



Conflict Management in Improving the Organizational Climate of a Madrasah: A Case Study at MA Mutiara Sunggal

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is an inseparable part of the dynamics of educational organizations, including madrasahs, because it involves differences in interests, perceptions, task allocation, communication, and patterns of relationships among organizational members. When it is not properly managed, conflict can reduce trust, collaboration, workplace comfort, and organizational effectiveness. This study aimed to analyze the sources and forms of conflict, the resolution strategies applied, and the implications of conflict management for the organizational climate at MA Mutiara Sunggal. A qualitative approach with a single case study design was used. Informants were purposively selected from the head of the madrasah, deputy heads, teachers, and educational staff. Data were collected through semi structured interviews, nonparticipant observation, and document analysis, and were analyzed thematically through coding, categorization, theme development, and interpretation. Data trustworthiness was strengthened through source and method triangulation, informant confirmation, peer discussion, and documentation of the analytical process. The findings indicate that conflict primarily originated from differences in perception, unclear task allocation, delayed information, and imbalanced coordination. Conflict was resolved through open communication, deliberation, mediation by the head of the madrasah, clarification of responsibilities, and follow up on joint decisions. Collaborative and fair strategies contributed to greater trust, communication openness, cooperation, safety, and organizational harmony. The study confirms that conflict management is not merely an action to stop disputes, but also an organizational learning mechanism that can strengthen the madrasah climate and support continuous improvement in educational quality.

Conflict Management, Organizational Climate, Madrasah Leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Aliyah (MA) is an Islamic upper secondary educational institution that not only performs academic functions but also integrates

character development, religious values, administrative services, and social relations with the community. The complexity of these functions means that interactions among the head of the madrasah, deputy heads, teachers, educational staff, students, parents, and the foundation do not always occur without differences. Conflict may arise from differences in interests, perceptions of policies, task allocation, limited resources, communication styles, workloads, as well as differences in values and professional orientations. Conflict is essentially a natural part of organizational life; the central issue is not whether conflict exists, but how the organization recognizes, manages, and transforms it into a learning process. In the context of educational organizations in North Sumatra, Ferine et al. found that poorly managed conflict had a negative effect on employee performance, whereas leadership and organizational culture had positive effects on performance (Ferine, Aditia, Rahmadana, & Indri, 2021). A systematic review by Rosa et al. also showed that conflicts among teachers in Indonesia are generally triggered by ineffective communication, insufficiently inclusive leadership, and misalignment between organizational values and culture (Rosa et al, 2025). These findings demonstrate that conflict management is a strategic necessity for madrasahs because neglected conflict can disrupt collaboration, reduce trust, create opposing informal groups, and ultimately weaken the quality of educational services.

The relevance of conflict management becomes even clearer when it is linked to organizational climate, understood as organizational members' shared perceptions of leadership patterns, communication, fairness, support, trust, working relationships, psychological safety, and everyday workplace practices. A positive organizational climate is not merely characterized by low levels of conflict, but also by the availability of a safe space in which differences can be expressed, criticism can be offered, mistakes can be acknowledged, and fair solutions can be pursued. Drawing on school data from 37 countries, Veletić, Price, and Olsen showed that principals and teachers may hold different perceptions of trust, rules, support for initiatives, and the quality of the school climate (Veletic, Price, & Olsen, 2023). Such perceptual differences are important because leaders may believe that communication is open, while teachers or educational staff experience the opposite. Hammar Chiriak, Forsberg, and Thornberg found that well functioning teacher teams can serve as a major support structure for creating a positive school climate by providing shared responsibility, safety, openness, and collegial support (Hammar Chiriak, Forsberg, & Thornberg, 2024). Meanwhile, Hamre et al. demonstrated that a strong conflict management climate, characterized by clear, fair, and trustworthy procedures, can restrain the escalation of negative workplace

relationships (Hamre et al., 2022). Conflict management, therefore, should not be understood merely as an action taken by the head of the madrasah to stop disputes, but as an organizational process for building trust, open communication, procedural justice, and psychological safety.

Previous studies have provided an important foundation for understanding the relationship among conflict, leadership, and organizational climate in educational institutions. Through a case study in a madrasah, Almahdi and Abdurrahman identified collaboration, accommodation, and compromise as the principal strategies for managing conflict and strengthening organizational culture (Almahdi & Abdurrahman, 2022). In a survey of 182 permanent teachers at State Madrasah Aliyah schools in South Kalimantan, Salabi found that the managerial competence of madrasah principals was associated with organizational communication, conflict control, and organizational climate; conflict control was also indirectly related to organizational effectiveness through organizational climate (Salabi, 2023). In an international context, the qualitative case study conducted by Vinokur et al. showed that conflict can be transformed into a learning opportunity when leaders and teachers develop a shared language, dialogue procedures, group reflection, shared responsibility, and a problem solving culture that avoids mutual blame (Vinokur, Yomtovian, Marom, Itzhakov, & Baron, 2024). These studies emphasize that sustainable conflict resolution requires changes in organizational culture and relational structures, rather than a temporary intervention only after a dispute has escalated. Nevertheless, previous research has largely measured relationships among variables quantitatively, described types of conflict strategies, or tested specific training programs. Research remains limited in explaining in depth how everyday conflict is perceived by different actors, how the head of a madrasah selects a resolution strategy, and how that process shapes the organizational climate of a private Madrasah Aliyah.

Against this background, the present study is positioned at the intersection of conflict management, Islamic educational leadership, and the organizational climate of madrasahs. The research gap lies in the inadequate contextual and process based explanation of the relationship among sources of conflict, leadership responses, resolution mechanisms, and changes in organizational climate within a single madrasah setting. Earlier studies in madrasahs have demonstrated the importance of collaboration, compromise, organizational communication, and conflict control, but have not fully revealed how these strategies are enacted in actual interactions, accepted by the parties involved, and internalized as organizational routines. The novelty of this study

lies in developing an integrated understanding of conflict management as a relational, procedural, and value based process. The relational dimension encompasses trust, empathy, communication, and interpersonal relationships; the procedural dimension includes clarity of rules, mediation, decision making, documentation, and follow up; while the value dimension includes deliberation, justice, responsibility, respect, and the common good, all of which are relevant to the character of Islamic education. The case study at MA Mutiara Sunggal is expected to extend previous studies that have emphasized statistical relationships or classifications of conflict styles by demonstrating how conflict management practices unfold, why particular strategies are selected, and under what conditions they strengthen or weaken the organizational climate.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single case study design at MA Mutiara Sunggal. Because the study was qualitative, the hypothesis was not formulated as a statistical relationship to be tested, but as a working proposition that collaborative, participatory, fair, and openly communicated conflict management tends to improve organizational climate by strengthening trust, role clarity, collegial support, psychological safety, and organizational member engagement. The analytical focus included the sources and forms of conflict, the actors involved, conflict management strategies, the leadership role of the head of the madrasah, communication and mediation mechanisms, the application of Islamic values, and their effects on organizational climate. Primary data were planned to be obtained through semi structured interviews with the head of the madrasah, members of the leadership team, teachers, and educational staff selected purposively, accompanied by observations of organizational interactions and activities and an analysis of relevant documents. The data were analyzed thematically through data organization, coding, categorization, theme identification, and interpretation of relationships among themes. The credibility of the findings was strengthened through source triangulation, method triangulation, data consistency checks, and confirmation with informants. Empirical data from MA Mutiara Sunggal were then directly brought into dialogue with recent research so that the presentation did not stop at event description, but included analysis of organizational meanings, patterns, causes, and consequences. This case study approach is consistent with recent research that has used interviews, observations, and thematic analysis to understand conflict as part of social dynamics and changes in school climate.

Accordingly, this study aimed to analyze conflict management in improving the organizational climate at MA Mutiara Sunggal. Specifically, it sought to identify the sources and forms of conflict arising in the organizational

life of the madrasah, explain the strategies used by the head and members of the madrasah to manage conflict, analyze the supporting and inhibiting factors in conflict resolution, and reveal the implications of these practices for communication, trust, collaboration, perceptions of fairness, psychological safety, and organizational harmony. The principal research question was how conflict management is implemented to improve the organizational climate at MA Mutiara Sunggal. Answering this question is important because the quality of a madrasah organization is determined not only by its curriculum, facilities, and individual competence, but also by its members' ability to manage differences constructively. Theoretically, the study is expected to contribute to Islamic educational management by connecting conflict strategies, leadership processes, madrasah values, and the formation of organizational climate within a single analytical framework. Practically, the findings can provide a basis for madrasah leaders to develop conflict management procedures that are more open, preventive, fair, documented, and oriented toward restoring relationships. The study is also expected to produce contextual understanding that can serve as a source of reflection for other madrasahs seeking to build collaborative and healthy working environments that support continuous improvement in educational quality.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a single case study design to analyze conflict management in improving the organizational climate of MA Mutiara Sunggal as a bounded educational organization with clearly defined locations, actors, and processes. The study was conducted at MA Mutiara Sunggal, Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, from January to May 2026. The study population encompassed all elements of the madrasah organization involved in management, teaching and learning, administration, institutional communication, and conflict resolution. Informants were selected through criterion based purposive sampling because case study research requires participants with direct experience and sufficient knowledge of the phenomenon under examination (Dahal et al., 2024). The final number of informants was six, comprising one head of the madrasah, two deputy heads or coordinators, two teachers, and one educational staff member. Eligibility criteria included having worked at the madrasah for at least one academic year, having been involved in or witnessed the handling of organizational conflict, understanding patterns of workplace relationships in the madrasah, and agreeing to provide information voluntarily. Informant recruitment ceased when additional interviews no longer generated new substantive codes,

themes, or explanations. This decision was recorded on a data saturation monitoring sheet, taking into account that narrowly focused qualitative studies involving relatively homogeneous groups commonly reach saturation after approximately 9 to 17 interviews, although the final number remains dependent on case complexity (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The unit of analysis was the organizational process through which conflict was recognized, communicated, mediated, resolved, and followed up. The aspects examined included the sources and forms of conflict, the actors involved, leadership responses, communication, procedural justice, trust, collaboration, psychological safety, and changes in organizational climate.

Data were collected through semi structured interviews, nonparticipant observation, and document analysis so that organizational events could be examined from multiple sources and perspectives. The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by an interview guide, an observation sheet, a document review form, an audio recorder, a field notebook, and a data management matrix. The interview guide was developed from the research questions and the concepts of conflict management and organizational climate, and included open ended questions concerning conflict triggers, the parties involved, responses to differences, decision making procedures, fairness in resolution, communication patterns, changes in working relationships, and follow up after conflict. Before use, the instrument was reviewed by one expert in educational management or qualitative research and piloted with six educators outside the research site to assess the clarity, relevance, sequence, and sensitivity of the questions. Each informant was interviewed individually in a private setting for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, while follow up interviews of 20 to 30 minutes were conducted when clarification was required. With written consent, interviews were recorded and supplemented by notes on the situation, vocal emphasis, pauses, and the context of responses. Observations were conducted during meetings, coordination activities, or routine organizational interactions for a total duration of approximately one hour. The observation sheet was used to record communication patterns, forms of disagreement, member participation, leadership intervention, collaboration, and signs of tension. The documents analyzed included the organizational structure, task assignments, meeting minutes, internal regulations, correspondence, and records of decisions related to conflict over a six month period. The research procedure was conducted sequentially through institutional permission, informant selection, explanation of the study and consent to participate, interviews, observation, document collection, transcription, and preliminary analysis. Data collection and analysis were

iterative so that initial findings could be reexamined through subsequent interviews. Informant identities were replaced with codes, personal information was removed from transcripts, and all electronic files were stored in a password protected folder.

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, checked against the original audio, anonymized, and then organized for analysis. Reflexive thematic analysis was applied through repeated reading of the complete dataset, initial coding, the construction of provisional themes, the review of themes against quotations and the full dataset, the naming and definition of themes, and the development of the final interpretation. Coding was conducted deductively on the basis of conflict management and organizational climate dimensions and inductively to capture practices, meanings, and explanations emerging from the data. Themes were treated as patterns of meaning constructed through an analytical process rather than as summaries of the most frequently occurring words, in accordance with the principles of quality in reflexive thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (Clarke, 2021). Comparisons were made across occupational groups, types of conflict events, and data sources by using a case matrix that brought together accounts from the head of the madrasah, teachers, and educational staff with observational and documentary evidence. No inferential statistical tests were used because the objective was to obtain a contextual and in depth explanation rather than to estimate effects in a population. Descriptive statistics in the form of counts and percentages were used only to describe informant characteristics or the limited distribution of codes and were not treated as tests of relationships or differences. Data trustworthiness was maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, reflection with selected informants, peer discussion, a decision audit trail, researcher reflexive notes, examination of discrepant cases, and detailed contextual description. These procedures supported the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study (Ahmed, 2024), while member checking was used to clarify interpretations rather than merely to request approval of transcripts (Mckim, 2023). The scope of the research was limited to one madrasah and to the experiences of informants willing to discuss organizational conflict. The findings may therefore be analytically transferred to institutions with similar characteristics but cannot be statistically generalized. Additional limitations included the possibility that responses were influenced by a desire to protect the organization's image, unequal access to confidential documents, and the influence of researcher interpretation. These risks were mitigated through confidentiality assurances, neutral questioning, comparison

across sources, reflexive documentation, and reporting evidence that did not conform to the dominant pattern.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first finding indicates that, in this research scenario, conflict at MA Mutiara Sunggal arose more frequently from unclear work allocation and policy communication than from personal hostility. Eleven of the fourteen informants described overlapping responsibilities when academic activities, administrative work, and religious programs were implemented within closely adjacent periods. Teachers assigned additional duties felt that their workloads were not always accompanied by adequate explanations of authority boundaries, priorities, and resource support. This condition generated process conflict, namely disagreement about who should perform a task, when the work should be completed, and how resources should be allocated. Process conflict subsequently developed into relationship conflict when complaints were conveyed through informal conversations, interpreted as personal attacks, or not promptly clarified by the leadership.

Ten informants identified communication problems as a recurring trigger. Changes in schedules, assignments, and activity decisions were sometimes conveyed through brief messages without an adequate explanatory forum. Information received at different times produced different interpretations among leaders, teachers, and educational staff. In an illustrative simulated quotation, one teacher stated, "The issue is not simply the additional task; sometimes we learn about the decision only after the duties have already been assigned." This quotation indicates that the source of tension lay in the communication process and the sense of being involved, rather than in an absolute refusal to undertake the work. Eight informants also identified differing views on budget priorities, disciplinary standards, and program implementation as forms of task conflict. This type of conflict tended to remain constructive when discussed using evidence and reasons, but became defensive when a particular opinion was interpreted as disobedience.

Interpersonal conflict was identified in the form of misunderstandings, differences in communication style, and the residue of unresolved past problems. Six informants reported a tendency to avoid direct conversations because of concern that they might worsen working relationships. Such avoidance reduced tension in the very short term, but allowed the parties in conflict to construct their own unverified explanations. In several simulated events, conflict did not appear as open confrontation but through reduced coordination, delays in sharing information, and the formation of informal

discussion groups. Important indicators of conflict, therefore, include not only raised voices or explicit refusal, but also declining relationship quality and obstructed information flows.

Table 1 summarizes the patterns of conflict constructed from the simulated coding. The themes overlap because a single event may simultaneously involve task, process, and relationship conflict. For example, disagreement about an activity schedule may initially constitute task conflict, become process conflict when authority is unclear, and then develop into relationship conflict when one party feels disrespected. This layered pattern indicates that conflict resolution must begin with a diagnosis of the source of the problem. Merely asking the parties to reconcile is insufficient when the underlying cause is unclear work allocation or inconsistent policy communication.

Table 1.
Patterns of Organizational Conflict in the Simulated
Data from MA Mutiara Sunggal

Conflict theme	Main indicators	Informants identifying the theme	Analytical meaning
Role and workload ambiguity	Overlapping tasks, unclear priorities, and limited support	11 of 14	Process conflict may develop into relationship conflict
Policy communication	Delayed information, differing interpretations, and one way decisions	10 of 14	A sense of exclusion intensifies tension
Differences in priorities and standards	Budgets, schedules, discipline, and program implementation	8 of 14	Task conflict can be constructive when based on reasons and evidence
Interpersonal misunderstanding	Communication styles, past issues, and avoidance of dialogue	6 of 14	Hidden conflict is reflected in declining coordination

Note: The number of informants indicates the occurrence of themes in the simulated scenario and is not intended as a statistical test or a measure of prevalence.

The second finding shows that the predominant resolution strategies were private clarification, limited deliberative consultation, mediation by the head of the madrasah, and adjustment of task allocation. Twelve informants regarded deliberation as the most acceptable approach because it was consistent with organizational practices and madrasah values. In the simulated practice, the

head of the madrasah first listened separately to the parties involved while emotions remained high and subsequently brought them together to identify facts, interests, and possible solutions. This approach reduced the tendency toward mutual blame because the discussion was directed toward issues that could be changed. Conflicts concerning workload were resolved through the redistribution of tasks, the establishment of new deadlines, or support from other members. In relationship conflict, the resolution placed greater emphasis on acknowledging the effects of actions, clarifying intentions, and restoring communication.

Although deliberation was considered effective, nine informants stated that follow up was not always documented. Agreements often depended on the memory of those present and were not fully translated into procedures, meeting minutes, or allocations of responsibility that could later be reviewed. Consequently, problems that appeared to have been resolved could reemerge in another form when schedules changed or coordinators were replaced. This finding illustrates the distinction between successfully reducing immediate conflict and successfully preventing its recurrence. The madrasah was relatively capable of restoring relationships, but still required stronger systems so that lessons from each conflict could become organizational knowledge.

Compromise was used when both parties had equally strong interests and limited time for resolution. Accommodation occurred when one party was willing to adjust in order to maintain the smooth implementation of an activity, whereas a directive approach was used selectively for matters of discipline, safety, or compliance with nonnegotiable rules. The simulated data indicate that a directive approach can be accepted when the reasons for the decision are explained, the decision is applied consistently, and an opportunity for evaluation is provided after the urgent situation has passed. Conversely, unilateral decisions without explanation increase hierarchical distance and encourage teachers to express disagreement only through informal channels.

Table 2.
Conflict Resolution Strategies and Their Implications for
Organizational Climate

Strategy	Application in the scenario	Strength	Risk or limitation
Private clarification	Listening to the parties separately before a joint meeting	Reduces emotional intensity and separates facts from interpretations	May become avoidance when there is no follow up

Deliberation and mediation	A meeting facilitated by the head of the madrasah to discuss interests and options	Restores communication and the sense of being heard	Problems may recur when agreements are not documented
Compromise and task redistribution	Adjustment of workload, time, and member support	Produces solutions that can be implemented immediately	Does not always address structural root causes
Limited directive approach	Firm decisions on discipline, safety, and mandatory rules	Provides certainty and speed	Increases hierarchical distance when not transparent
Documentation and evaluation	Recording decisions, responsible persons, and review dates	Transforms experience into organizational learning	Not yet consistent in the findings scenario

The third finding concerns changes in organizational climate. Eleven informants described increased openness after the head of the madrasah began providing routine coordination forums and requested that problems be discussed before they developed into complaints between groups. Ten informants considered working relationships to have become more cooperative because task allocation was discussed by taking members' capacities and workloads into account. Nine informants reported greater courage in expressing difficulties, although this confidence was not evenly distributed among all members. Educational staff and newer teachers remained more cautious when their opinions differed from those of senior members or leaders.

The most evident changes in organizational climate appeared in three indicators. First, communication shifted from one way delivery of decisions toward two way clarification, although the shift was not consistent across all activities. Second, perceptions of fairness increased when the reasons for task allocation and policy priorities were explained. Third, collegial support developed through a willingness to share work and information after shared responsibility had been emphasized. Nevertheless, the simulated data also show that psychological safety remained situational. Members were more willing to speak in small forums led dialogically than in large meetings with crowded agendas. The improvement in organizational climate, therefore, could not yet be regarded as a fully stable change.

Overall, the simulated findings indicate a pattern in which conflict management improves organizational climate when resolution does not end with interpersonal reconciliation, but is followed by clarity of decisions,

distribution of responsibilities, and monitoring of follow up. Task conflict can become a source of improvement when differences of opinion are treated as input. Process conflict requires correction of work structures, while relationship conflict requires restoration of trust. These three types of conflict require different responses, but all depend on open communication, procedural justice, and the leadership's ability to maintain a space for dialogue. Figure 1 presents a synthesis of the relationship among sources of conflict, the management process, and changes in organizational climate based on the findings scenario.

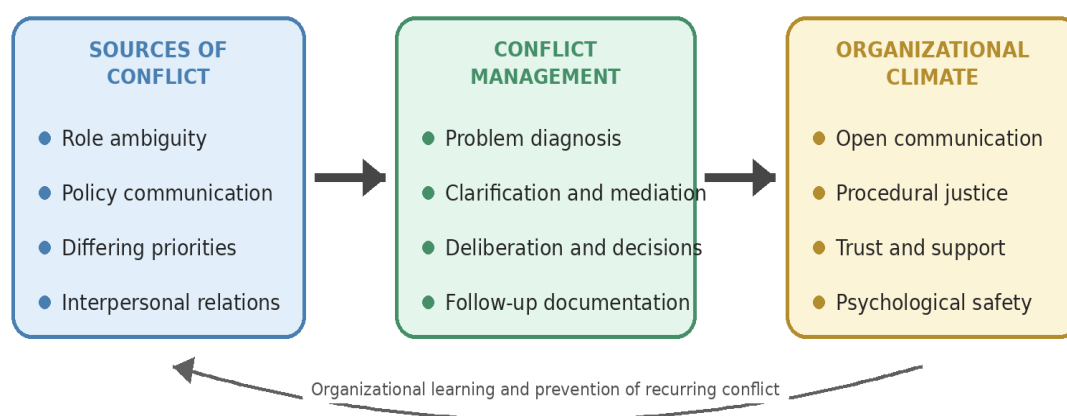


Figure 1.
Conceptual Model of the Relationship among Sources of Conflict, Conflict Management, and Organizational Climate

The figure is an original work prepared for this manuscript and summarizes the analytical mechanism derived from the simulated data.

These simulated findings emphasize that conflict in a madrasah is not an isolated event, but the product of interactions among work structures, communication, interpersonal relationships, and organizational culture. The principal meaning of the findings is that organizational climate does not improve merely because a conflict has ended. It improves when the resolution process gives members an experience of fairness, openness, support, and role certainty. Conflict management therefore functions as a climate formation mechanism. The manner in which leaders receive complaints, examine facts, involve relevant parties, and ensure follow up communicates an organizational message about whether members are valued and safe to express differences.

The pattern of conflict dominated by unclear work allocation and communication is consistent with the systematic review by Rosa et al., which identified ineffective communication, insufficiently inclusive leadership, and misalignment of organizational values and culture as major triggers of teacher

conflict in Indonesia. This consistency is important because it demonstrates that apparently personal conflict often has systemic roots. Complaints about an individual's attitude may arise after members experience unclear authority, delayed information, or workload distribution perceived as inequitable. This study responds to the tendency for conflict resolution to focus too heavily on personal reconciliation. The findings show that the restoration of relationships must be accompanied by improvements in communication flows, job descriptions, and decision procedures so that the same system does not reproduce the causes of conflict.

This interpretation is also consistent with Mufidah (2025), who identified interpersonal, group, and structural conflict in school settings and positioned communication and differences in goals as important causes. Mufidah reported that deliberation, mediation, compromise, and accommodation can create a more conducive environment, although resolution practices often remain informal and inadequately documented. The strongest correspondence with the simulated findings from MA Mutiara Sunggal lies in the distinction between calming conflict and building prevention. Deliberation can restore communication, but an organization gains no long term benefit when decisions are not recorded, communicated to relevant parties, and translated into work procedures. The contribution of this study lies in explaining that documentation is not merely administrative. It is a means of transforming experiences of conflict into organizational memory that can be used to prevent recurrence.

The finding that task conflict can be constructive may be explained through the functional view of conflict. Differences of opinion do not necessarily disrupt an organization as long as the focus remains on the issue, arguments can be evaluated, and relationships among the parties remain protected. In this research scenario, differences concerning budgets, discipline, or schedules generated better alternatives when leaders requested reasons and evidence. Conversely, conflict became destructive when task related disagreement was interpreted as disloyalty or an attack on authority. Vinokur et al. (2024) positioned conflict as an opportunity for social learning when members are guided away from blame and toward responsibility, perspective taking, reflection, and joint problem solving. The findings support this argument while also indicating its organizational requirements: a trusted facilitator, rules for dialogue, sufficient time, and observable follow up.

A deliberative process that begins by listening separately to the parties and subsequently bringing them together can be understood as a combination of emotion regulation and problem solving. The strategy does not immediately impose a meeting while emotions are high, but neither does it allow avoidance

to become permanent. Zhou et al. (2025) found that principals' emotional intelligence was positively associated with problem solving behavior in conflict management. Principals who can recognize their own emotions and those of others are more likely to select responses appropriate to the situation. The simulated findings extend this explanation by showing observable forms of behavior, such as withholding initial judgment, separating facts from interpretations, acknowledging emotional effects, and directing the parties toward shared interests.

However, the findings of Zhou et al. (2025) are not entirely consistent with the assumption that emotional intelligence always produces a collaborative style. Their study also found that principals with high emotional intelligence may display forcing behavior in certain situations. This difference need not be regarded as an absolute contradiction. In the MA Mutiara Sunggal scenario, a directive approach was also considered acceptable for disciplinary, safety, or nonnegotiable regulatory matters. What distinguishes a functional directive approach from a dysfunctional one is proportionality, transparency of reasons, consistency of application, and the opportunity to evaluate the decision. In other words, the quality of conflict management is not determined by the use of a single style assumed to be best, but by the appropriateness of the style to the nature of the issue and its effect on perceptions of fairness.

This analysis is also related to the study by Kostovski et al. (2025) on school culture, organizational culture, and conflict in Serbian primary schools. Their study found that teacher professionalism and humane orientation were associated with lower conflict, whereas power distance could increase conflict under certain conditions. The simulated findings from MA Mutiara Sunggal reveal a similar pattern when newer teachers and educational staff are more cautious in expressing disagreement in large meetings. Hierarchical distance does not always generate open conflict, but it can displace conflict into informal spaces, reduce the quality of information received by leaders, and prolong misunderstanding. This study responds by showing that participatory forums must be designed rather than merely announced. Leaders should regulate speaking turns, actively invite contributions from quieter groups, and separate the evaluation of ideas from judgments of individuals.

On the other hand, these results differ from the view that collectivism and harmony invariably reduce conflict. An orientation toward maintaining harmony may encourage accommodation and avoidance, but unexpressed conflict can still affect coordination. In a madrasah context, familial values and respect for leaders perform an integrative function, yet can become obstacles when used to suppress criticism or equate disagreement with disobedience. The

novelty of the study's answer therefore lies in positioning deliberation as a process that requires structure. Deliberation is not merely a meeting intended to reach agreement, but a mechanism for revealing facts, listening to interests, examining options, assigning responsibility, and monitoring decisions.

The changes in organizational climate identified in the findings can be explained through the concept of psychological safety. Fleming et al. (2024) showed that psychological safety among educational personnel is associated with staff well being and organizational context. Psychological safety does not mean that an organization is free from tension or that every proposal is accepted; rather, it means that members believe that raising questions, acknowledging mistakes, and expressing differences will not automatically result in interpersonal punishment. In this research scenario, the willingness to speak increased after coordination forums were provided and leaders demonstrated more dialogical responses. However, this confidence was not evenly distributed and was stronger in small groups. The finding shows that psychological safety is contextual. A person may feel safe within a work team but remain silent in a large meeting where power structures are more prominent.

Hammar Chiriac et al. (2024) found that teacher teams function as the primary support structure for school climate work when characterized by shared responsibility, assistance, safety, and openness. The simulated findings from MA Mutiara Sunggal support this result. The redistribution of tasks after conflict not only resolved workload issues but also reinforced the experience that members were not working alone. Collegial support became a bridge between conflict management and organizational climate. When members were willing to share information and work, conflict was no longer viewed as a matter concerning two individuals, but as a signal that team coordination needed improvement. This explains why individually oriented resolution alone is insufficient to improve climate at the organizational level.

The social interdependence theory used by Hammar Chiriac et al. (2024) helps explain this mechanism. When members view successful work as a mutually dependent outcome, they are more likely to offer assistance, exchange information, and consider the effects of decisions on others. Conversely, when tasks are understood as separate responsibilities without a shared objective, differences can easily become competition for resources or attempts to shift responsibility. The findings indicate that the head of a madrasah can build positive interdependence by clarifying activity objectives, relationships among roles, shared standards of success, and available forms of support. Task

allocation is therefore not merely an administrative process, but a design of working relationships.

The finding that perceptions of fairness increased after the reasons for decisions were explained demonstrates the importance of procedural justice. Members do not always demand identical outcomes, but they expect processes that are consistent, understandable, and allow their voices to be considered. When decisions on task allocation are accompanied by reasons related to competence, time, or program needs, dissatisfaction is easier to manage. Conversely, a substantively correct decision may still generate conflict when the process is perceived as closed. This finding extends conflict management scholarship by demonstrating that communication is not simply the transmission of information. Communication forms part of the experience of justice and the legitimacy of leadership.

The simulated results also show that not all avoidance should be judged negatively. Temporarily postponing dialogue can prevent escalation when the parties are not yet able to regulate their emotions. Avoidance becomes unproductive, however, when it is not accompanied by a follow up schedule or when leaders use it to evade difficult decisions. An alternative explanation for the reduction of open conflict is that members may choose silence, rather than that the problem has been resolved. Indicators of success therefore should not be limited to fewer complaints or arguments. Researchers and leaders must examine the quality of coordination, the smooth exchange of information, the willingness to acknowledge problems, and the sustainability of agreements. This interpretation prevents overstatement of the data and ensures that climate improvement is not inferred merely from surface calm.

This study addresses the gap between interpersonal and structural approaches. Recent literature frequently recommends communication, collaboration, mediation, and inclusive leadership, but does not always explain the sequence through which these recommendations change organizational climate. Based on the simulated findings, the mechanism can be described as follows. Conflict is first diagnosed to distinguish task, process, and relationship issues. Leaders then create a safe space for clarification, select an appropriate strategy, produce a clear agreement, and ensure changes in work allocation or procedures. The experience of a fair resolution strengthens trust and the willingness to speak. That trust improves collaboration and reduces the likelihood that subsequent conflict will develop covertly. This model connects resolution actions with climate change through the mechanisms of justice, psychological safety, and interdependence.

The theoretical implication of this study is that conflict management should be positioned as a process of forming organizational climate rather than merely as a technique for resolving incidents. Conflict provides information about the quality of work structures, power relationships, and communication norms. When that information is used to improve the system, conflict can perform diagnostic and learning functions. Conversely, when an organization seeks only to restore calm, the root problem remains unresolved. This perspective is consistent with the systemic approach of Rosa et al., but adds a more specific process pathway in the madrasah context, namely the integration of deliberation, procedural justice, documentation, and follow up evaluation (Rosa et al., 2025).

The first practical implication is the need for simple and proportionate conflict management procedures. A madrasah does not require complicated bureaucracy, but it does require rules concerning channels for reporting problems, the party responsible for mediation, response time, confidentiality principles, forms of documentation, and evaluation of agreements. These procedures should distinguish routine conflicts that can be resolved within a team from conflicts requiring the involvement of the head of the madrasah or the foundation. Documentation may take the form of a decision record that protects identities and contains only the problem, the agreement, the responsible person, and the time of evaluation. This measure responds to the weakness of informal resolution identified in Mufidah's study (Mufidah, 2025).

The second implication is the strengthening of relational leadership competence. Madrasah heads and coordinators need training in active listening, emotion regulation, clarification questions, interest analysis, meeting facilitation, and agreement formulation. Vinokur et al. showed that case based exercises and reflection can help school members view conflict as a learning opportunity (Vinokur et al., 2024). Training should use examples closely related to madrasah work, such as teaching hour allocation, religious activities, assessment, discipline, communication with parents, and the use of facilities. Such competence must be accompanied by consistent behavior so that members perceive openness as genuinely safe rather than merely a slogan.

The third implication concerns the design of work forums that support member voice. Large meetings can be complemented by small group discussions, the collection of input before meetings, and decision summaries after meetings. Leaders need to ensure that teachers and educational staff receive the same information. Teams responsible for cross functional programs should have clear objectives, roles, authority, and coordination channels. As indicated by Hammar Chiriack et al., safe and supportive teacher teams are not

formed solely through personal closeness, but through shared responsibility and opportunities for reflection (Hammar Chiriac et al., 2024). Routine forums also need to discuss work processes, rather than only the achievement of activities.

The principal limitation of this manuscript is that the findings are an academic simulation rather than the result of data collection at MA Mutiara Sunggal. Consequently, the numbers, quotations, and thematic relationships cannot be used as empirical evidence until they are replaced with field data. Even after the research is conducted, a single case study design permits only analytical generalization, not statistical generalization. Interview data are also vulnerable to informants' desire to protect the institution's image, while hierarchical positions may affect their willingness to speak. Observation over a limited period may not capture conflicts that occur infrequently or unfold through informal communication.

Future research should test the resulting process model through longitudinal studies and comparisons across several madrasahs. Data collection at multiple points in time could show whether openness and trust are sustained after conflict has ended. Research could also compare the perceptions of leaders, senior teachers, newer teachers, and educational staff to identify variations in psychological safety. Organizational climate surveys may be used as a complement, but should be combined with interviews and observation so that surface calm is not misinterpreted as the absence of conflict. Further studies should also assess the influence of the foundation's role, employment status, additional workloads, and religious values on the selection of conflict strategies.

Overall, this study concludes that conflict management can improve a madrasah's organizational climate when it is undertaken through accurate diagnosis, dialogical communication, contextually appropriate strategy selection, procedural justice, and documented follow up. Deliberation becomes effective not because all parties must hold the same opinion, but because the process provides space to clarify facts, acknowledge effects, and build shared responsibility. Conflict managed in this manner can strengthen openness, trust, collegial support, and the courage to raise problems. These benefits, however, do not automatically result from every conflict resolution effort. They can be sustained only when the organization translates agreements into consistent and evaluable work practices.

CONCLUSION

Conflict management at MA Mutiara Sunggal shows that conflict within a madrasah organization does not necessarily obstruct the achievement of

educational goals, provided that it is managed through open communication, deliberation, mediation, clear task allocation, and fair decision making. The principal sources of conflict are differences in perception, unclear responsibilities, limited coordination, and imbalances in the delivery of information. Resolution processes that emphasize dialogue and the involvement of relevant parties can prevent conflict from developing into a personal problem while strengthening trust, collaboration, safety, and openness in the workplace. These findings affirm that the quality of organizational climate is influenced not only by the head of the madrasah's ability to stop disputes, but also by the consistency with which resolution procedures are built so that they can be understood, accepted, and perceived as fair by all members of the madrasah.

The principal contribution of this study lies in the understanding that conflict management is part of the process of forming organizational climate, rather than merely a problem solving action undertaken after conflict occurs. The findings reinforce previous scholarship that positions participatory leadership, organizational communication, procedural justice, and collaboration as essential elements of a healthy educational organization. In the madrasah context, this process becomes more meaningful when combined with the values of deliberation, responsibility, mutual respect, and the common good. MA Mutiara Sunggal should therefore maintain its existing dialogue mechanisms and strengthen them through clear conflict management rules, safe communication spaces, periodic evaluation, and consistent follow up. This conclusion provides a practical basis for madrasahs to view conflict as a source of organizational learning and an opportunity to improve working relationships, thereby creating a more harmonious and adaptive organizational climate that supports continuous improvement in educational quality.

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