict. Differences in the interpretation of voice intonation or facial expressions often lead to misunderstandings. One student stated:

"We often consider the teacher's harsh tone of voice angry, even though maybe he is just firm." (Student 1)

Meanwhile, teachers assessed that students' attitudes were often misinterpreted:

"Students' expressions that are silent or flat sometimes look disrespectful, when maybe they just don't dare to speak." (Teacher 2)

Misinterpretation of verbal and nonverbal messages often leads to misunderstandings. For example, a teacher's loud intonation is considered angry, or a cold student's facial expressions are considered disrespectful. Though both parties may not mean so.

5) Conflict of values and culture.

The diversity of students' social and cultural backgrounds also influences the emergence of conflicts, especially related to the application of values and disciplines typical of Muhammadiyah schools. A BK staff member explained:

"Not all students come with the same background of grades. There are those who are not used to the rules and discipline based on Islamic values, so there are often clashes." (BK 1)

This is also felt by students:

"At home, we weren't as strict as the school rules, so it was difficult to adjust at first." (Student 7).

At SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, there are students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. The values they adopt are not always in line with the religious values or disciplines typical of Muhammadiyah schools. This inconsistency of values sometimes gives rise to conflicts in terms of adherence to the rules.

b. Major Sources of Conflict

The results of the study show that the source of interpersonal conflict between teachers and students can be categorized into several factors:

1) Communication Factors.

Lack of effective communication is a major source of conflict. Teachers' communication styles that are too instructive without opening up dialogue space often provoke student resistance, while defensive or disrespectful student language provokes an emotional response from the teacher. A teacher said:

"Sometimes the teacher has explained with the intention of affirming the rules, but the students catch it as angry or authoritarian." (Teacher 2)

From the student side, communication problems are also clearly felt:

"If we are not allowed to explain, we feel that we are not heard, and we end up denying it." (Student 3)

The lack of the ability to communicate effectively is the main source of conflict. Teachers who use a slightly assertive or instructive communication style without opening a dialogue space often cause resistance from students. And vice versa, students who use disrespectful or defensive language trigger an emotional response from the teacher.

2) Personality and Emotional Factors.

Differences in individual characters and emotional states also influence the emergence of conflicts. Assertive teachers are often perceived as harsh by sensitive students, while critical students are often perceived as challenging the teacher's authority. One teacher revealed:

"There are students who are sensitive, so a casual reprimand can be considered a personal attack." (Teacher 4)

In addition, emotional stress also triggers conflict:

"If the assignments pile up and the teachers are also tired, emotions are easily ignited." (Student 6)

The factor of differences in individual characters also plays a big role. A teacher who tends to be assertive may be perceived as harsh by sensitive students. While expressive or critical students are sometimes considered to challenge the authority of teachers. This emotional imbalance, such as teacher stress due to the student's workload or academic pressure, can also trigger a conflict.

3) School System and Rules Factors.

Some conflicts arise due to school rules that are felt to be rigid or not well socialized. This is especially experienced by new students. One student stated:

"When we first entered, there were many rules that we did not understand, but we were immediately sanctioned." (Student 1)

BK staff emphasized the same thing:

"Problems often arise because of differences in perception in the application of rules, not because of intent to violate." (BK 2)

As a result of interviews with students, several school rules are felt to be rigid or poorly socialized, causing misunderstandings. For example, rules of conduct that new students do not understand, or differences in perceptions in the application of sanctions.

4) Academic Factors.

High academic load and achievement demands often cause stress in students. When teachers lack understanding of the psychological condition of students, conflicts are easy to occur. One student explained:

"There are so many assignments and exams, but sometimes the teachers don't know that we are tired." (Student 5)

Teachers also acknowledge academic pressure:

"The curriculum target must be achieved, but the condition of students is not always the same." (Teacher 1)

A high workload of assignments, exams, and academic expectations can often cause stress for students. Teachers who lack an understanding of students' psychological conditions have the potential to cause conflicts due to achievement pressure.

5) Social and Environmental Factors.

Students' family backgrounds and social environment also influence their response to teacher reprimands. Students with low social support tend to be more reactive. A BK staff member stated:

"Students who have problems at home are usually more offended when they are reprimanded at school." (BK 1)

This is also realized by the teacher:

"Sometimes the behavior of students in the classroom cannot be separated from their family conditions." (Teacher 3)

Social support from peers or the home environment can also influence student behavior at school. Students with problematic family backgrounds tend to be more reactive to teachers' reprimands. Thus, it can be concluded that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and students at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang are not only caused by individual factors, but also influenced by the communication system, school culture, and psychological conditions of each party.

c. Mediation Strategy and the Role of Counseling Guidance (BK)

BK staff play a crucial role in managing interpersonal conflicts that teachers cannot resolve in the classroom. Based on an interview with the Chief of Staff of BK, the mediation process they carried out was guided by professional and Islamic counseling principles. Guidance and Counseling (BK) staff play a crucial role in dealing with interpersonal conflicts between teachers and students that cannot be

resolved in the classroom. The mediation process applied is systematic and based on the principles of professional counseling and Islamic values. Mediation starts from problem identification, followed by data verification through separate interviews, mediation meetings to reach a mutual agreement, to follow-up to ensure the sustainability of conflict resolution. In certain cases, parents are also involved to speed up and strengthen the conflict resolution process. This was emphasized by the Head of BK:

"We handle every conflict by listening to both parties fairly, then bringing them together to deliberate. We do not immediately punish them, but look for mutually acceptable solutions, and if necessary, our parents involve us so that the problem does not recur." (Head of BK)

These findings show that the role of BK is not only as a mediator of conflict, but also as a facilitator of character building and sustainable social relationships between schools, students, and parents such as the following points:

1. Problem Identification: The conflicting party, whether teachers or students, comes to the BK room.
2. Data Verification: BK staff conduct separate interviews to listen to each party's perspective.
3. Meeting Mediation: Both parties meet to find common ground. BK staff act as neutral mediators.
4. Conclusion Drawn: Together, they put together a favorable and fair deal.
5. Follow-Up: BK staff monitor the implementation of the agreement and provide follow-up guidance if needed. The role of parents is also very important in this mediation process. If the conflict is considered serious, the school will call the parents. Based on data from interviews, parental involvement often helps speed up the resolution process, as they can provide additional information and, together with the school, find the best solution for their child.

In conclusion, the interpersonal conflict management strategy between teachers and students at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang is managed effectively through a combination of collaboration and accommodation strategies, which is supported by the active mediation role of BK staff and a family approach based on Islamic values. The active involvement of parents is also an important factor in conflict resolution. This approach succeeds in creating a conducive learning environment because it focuses on problem-solving, not punishment, so that the relationship between teacher and student is maintained.

The results of this study show that conflict management at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang is quite effective because it focuses not only on problem-solving, but also on character development and interpersonal relationships. These findings are in line with some previous theories and research, but they also have significant differences.

These findings are very relevant to the theory of conflict management styles, according to Aisyah (2025), which categorizes five styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang clearly adopts the collaborative and accommodating style as the main approach.

1. Collaborating: Seen in the practice of open deliberation and discussion aimed at finding win-win solutions. This is different from the competitive style that is oriented towards unilateral victory.
2. Accommodating: It appears in the attitude of teachers who are willing to give in to maintain good relationships with students, showing priority on relationships over personal interests.

The collaboration strategy has proven to be effective at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang because it is applied in the context of social relations that emphasizes togetherness and moral responsibility, not solely formal authority. Collaboration is not understood as a negotiation of interests, but as a deliberation process to reach a fair agreement. Teachers do not position themselves as the party who must "win" in conflicts, but as educators who are responsible for maintaining the academic development and character of students. In this context, students are more willing to open up because

they are treated as subjects of dialogue, rather than objects of discipline. The success of the collaboration is also supported by the existence of BK as a neutral mediator trusted by both parties, so that the dialogue process takes place in a safe and controlled atmosphere.

Islamic values shape conflict management practices in this school substantively, not symbolically. The principles of deliberation, *ukhuwah*, and *islah* (relationship improvement) frame conflict as an opportunity for moral learning, not as a violation that must be punished immediately. In contrast to secular approaches that tend to emphasize adherence to formal rules and sanctions, Islamic values-based approaches encourage self-reflection, confession, and a willingness to forgive each other. Teachers show a tendency to accommodate students' mistakes to maintain long-term relationships, while students feel a moral obligation to correct behavior, rather than simply avoid punishment. This pattern results in more sustainable conflict resolution because it is based on value awareness, rather than purely external compliance.

3.2. Discussion

Collaboration and accommodation strategies have been extensively discussed in the literature; however, the present study offers a distinctive contribution due to its specific contextual setting. Dahari (2022) found that schools with high levels of student satisfaction tend to implement strong collaborative strategies. While this finding is consistent with the present study, the results further reveal that collaboration at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang is not solely grounded in professional practices but is also deeply embedded in religious values. This dimension of value-based collaboration is not addressed in Dahari's study, thereby highlighting the unique contribution of the current research.

Support for effective conflict resolution through mediation is also evident in prior studies. Lee and Kim (2022), in their study published in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, emphasize the effectiveness of counseling staff in mediating student conflicts. In contrast, the present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that counseling (BK) staff at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang integrate modern counseling approaches with Islamic values such as patience (*sabar*) sincerity (*ikhlas*), and deliberation (*musyawarah*). This integration introduces a spiritual dimension to the mediation process, enriching conventional approaches to conflict resolution (Lee & Kim, 2022).

In terms of leadership, Chen (2020) highlights the importance of transformational leadership in fostering a supportive school culture. The findings of the present study align with this view but further indicate that the leadership of the principal at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang is infused with Muhammadiyah values. These values contribute to the development of a collaborative and familial school culture, extending beyond the professional orientation emphasized in previous research (Chen, 2020).

Contrary to the findings of Johnson and Williams (2023), who argue that parental involvement in school conflicts often exacerbates issues due to differing perspectives, this study demonstrates a different dynamic. At SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, parental involvement serves as a facilitating factor that accelerates conflict resolution. This is largely due to the alignment of vision and mission between parents and the school in the educational process, which minimizes potential conflicts and fosters cooperation (Johnson & Williams, 2023).

Finally, Mulyadi (2021) found that the integration of Islamic values within the curriculum can enhance tolerance and reduce conflict. While this supports the general premise of the present study, the findings go further by showing that these values are not limited to curricular integration. Instead, they are actively practiced in daily conflict management processes, serving as guiding principles in activities such as deliberation and mutual forgiveness. This demonstrates a more comprehensive and practice-oriented application of Islamic values in managing conflict within the school environment (Mulyadi, 2021). The findings of this study show that the dominant conflict management strategy applied at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang is collaboration and accommodation. This result is in line with the theory of conflict management styles put forward by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), which

classifies five main styles of conflict management, namely competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Collaborative strategies emphasize finding win-win solutions through open communication, while accommodation emphasizes the maintenance of social relationships by overriding personal interests. In the context of education, these two strategies are considered the most constructive because they not only solve problems but also maintain the sustainability of interpersonal relationships.

These findings also reinforce the view of Rahim (2002), who stated that collaborative and accommodative styles are very effective in organizations that emphasize long-term relationships and collective values. Schools as social organizations have these characteristics, so a relationship-oriented approach to conflict becomes more relevant than a competitive or avoidant approach. This can be seen in practice at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang, where conflict resolution is not directed at the imposition of sanctions alone, but on dialogue, mutual understanding, and behavior improvement.

Furthermore, the findings of this study show that Islamic values, such as deliberation, patience, and mutual respect, play an important role in shaping conflict management strategies. These results are in line with the research of Ulya (2016) and Hamzah (2025), which affirms that the integration of Islamic values in educational practices can increase tolerance and reduce the intensity of conflict. However, this research goes further by showing that religious values not only function as moral norms, but also as an operational framework in the process of mediating conflicts between teachers and students.

The active role of BK teachers as mediators in this study is also consistent with the findings of Kim & Lee (2020), which emphasize the importance of professional mediation in resolving student conflicts constructively. Mediation carried out through the process of problem identification, two-way dialogue, and follow-up has been proven to be able to prevent the escalation of conflicts. In contrast, this study shows that mediation in faith-based schools not only relies on modern counseling approaches but is also enriched with a spiritual value approach, which strengthens the acceptance of solutions by the parties. In addition, the involvement of parents in conflict resolution in this study supports Chandolia's (2020) view of the importance of collaboration between schools and families in building a positive school climate. In contrast to the findings of Johnson and Williams (2023), who stated that parental involvement has the potential to complicate conflict, this study shows that in the context of value-based schools that have a shared vision, parental involvement actually accelerates conflict resolution.

Overall, this discussion emphasized that the effectiveness of conflict management at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang is not only determined by the selection of collaboration and accommodation strategies, but also by the context of values, school organizational culture, and religious-communal social relations. Thus, this study strengthens the argument that conflict management theory needs to be understood contextually, especially in the context of religion-based and vocational education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the management of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and students at SMK Muhammadiyah I Palembang is dominated by collaboration and accommodation strategies. The success of this strategy is determined not only by conflict resolution techniques, but by the integration of Islamic values—such as deliberation, patience, and moral responsibility—that shape the behavior of teachers and students in responding to conflicts. This approach allows conflicts to be managed constructively, maintains the quality of teacher-student relationships, and supports character formation and the creation of a conducive learning environment.

This research has several limitations. First, the study used a single case study, so the findings could not be generalized extensively. Second, the research was conducted in a religious-based school environment with a specific value context, so that the results were greatly influenced by the culture and institutional values of Muhammadiyah schools.

Further research is suggested to conduct a comparative study between religion-based schools and secular schools to deepen understanding of the influence of institutional values on conflict management. In addition, quantitative validation through surveys or statistical models is required to test the consistency of these findings. Future research could also be extended to other faith-based schools, both Islamic and non-Islamic, to test the applicability of findings in a more diverse educational context.

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