E-ISSN: 3025-3012

Volume 3 Number 2, December 2025, page 114-125

Doi: 10.60046/joeri.v3i2.222

https://ejournal.stiab-jinarakkhita.ac.id/index.php/joeri



# Integrating Islamic Leadership Values in School Conflict Management: Insights from Indonesian Secondary Education

Indah Septiani Dwi Puji Rahayu<sup>1\*</sup> https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8991-5402

Desintha Yura Saraswati<sup>2</sup> https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6919-3586

Nur Aviva Azzahro<sup>3</sup> https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1520-629X

Wiwin Astuti<sup>3</sup> https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3415-6288

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Faculty of Tarbiyah,Raden Mas Said State Islamic University Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia

#### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines how Islamic values can be systematically integrated into conflict management processes within Islamic educational institutions, addressing the limited empirical evidence on value-based approaches in educational leadership. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, the research gathered data through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The Miles and Huberman interactive model was applied to analyze data through iterative stages of reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that conflicts predominantly stem from individual traits, perceptual differences, and communication gaps. The resolution process follows four phases problem identification, causal exploration, solution formulation, and decision evaluation each significantly shaped by the application of Islamic principles. Integrating shūrā (deliberation), justice, and ethical communication not only improved the effectiveness of conflict resolution but also fostered a more cohesive organizational climate and strengthened valueoriented leadership practices. The study contributes a contextualized model of conflict management grounded in Islamic ethics, offering theoretical refinement to value-based leadership discourse and practical implications for enhancing governance within Islamic educational settings.



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#### ARTICLE INFO

#### **Keywords:**

school leadership; Islamic values; conflict management; Islamic education.

#### Article History:

Received: May 26, 2025 Revised: December 24, 2025 Accepted: December 24, 2025 Published: December 30, 2025

#### How to Cite in APA Style:

Rahayu et al., (2025).
Integrating Islamic
Leadership Values in School
Conflict Management:
Insights from Indonesian
Secondary Education.
Journal of Education,
Religious, and Instructions,
vol 3 (2), 114-125.

#### Introduction

The leadership of school principals is one of the important elements in determining the quality of school management and the success of the learning process. The principal does not only function as an administrator, but also serves as a leader who is able to provide direction, motivation, and inspiration to all members of the school community. Robbins in Ratnawulan et al., (2023) states that an educational leader must have the ability to help all members of the organization, including teachers, staff, and students, in achieving the goals that have been set. This indicates that principal leadership is a strategic factor in ensuring the achievement of educational visions and missions through the creation of a conducive, collaborative, and productive learning environment.

<sup>\*</sup>Corresponding author: <u>iseptiani596@gmail.com</u>

E-ISSN: 3025-3012

Volume 3 Number 2, December 2025, page 114-125

Doi: 10.60046/joeri.v3i2.222

https://ejournal.stiab-jinarakkhita.ac.id/index.php/joeri



The role of the principal, as explained by Siagian (2023) in (Ratnawulan et al., 2023), includes establishing work standards, formulating organizational regulations, representing the institution, facilitating communication among school components, and integrating all resources in order to achieve educational goals. Al-Hadi et al., (2025) even emphasizes that a leader is a change agent, namely an individual whose actions can significantly influence others. In the context of the school as a social organization, the principal must be able to manage interpersonal relationships, facilitate collaboration, and direct organizational dynamics so that they remain on a harmonious path.

Schools are heterogeneous communities composed of individuals with different backgrounds, needs, motivations, and characteristics. This condition naturally creates the potential for differences of opinion, misunderstandings, or conflicts of interest that may escalate into disputes. Qoyyimah et al., (2022) state that human beings, as rational creatures with unique personalities, are highly likely to experience differences in understanding and interests, making conflict an unavoidable phenomenon within educational organizations. Conflicts may arise from differences in vision among teachers, staff dissatisfaction with school policies, tensions among students, or miscommunication between parents and the school management.

Theoretically, conflicts are classified into two types: constructive conflict and destructive conflict (Riaz & Junaid, 2013). Constructive conflict can generate positive impacts such as encouraging innovation, improving communication, and enhancing the quality of organizational decision-making. Conversely, destructive conflict may hinder the learning process, damage organizational cohesion, reduce work motivation, and even threaten the sustainability of educational institutions. Within the realm of Islamic education, these conflict dynamics often involve differences in interpreting values, moral expectations, and perspectives related to religious practices.

Sudarmanto et al., (2021) categorize conflict into five types: intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict, conflict between individuals and groups, intergroup conflict within an organization, and inter-organizational conflict. In the school context, all five forms may appear with varying intensities. For example, teachers may experience intrapersonal conflict due to workload, students may experience interpersonal conflict, and intergroup conflict may arise between senior and junior teachers or among units within the school.

Conflict management becomes essential so that conflicts do not develop into obstacles to school development. From the perspective of Islamic education, conflict management must be grounded in Islamic values that emphasize justice, consultation (shūrā), patience, and Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah). Nadziro et al., (2023) emphasizes that leaders of Islamic educational institutions must be able to resolve conflicts at the early (latent) stage, that is, when conflicts are still in the form of potential differences before they escalate into open disputes. Early handling serves as a responsive strategy that can minimize the likelihood of conflicts that may harm the school (Almaidah et al., 2022).

Islamic education, as a strategic institution in shaping students' character, moral values, and integrity, carries the responsibility of creating a safe and harmonious learning environment. Suryati et al., (2022) asserts that education is a process of transferring values and culture across generations, requiring stability, social cohesion, and healthy interactions. Therefore, the presence of conflict in Islamic schools should not be left unaddressed and requires systematic management.

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Doi: 10.60046/joeri.v3i2.222

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The importance of consultation (musyawarah) in conflict resolution is affirmed in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah Ash-Shūra, verse 38. Consultation is not merely a discussion mechanism but a part of social and organizational ethics in Islam. Inayati et al., (2024) explain that implementing the principle of consultation in conflict resolution can foster mutual agreements, improve interpersonal relationships, build trust, and strengthen democratic and tolerant cultures within Islamic educational settings. Thus, conflict management based on Islamic values not only resolves problems but also shapes the character of students and teachers in responding to differences maturely and constructively.

Although several studies have examined the principal's role and conflict management in Islamic educational institutions, research gaps remain particularly in understanding how principals apply Islamic values in resolving conflicts concretely within Islamic-based secondary schools such as SMP Muhammadiyah. Some previous studies focus only on general conflict-management strategies without elaborating on the integration of Islamic values in decision-making and conflict mediation processes.

Based on this background, this study seeks to examine in greater depth the role of the principal's leadership in managing conflicts at SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta, with an emphasis on the application of Islamic values. This study identifies the types of conflicts that emerge, the strategies used by the principal to resolve them, and the Islamic principles that inform the process. In addition to providing theoretical insights into conflict management in Islamic education, this study is expected to offer practical contributions for principals, teachers, and Islamic educational institutions in enhancing managerial capabilities and leadership ethics grounded in Islamic values.

# Method

### **Research Design**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative design to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of quality education at Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is capable of revealing the meaning, context, and complexity of social phenomena through non-numerical data analysis, enabling researchers to interpret leadership practices, interactions, and school culture more comprehensively (Hardani et al., 2020).

#### **Research Setting**

The research was conducted at Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta, a character-based school that develops students' potential under the Muhammadiyah organisation. The location was chosen purposively because this school is known for its good academic and managerial performance. Data collection was carried out during the research period through observation, documentation, and structured and semi-structured interviews.

### **Participants / Informants**

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling based on considerations of relevance and mastery of information related to the research focus. The main informants in this study were school principals as strategic decision makers in the implementation of education. Supporting informants included educators, educational staff, and parties

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relevant to the implementation of school programmes. The selection of informants aimed to obtain rich and layered data on school principal leadership, human resource support, infrastructure, and the dynamics of the learning process.

#### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection was carried out using the following three main techniques:

#### 1. Direct observation

Researchers observed school activities, interactions among school members, and the physical condition of the environment and infrastructure. Observations were conducted in a participatory-moderate manner to capture natural behaviour and the social context.

# 2. In-depth interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head teacher as the main informant and several supporting informants. This technique allowed for a more in-depth exploration of policies, leadership strategies, programme implementation and school dynamics.

#### 3. Documentation

Data was obtained from school documents such as activity reports, work programmes, managerial records, school publications, and other supporting documents relevant to the research focus.

#### **Data Analysis Technique**

Data reduction, which is the process of selecting, simplifying, and organising data from interviews, observations, and documentation.

- 1. Presentation of data, through thematic grouping to reveal patterns, relationships, and key findings.
- 2. Drawing conclusions, which is done continuously through verification and interpretation of data to produce a valid and comprehensive understanding of the success of education in schools.

# Trustworthiness / Validity of Data

Data validity is maintained through several triangulation techniques, namely:

- 1. Triangulation of sources, by comparing data from various informants and referring to previous research findings.
- 2. Triangulation of methods, through comparison between interview results, observations, and documentation to ensure data consistency.
- 3. Theoretical triangulation, by linking field findings with concepts of educational leadership, school quality management, and other relevant theories.

### **Findings**

Based on interviews and observations, this study found that conflicts at Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta mainly arise in interactions between students, whether related to friendship dynamics, personal issues, or parental influence. The principal explained that these conflicts usually stem from misunderstandings and personal sensitivities, as stated:

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"The conflicts that occur at our school are like conflicts between friends, between one student and another... the main causes of these conflicts are often related to personal issues and parents."

In handling these conflicts, the school prioritises a dialogical approach that positions students as subjects capable of reflecting on their actions. This approach is carried out through a process of discussion, exploration of problems, and guidance to build self-awareness, as explained:

"...we prioritise discussion... we ask them to express themselves, what the problem is and the best solution... they realise that what they did was not good... they have to apologise. So, we prioritise dialogue."

These findings show that conflict resolution is not only based on formal school rules, but emphasises character building and the internalisation of moral values.

In addition, this study identifies Islamic values as the main principles in conflict resolution. The principal emphasises that deliberation, tabayun, and verification of information are important steps to prevent misunderstandings and biased perceptions. This was stated in the following interview:

"...the roles of Islam are to prioritise deliberation, tabayun, and confirmation... lest the information from others is not true... we need balance from the other party... and we will also prioritise deliberation, dialogue and patience."

The informant also highlighted the significant impact of poorly managed conflicts. Repeated conflicts can hinder school development, lower achievement, and reduce community trust. This is evident in his statement:

"The impact is that the school does not progress... it is not attractive to the community... the school will definitely have no students because of frequent conflicts... so the effect is extraordinary."

From these findings, it can be concluded that the headmaster implements preventive and curative conflict management through a dialogical approach and Islamic values. This strategy is believed to be capable of maintaining the stability of the learning environment and enhancing the school's reputation.

Table 1. School Conflict Coding Process

Axial Coding (central

Open Coding (initial code)	Axial Coding (central theme)	Selective Coding (main theme)
Conflict between students	Conflicts based on student social relationships	Characteristics of conflict in schools
Conflict due to personal issues	Conflicts based on psychological and personal factors	
The influence of parents	External factors that trigger conflict	
Discussion and dialogue	A dialogical approach to conflict resolution	Headteacher leadership strategies in conflict
Students' outpouring of	Mediation based on	resolution

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feelings	interpersonal	
J	communication	
Building student	Character building as a	
awareness	means of conflict	
	resolution	
The student apologised.	Restorative practice in	
	relationship restoration	
The use of deliberation	Islamic principles in	Implementation of
	collective decision-making	Islamic values in
Tabayun (Clarification)	Verify information to	conflict management
	prevent prejudice	
Confirmation of	Data validation from	
information	various parties	
Patience in resolution	Islamic ethics in the	
	conflict resolution process	
Conflict affects the	The impact of conflict on	The impact of conflict
school's reputation	the image and	on institutional
	sustainability of schools	sustainability
Declining public	The impact of conflict on	
confidence	public perception	
Systematic conflict	School conflict	Effectiveness of
management	management mechanisms	headteacher conflict
		management
Adjusting strategies	Adaptive responses to	
based on the type of	variations in conflict forms	
conflict		

Source: Research interview data (processed by researchers), using coding techniques based on (Creswell, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1998)

#### Discussion

### **Definition of Conflict According to Experts**

The views of experts on conflict within organisations are as follows: Santosa & Budiati, (2025) states that according to Stoner and Freeman, conflict can be divided into two types: (1) The traditional view, which considers conflict to be something that must be eliminated, as it can hinder the achievement of organisational goals, (2) The contemporary view, which considers conflict to be inevitable, and managers must be able to manage conflict appropriately so that it does not become an obstacle but rather a driving force to maximise the achievement of organisational goals.

Meanwhile, Robbins (2001) in Santosa & Budiati, (2025) divides conflict into three categories: (1) The traditional view, which considers conflict to be something negative caused by a lack of communication and trust in superiors. (2) The human relations view, which considers conflict to be a natural occurrence in an organisation due to interpersonal relationships, meaning that differences of opinion are inevitable and can even be used to increase organisational loyalty. (3) The interactionist view, which actually encourages conflict within an organisation so that the organisation can explore new ideas from each of its members, thereby preventing the organisation from stagnating.

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### The Role of Leadership in Conflict Management

Based on the results of the interviews, it can be concluded that in managing conflicts, leaders are needed to resolve various conflicts that arise. Leaders must master conflict management skills so that conflicts that arise can have a positive impact on the achievement of organisational goals (Tumiwa, 2020).

One of the measures of a leader's success can be assessed by how they manage conflicts, both internal and external, within their institution or organisation (Huriyah et al., 2023). Leaders are required to be able to minimise and prevent disputes before they ultimately harm each other. Leaders must be able to reunite various parties through various solutions. In this way, ideal performance can be achieved and conflicts can be managed well and functionally to minimise the consequences of the conflicts that occur (Ismi et al., 2022).

The principal of the Islamic educational institution where the author conducted this research believes that Allah will not give him burdens beyond his capacity and that Allah will always provide guidance in all matters concerning His servants. Therefore, the principal always believes that every problem in the educational institution he leads will always have a solution, as stated in the words of Allah SWT in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 286, which means:

"Allah does not burden a person beyond his capacity. For him there is something (reward) from (the goodness) he strives for and against him there is (also) something (punishment) for (the evil) he has done. (They pray,) "O our Lord, do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. O our Lord, do not burden us with a burden as You burdened those before us. O our Lord, do not burden us with what we cannot bear. Forgive us, pardon us, and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so help us against the disbelievers." (QS. Al Bagarah: 286).

Conflict management cannot be separated from the role of the leader. A leader must be patient and wise in handling a conflict. In resolving the conflict, deliberation and consensus can be used (Salihin, 2023). As stated in Surah Ali-Imran verse 159, which reads, according to the translation by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2013) 159 (Mustaqim, 2018):

"Then, by the grace of Allah, you (Prophet Muhammad) were gentle towards them. If you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have broken away from you. Therefore, forgive them, seek forgiveness for them, and consult with them in all (important) matters. Then, when you have made a decision, put your trust in Allah. Verily, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him."

#### Strategies Used by School Principals in Resolving Conflicts

In dealing with conflict, a strategy for resolution is necessary. If conflict is resolved effectively with the right strategy, it can provide satisfaction and positive impacts for all parties. Conversely, if not, it can have negative impacts on both parties (Sudarmanto et al., 2021).

Faqrurrowzi & Dharma, (2023) state that there are several strategies that can be applied in conflict management, including: (1) recognising conflict: It is important to recognise the existence of conflict from the outset. Be aware of differences of opinion, tensions, or other symptoms that indicate conflict; (2) effective communication: communicate openly and

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honestly with the parties involved in the conflict. Listen carefully to their views and interests, while conveying your views and interests in a constructive manner; (3) mutual understanding: try to find common ground regarding the issues that are the source of the conflict. Discuss in depth to identify the root causes and focus on the issues that need to be resolved; (4) negotiation: use a negotiation approach to reach a mutually beneficial solution for all parties. Be open to finding compromises that meet the interests of each party; (5) collaboration: invite all parties involved in the conflict to work together to find a satisfactory solution. Promote cooperation and synergy to achieve better results; (6) managing emotions: conflicts often involve strong emotions. It is important to manage emotions effectively and not let them influence rational decision-making. Use a calm and controlled approach in dealing with conflict; (7) mediation or arbitration: in difficult situations, consider involving a neutral and trained third party as an arbitrator or mediator. The arbitrator can help facilitate exchanges between the parties involved and find a solution that is acceptable to all parties; (8) learning and evaluation: after the conflict is resolved, conduct an evaluation to understand the causes and identify (9) preventive measures for the future. Use the experience as a lesson to avoid similar conflicts in the future.

Meanwhile, the results of interviews with Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta show that they have implemented several Islamic strategies in resolving conflicts, namely deliberation (syura), verification (tabayyun), and giving advice (nasihah). Each of these strategies has its own advantages in resolving conflicts and supporting positive change in the school environment.

### (1) Deliberation

This study found that school principals use deliberation as a method for resolving conflicts in schools. Deliberation was chosen because it is considered an effective method and is in line with Islamic principles. School principals believe that deliberation creates a space for all parties involved in the conflict to express their opinions openly and fairly.

Each conflict is resolved through open discussion between the parties involved, with mediation from a master or authorised person. This process is carried out in a calm and conducive atmosphere, where each party is given the opportunity to express their views and feelings. Deliberation usually begins with an opening statement reminding all parties of the importance of maintaining brotherhood and harmony based on Islamic teachings.

To implement deliberation as a conflict resolution strategy at Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta, several steps are taken, including: First, resolving conflicts between students. When a conflict arises between students, such as a difference of opinion, they are invited to sit together in a small gathering in the student affairs room. The teacher will facilitate the discussion, ask each student to explain their views, and help them find a mutually agreed solution.

Second, conflict resolution between teachers and students. If there is tension or misunderstanding between teachers and students, deliberation can be used as a tool to resolve the situation. For example, when a student feels that they have been treated unfairly by a teacher, they can hold a deliberation where both the teacher and the student are given the opportunity to express their views. Thus, the solution reached not only resolves the problem but also strengthens the relationship between the teacher and the student.

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Deliberation as a conflict resolution strategy is an effective method and is in line with the values upheld by Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta. By implementing deliberation in everyday school life, students are not only taught to resolve problems wisely, but also educated to become fair, open, and responsible individuals. The success of this strategy depends on the commitment of all parties, including students, teachers, and the school, to consistently and continuously apply the principles of deliberation.

#### (2) Tabayyun

At Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta, the headmaster plays an important role in maintaining harmony and ensuring that any conflicts between students are resolved fairly and in accordance with Islamic values. One of the key principles that can be used in conflict resolution is tabayun, which means seeking clarity and ensuring the truth before making a decision.

When a conflict arises among students, the first step taken by the principal is to clearly identify the problem. The principal listens to reports from the parties involved, including students, teachers, and other eyewitnesses. In this process, it is very important to remain neutral and not rush to conclusions based on one-sided information. After gathering all relevant information, the next step is to verify or tabayun. The headteacher needs to check the accuracy of each piece of information received by confirming the statements of each student involved and examining the available evidence. For example, if there is an allegation that a student has committed an inappropriate act, the headteacher must ensure that the allegation is supported by strong evidence and is not merely a rumour or misunderstanding.

This verification process not only ensures that the decision made is fair, but also educates students about the importance of honesty, responsibility, and caution in communication. By involving students in the verification process, the headteacher can also help them understand the impact of spreading unverified information. Once all information has been verified and the truth has been revealed, the headteacher can take the necessary steps to resolve the conflict. These steps can include mediating between the students involved, providing advice, or, if necessary, imposing appropriate sanctions. However, the sanctions imposed must be based on the principle of fairness and aim to educate, not merely punish. In addition, the headteacher can also hold verification sessions as part of the school's character education programme. In these sessions, students are taught the importance of verifying information before spreading it and are trained to act wisely when dealing with conflicts (Siregar et al., 2024).

Thus, the concept of tabayyun is not only applied in conflict resolution but also becomes an indispensable part of character building for students. The implementation of tabayyun by the principal at Middle school Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta reflects the school's commitment to upholding Islamic values in every aspect of school life. By prioritising the principles of justice and truth, the school can create a harmonious and conducive environment for the development of students' worldview and ethics.

#### (3) Advice

In addition to using tabayun (verification) and musyawarah (deliberation), the head teacher can also integrate patient counselling as part of a holistic approach to conflict resolution. When a conflict arises between students, the first step taken by the head

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teacher is to apply tabayun. This process involves gathering information from all parties involved and ensuring that all information is carefully verified before making a decision. For example, if there is a dispute between two students regarding allegations of inappropriate behaviour, the principal will talk to both parties and other witnesses to ascertain the truth of the allegations.

Tabayun ensures that decisions are made based on clear facts and avoid slander or misunderstanding. After going through the tabayun and deliberation process, the principal can give advice as part of conflict resolution. This advice is constructive and aims to improve behaviour and strengthen students' understanding of Islamic values. For example, after resolving a conflict through deliberation, the principal may advise the students involved on the importance of maintaining good character, avoiding slander, and always speaking honestly. This advice not only serves as the conclusion of the conflict resolution process, but also as an educational tool that helps students become better and more responsible individuals (Siregar et al., 2024).

By combining tabayun, deliberation, and advice, the principal at Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta can ensure that conflict resolution is not only fair but also educational. This process not only resolves existing problems but also shapes students' characters for the better. Students learn to always seek the truth, collaborate in problem solving, and appreciate Islamic values in every aspect of their lives. This approach creates a harmonious school environment, where each individual feels valued and listened to, and is inspired to always do good in accordance with Islamic teachings.

#### Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in organisational environments, including educational institutions. The findings show that the effectiveness of conflict resolution is largely determined by the quality of leadership. The headteacher plays a central role in ensuring that conflicts are managed constructively so as to have a positive impact on social relations and organisational performance.

This study also confirms that the integration of Islamic values, particularly deliberation, clarification, and advice, contributes significantly to creating a humanistic, inclusive, and development-oriented approach to conflict management. These values function not only as a resolution mechanism but also as a preventive instrument to minimise the negative impact of conflict and strengthen a harmonious school culture. Thus, conflict management at Middle School Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta aims not only to resolve disputes but also to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships, strengthen the character of students, and reinforce the effectiveness of value-based leadership.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on conflict management by showing that an Islamic value-based approach can go hand in hand with modern conflict management models. Practically, this study provides a conflict resolution model that can be applied in value-based schools, particularly through the systematic application of tabayyun, deliberation, and advice.

This study has limitations in the scope of the case study, which focuses on one school, so generalisation of the findings needs to be done with caution. Therefore, further research is

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Doi: 10.60046/joeri.v3i2.222

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recommended to examine the implementation of value-based conflict management in more diverse contexts, as well as conducting comparative studies between Islamic schools and public schools to strengthen the theoretical and practical validity of these findings.

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E-ISSN: 3025-3012

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