

Principals' Leadership Strategies in Conflict Management in Islamic Boarding Schools

Azzahra¹, Ruri Liana Anugrah²

zahrasiregar568@gmail.com¹, lianaruri@gmail.com²

^{1,2}Imam Shafi'i Institute of Islamic Religion Indonesia

Keyword

Leadership Strategy;
Conflict Management;
Islamic Boarding School;
Evaluation; *Tabayyun*

Article History

Submission : 02-04-2026
Revised : 02-05-2026
Publish : 05-05-2026

Abstract

This study aims to describe and evaluate the principal's leadership strategies in conflict management at the Hayatuddiyar Islamic Boarding School Pekanbaru, as well as to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors. The study employs a descriptive-evaluative qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews with five informants—consisting of the principal, teachers, educational staff, and female students—complemented by observation and documentation. The results indicate that the leadership strategies implemented include strengthening open communication through a "normalizing mandatory reporting" policy, participatory decision-making based on deliberation (*musyawarah*), and delegation of authority according to standard operating procedures. Furthermore, the principal applies mediation and *tabayyun* mechanisms, personal approaches, post-conflict evaluation, moral guidance (character building), educational sanctions, and the *ishlah* process for character restoration. Evaluatively, these strategies are considered effective in resolving conflicts constructively and maintaining justice. The primary supporting factors are stakeholder cooperation and effective communication, while identified inhibitors include miscommunication caused by personal closeness exceeding professional boundaries, protracted conflicts, students' closed character, dishonesty, and external environmental influences. This study concludes that adaptive leadership based on Islamic boarding school values is capable of creating harmonious organizational stability.

This is an open access article under the [Lisensi Creative Commons Atribusi-BerbagiSerupa 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



INTRODUCTION

Education is an effort that is carried out consciously and planned to create an atmosphere and learning process that supports students in developing their potential to the maximum, both from spiritual aspects, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed in life. To achieve these educational goals, the existence of a leader plays a very crucial role in directing and ensuring that the educational process runs effectively. Leadership is basically the art and ability of a person to influence others to move towards a specific vision and goal. In the world of education, the principal is the central figure who holds the managerial function as well as leadership (Siregar, 2021).

School principals have a strategic role in directing school operations, developing human resources, and creating a conducive learning climate, where these functions include roles as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators. Therefore, school principals are not only required to understand leadership theory, but also be able to implement it in real life in educational institutional practice (Fitria, 2025). Management strategies in educational institutions are an important instrument in planning, controlling, and evaluating the organization's vision and mission to stay in line with educational goals, the success of which is greatly influenced by the managerial

competence of leaders in mobilizing all existing resources (Siregar & Putra, 2023).

However, in practice, the dynamics of educational organizations are inseparable from the emergence of conflicts. Conflicts can occur between teachers, students, education staff, parents, and school management as a result of differences in interests, differences of views, and misunderstandings in communication. Conflict is a social phenomenon that cannot be completely avoided in an organization, including schools, because of intensive interaction. In fact, the attachment between leaders and subordinates allows conflicts such as incompatibility of organizational goals, leadership styles, and policies (Rostini et al., 2023).

Although it is often perceived as a problem, conflict does not always have a negative impact. If managed properly, conflict can actually be a means of evaluation, improvement of work systems, improved communication, and a driver of organizational innovation (Suncaka, 2023). Therefore, conflict management is an important aspect in the sustainability of educational institutions because it functions to control differences in interests so as not to interfere with the effectiveness of work and the achievement of organizational goals. Conflict management is understood as a series of strategic efforts to steer disputes towards solutions that are constructive, productive, and oriented towards mutual agreement (Istiqomah et al., 2024).

In an Islamic perspective, conflicts and misunderstandings often stem from unclear information, miscommunication, or hasty judgment. The Qur'an emphasizes that every information received is clarified first before a decision is made, as Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala says in the Qur'an. Al-Hujurāt verse 6: *"O you who have believed, if a wicked person comes to you with important news, then examine the truth so that you do not harm a people because of (your) ignorance which causes you to regret your deeds"*. This verse commands the believers to perform *tabayyun* on every news that comes, so as not to cause regret due to mistakes in attitude. From the

above paragraph, it shows that conflict management in educational institutions requires prudence, wisdom, and appropriate leadership strategies so that conflicts that arise do not develop into bigger problems and harm various parties.

Educational leadership has a strategic role in resolving conflicts that arise in the school environment. The principal functions as a mediator who is able to identify the source of the conflict and develop a resolution strategy that is fair and does not harm one of the parties (Istiqomah et al., 2024). Various leadership styles, including democratic leadership styles that emphasize participation, open communication, and collaborative decision-making have been shown to have a significant influence on the success of conflict management because they encourage the involvement of all school residents and build collective trust (Rostini et al., 2023). However, ideal leadership not only emphasizes inclusivity and collaboration, but also demands adaptability and decisiveness in dealing with certain situations that require quick decisions. With proper conflict management, the principal is not only able to resolve conflicts effectively, but also builds a positive, inclusive, and productive school culture so that all school residents feel valued and motivated to achieve common goals.

A number of previous studies have shown that the principal's leadership strategy in conflict management is generally realized through effective communication, mediation, collaboration, empowerment of school residents, and continuous conflict evaluation. This strategy has been proven to be able to create a conducive school climate and maintain harmonious working relationships between school residents. However, most of the research was conducted in the context of public formal schools and has not specifically examined pesantren-based educational institutions that have different organizational characteristics, culture, and Islamic values. These differences in context show that there is a research gap or research gap related to how the principal's leadership strategy in managing conflicts in the pesantren environment.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the dynamics of conflict have their own peculiarities. Pesantren is a dormitory-based educational institution with intense interaction that lasts for 24 hours between leaders, *ustadz*, *ustadzah*, students, and administrators, which creates a greater potential for conflict than formal schools in general. Based on the results of initial observations at the Hayatuddiyar Islamic Boarding School in Pekanbaru, various forms of conflict were found that were internal and external. Internal conflicts include the problem of managing the emotions of some *of the musyrifah* in dealing with students, teacher discipline that is not optimal such as being late for attendance, and the dynamics of interaction between students which are triggered by misunderstandings and differences in character until they develop into quarrels. In addition, external conflicts have also occurred in the form of misunderstandings between the pesantren and the surrounding community regarding the ownership or use of land (land). The complexity of the conflict shows that Islamic boarding schools as dormitory-based educational institutions have more intense organizational dynamics than formal schools in general, so they require the right leadership strategy of the principal in managing conflicts constructively.

Based on these differences in context and challenges, this research is important to be carried out by focusing on the study of the principal's leadership strategy in conflict management at the Hayatuddiyar Islamic Boarding School in Pekanbaru. This research is focused on analyzing how the principal's leadership strategy in managing conflicts, as well as examining the factors that support and hinder the implementation of these strategies. In line with this focus, the purpose of this study is to describe the leadership strategy of school principals in conflict management as well as identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. Thus, this research is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the leadership practices of school principals in conflict

management in the pesantren environment, as well as contribute to the development of education management science and become a practical reference for Islamic boarding school institutions in optimizing leadership strategies and conflict management.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-evaluative design. This approach aims to describe in depth the phenomenon of principals' leadership in conflict management as well as evaluate the implementation of leadership strategies carried out in the Islamic boarding school environment. The qualitative approach focuses on understanding the meaning, process, and social dynamics that occur in the field through the interpretation of data in the form of narratives. In this study, the researcher plays the role of the main instrument that interacts directly with the research subject to explore social reality as a whole (Waruwu, 2023). This approach is considered appropriate because Islamic boarding schools have distinctive cultural characteristics and Islamic values, so it requires contextual understanding in assessing the leadership strategies applied.

This research was conducted at the Hayatuddiyar Islamic Boarding School on Jl. Dahlia, RT.004 RW.002 Kel. Tobek Godang, Bina Widya District, Panam, Pekanbaru-Riau. The time for this research will be carried out for 3 months. The researcher will collect the data needed to answer the problems in this study within that period. The informants in this study are parties who are considered to have relevant and in-depth information related to the principal's leadership strategy in conflict management at the Hayatuddiyar Islamic Boarding School Pekanbaru. The determination of informants was carried out by *purposive sampling*, which is based on certain considerations in accordance with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2023). The informants in this study included school principals, teachers, education staff, and 2 students.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through three methods, namely observation, interview, and documentation. Observation is used to directly observe the interactions and dynamics that take place in the Islamic boarding school environment, so that a real picture of leadership practices and conflict management is obtained. Interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, education staff, and students to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, views, and leadership strategies in managing conflicts. Meanwhile, documentation is used as a complement to the data through the review of various written documents, institutional policies, and other archives relevant to the research focus (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2023). The data analysis in this study uses a qualitative approach which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The data reduction process is carried out by selecting, grouping, and simplifying the data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, the data that has been reduced is presented systematically in the form of narrative descriptions to facilitate understanding of the patterns, relationships, and meanings that emerge. The final stage in the form of drawing conclusions is carried out on an ongoing basis through a verification process of research findings until valid and accountable conclusions are obtained (Sutikno, 2020).

The validity of the data in this study was tested through the source triangulation technique, namely by comparing data obtained from school principals, teachers, education staff (musyrifah), and students. The results of interviews from various informants showed that the information was consistent with the main findings of the research, such as communication strategies, deliberation, justice and conflict resolution. Meanwhile, some specific data was obtained from certain informants as a form of support in enriching the research results. Thus, the data obtained is declared valid and trustworthy.

DISCUSSION

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive-evaluative approach. Descriptively, this study aims to describe in depth the leadership strategy of the principal in conflict management at the Hayatuddiyar Islamic Boarding School Pekanbaru along with its supporting and inhibiting factors. Meanwhile, evocatively, this study provides an assessment of the extent to which the strategy is able to resolve conflicts constructively and its impact on the stability of school organizations.

Principal's Leadership Strategy in Conflict Management

The leadership of the principal at the Hayatuddiyar Islamic Boarding School in Pekanbaru in managing conflicts applies a systematic, communicative, and participatory approach. Based on findings in the field, the main strategy implemented is to strengthen open and proactive communication with all school components, ranging from teachers, education staff, to students. The principal emphasized that two-way communication is very important to unite the vision and mission, as well as listen to proposals and criticisms from below. This is evidenced by the existence of a weekly routine meeting agenda where teachers are given space to express their aspirations openly. Not only that, the principal also opened a space through personal channels to convey criticism and suggestions as well as report problems. In fact, the principal implements a policy of "normalizing mandatory complaints" for students so that every small problem can be detected immediately and does not accumulate into a psychological burden for children. This open communication is also supported digitally through the use of WhatsApp groups to ensure that information distribution and supervision coordination are maintained. The researcher evaluated that this openness is very effective in minimizing information bottlenecks that often trigger conflicts in the pesantren environment, and is able to create a more conducive atmosphere for mutual trust, in line with the opinion of Janah et al. (2025) regarding

the importance of effective communication to build trust among school residents.

In making decisions, the principal prioritizes a deliberation mechanism involving all stakeholders, such as section heads (*kabag*), teachers, homeroom teachers, and education staff (*musyrifah*). Based on the results of interviews with school principals and teachers, every major decision in the Islamic boarding school is not taken unilaterally, but through discussions to unite various points of view. For each problem, the principal will gather related parties to discuss the best solution options until a consensus is reached. This involvement, according to Janah et al. (2025) is able to encourage a sense of belonging and shared responsibility so as to minimize the potential for conflict due to unilateral decisions. If the conflict involves students, the principal applies a mechanism of delegation of authority to the relevant unit according to the SOP before being taken over by the principal. The principal gave full trust to the team that had been appointed to solve the problem at an early stage. In the process, the relevant parties will handle it in stages, including giving warnings to students. However, if the problem is not resolved after several warnings, then the handling will be taken over directly by the principal as a form of final responsibility of the leadership. This step reflects a structured school management team empowerment strategy to improve organizational effectiveness (Salim, 2025). The researcher considers that this participatory approach is a smart evaluative step to foster a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, so that every policy produced has strong legitimacy and minimal rejection from members of the organization.

The conflict resolution strategy at the *hayatuddiyar* Islamic boarding school also emphasizes the aspects of justice and neutrality through the mediation and *tabayyun* process. Based on the results of interviews with the principal and education staff, if there is a dispute or violation, the principal does not immediately impose a verdict, but traces the facts objectively through witnesses or examination of CCTV

footage. After the facts were discovered, the principal conducted a closed mediation, starting with summoning the warring parties separately for the Examination Report (BAP) process before meeting to forgive each other. The researcher evaluated that this strategy can be said to be effective because it is able to resolve conflicts fairly and maintain harmonious relationships, while ensuring that the decisions made by school principals are based on fair factual data. In addition, this approach is also able to prevent wider misunderstandings, as explained by Hikmah et. al (2025) regarding the importance of clarifying information in conflict resolution. In addition, based on the results of an interview with one of the education staff, the principal also directed the *musyrifah* to take a personal approach to the students by blending directly. This approach aims to understand the emotional condition and background of students' problems in more depth. Then, after the conflict is resolved, a post-conflict evaluation is carried out to ensure that the relationship between the parties has returned to good and prevent similar conflicts from occurring in the future. This evaluation also helps in identifying the root of the problem that has not been thoroughly resolved.

Furthermore, the conflict resolution strategy ends with moral coaching, providing direction (advice), providing educational sanctions, and *the islah* process. Based on the results of interviews with the principal, the moral development is directed at improving students' manners and behavior as the main foundation in daily life. Moral values are not only conveyed in certain activities, but are also integrated into the learning process, where advice and strengthening of manners are given on an ongoing basis. In addition, moral development also emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and love between students, such as building a harmonious relationship between seniors and seniors. Students are directed to respect each other, respect, and foster a sense of care for each other. In addition to moral coaching, the principal also provides follow-up directions according to the level of

violations committed by students. Based on the results of interviews with education staff, the handling of conflicts and violations is divided into several levels, namely light, medium, and severe. In minor violations, handling is still carried out by the *santri* and *musyri-fah* through the provision of advice and initial coaching. Meanwhile, in moderate violations, further monitoring is carried out to see the development of students' behavior before determining the next step. As for serious violations, handling will be delegated to the principal by involving related parties, including the possibility of summoning parents. In this condition, the direction given becomes more intensive and in-depth as a form of further coaching. The researcher considers that this approach shows a gradual and structured conflict handling system, so that each problem is handled according to its severity.

Then, educational sanctions are given, the sanctions given are not physical, but are directed at improving manners such as memorization of the Qur'an, memorization of hadith, or additional pickets. After the sanction is carried out, a good name restoration (*ishlah*) is carried out in front of other students to prevent bullying or negative labeling of the perpetrators of violations. This strategy is in line with the principal's leadership function to create a safe and inclusive learning environment (Suryana et al., 2022), and is based on the values of peace in QS. Al-Hujurāt verse 10. The researcher considers that this step is a form of humanist evaluation that is very appropriate for the Islamic educational environment, where the main focus is not just to punish actions, but to improve character (morals).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Conflict Management

Based on the results of the study, there are several factors that support and hinder the implementation of the principal's leadership strategy in conflict management at the Hayatuddiyar Pekanbaru Islamic Boarding School. These supporting factors include good cooperation between teachers, education staff,

students, and parents. Based on the results of interviews with education staff, the school routinely conveys information related to school regulations and programs to parents, especially at the beginning of the new school year through communication media such as WhatsApp groups. This is so that all parents, both new and old parents, understand the applicable rules and can support their implementation. In addition, schools also involve parents in the process of monitoring student development through activities such as filling out self-reflection sheets during the holiday period. Through the sheet, parents can find out their children's activities at home, such as worship activities, learning, and daily interactions. With this involvement, parents play a role in fostering and supervising children's behavior outside the school environment. Then, effective communication and quick response from the principal are also important factors in accelerating conflict resolution. In addition, based on the results of an interview with one of the students, the cooperative attitude of students who sincerely accept decisions (*iqob*) also accelerates the conflict resolution process. Researchers consider that these factors play a big role in creating organizational stability, where conflicts can be resolved quickly and do not develop into bigger problems. This is in line with the view of Suryana et al. (2022) that school progress is highly dependent on the ability of leaders to manage and mobilize all resources effectively.

However, there are also several inhibiting factors in the form of miscommunication triggered by personal closeness between staff that goes beyond the limits of professionalism. This phenomenon strengthens the theory of Nisa et al. (2024) that ineffective communication is the main trigger for conflict in organizations. In addition, the existence of protracted conflicts due to the neglect of problems that are not addressed immediately can be a time bomb that triggers a larger explosion of conflict. Other obstacles also include the closed character of the students and the existence of dishonesty during the mediation process, which according to Wardana et al. (2024)

hinder the acquisition of accurate information for constructive solutions. Finally, the influence of the external environment such as social media or movies brought by post-vacation students is a challenge in maintaining a positive school culture. The researcher evaluated that this inhibiting factor can reduce the effectiveness of the strategy that has been set if it is not handled appropriately. Therefore, preventive efforts are needed to minimize these obstacles, such as increasing supervision and fostering the character of students.

Thus, the success of conflict management in Islamic boarding schools is not only determined by the principal's leadership strategy, but also by the ability to maximize supporting factors and minimize existing inhibiting factors. This shows that the leadership strategy applied is not only effective in resolving conflicts, but also sustainable in maintaining the stability and harmony of the pesantren environment. The findings of this study were obtained consistently from various informants on the main aspect, and supported by specific information from certain informants, thus showing the suitability of data through triangulation of sources.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal's leadership strategy in conflict management at the Hayatuddiyar Pekanbaru Islamic Boarding School is carried out through a systematic, communicative, and participatory approach. The strategy includes strengthening two-way communication, consensus deliberation mechanisms in decision-making, and the implementation of mediation and tabayyun supported by factual data such as witnesses or CCTV footage to ensure objectivity. The researcher evaluated that the integration between administrative firmness (providing educational sanctions & moral development) and humanist approaches (personal approach, giving direction (advice) and islah) proved effective in restoring

the character of students and maintaining institutional harmony.

The success of conflict management is supported by cooperation between stakeholders, effective communication and cooperative attitudes from school residents. However, there are obstacles in the form of miscommunication due to personal closeness that is overshadowed by work professionalism, protracted conflicts, dishonesty, closed student character, and challenges of external influences. As an evaluative implication, it is recommended for leaders to continue to strengthen the boundaries of work professionalism and improve post-holiday supervision. Overall, the leadership strategy in this Islamic boarding school is not only oriented towards solving problems, but also on strengthening the moral values of karimah in accordance with the philosophical foundation of the Islamic boarding school.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fitria, D. (2025). Efektivitas Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Manajemen Konflik. *Journal Innovation in Education*, 3(1), 192-200. <https://doi.org/10.59841/inoved.v4i1.2218>
- Hikmah, N., Nofiyatus, S., Firman, H., & Mu'alimin. (2025). Strategi Efektif dalam Manajemen Konflik: Studi Kasus di Organisasi Modern. *Karakter: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, 2(1): 206–221. <https://doi.org/10.61132/karakter.v2i1.409>
- Istiqomah, F., U., Nurul, A., Lailatul, M., & Mu'alimin. (2024). Peran Kepemimpinan Dalam Menyelesaikan Konflik di Lingkungan Pendidikan. *Journal of International Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(12), 136–142.
- Janah, H., F., Adelia, A., F., Binti, A., M., Uswatun, K., Amira, R., & Tamrin, F. (2025). Strategi Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Manajemen Konflik di Lingkungan Pendidikan. *Al Mikraj: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora*, 5(2), 450-457.

- <https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v5i2.6287>
- Nisa, K., Camelia, S., & Mu'alimin, M. (2024). Literatur Review tentang Manajemen Konflik: Sumber, Gejala, dan Penyebab Konflik. *Jurnal Riset dan Inovasi Manajemen*, 2(4), 64-77. <https://doi.org/10.59581/jrimwidyakarya.v2i3.4185>
- Ratnaningtyas, E. M. & Ramli. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Aceh: Zaini.
- Rostini, D., Khalifaturramah, Sulaiman, & Norsyam, A. (2023). Efektivitas Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Manajemen Konflik. *Edukasia: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 4(1), 173–180.
- Salim, A. (2025). Strategi Kepala Sekolah dalam Mengelola Konflik Internal di Lembaga Pendidikan. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(3), 223-231.
- Siregar, J., S. (2021). Kepemimpinan dalam pendidikan islam. *Al-Fatih: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman*, IV(1), 30–44.
- Siregar, K., E., & Ali, M., S., P. (2023). Strategi Ali Musri Semjan Putra dalam Pengelolaan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Bermanhaj Salaf. *Invest: Jurnal Inovasi Bisnis dan Akuntansi*, 4(1), 12-25
- Suncaka, E. (2023). Manajemen Konflik di Sekolah. *Journal on Education*, 05(04), 15143–15153.
- Sugiyono. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Kombinasi, R&D dan Penelitian Pendidikan)*. Bandung: Alfabeta
- Sutikno, M. S. (2020). *Penelitian Kualitatif*. Lombok: Holistica.
- Suryana, C., & Sofyan, I. (2022). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Menerapkan Konsep Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 7317–7326.
- Wardana, A. K., Muhammad. F. R., & Suharyat, Y. (2024). Manajemen Konflik. *Nusra: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5(1), 95–102. <https://doi.org/10.55681/nusra.v5i1.1856>
- Waruwu, M. (2023). Pendekatan Penelitian Pendidikan: Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif dan Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Method). *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 7(1), 2896-2910.