



Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Style as Predictors of Conflict Management Skills: An Empirical Study of Educational Leaders

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: School principals often face conflicts that undermine school climate and educational effectiveness, particularly in Indonesian educational settings where diverse stakeholders have competing interests. This study aims to examine the contribution of emotional intelligence and leadership style to the conflict management skills of school principals, particularly within the context of educational leadership in Muhammadiyah secondary schools.

Methodology: The study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design and utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the direct relationships among variables. The measurement instruments included an emotional intelligence scale based on Goleman's model, a leadership style scale grounded in situational leadership theory, and a conflict management skills scale adapted from the Thomas-Kilmann model.

Main Findings: The results indicated that emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.531$, $p < 0.001$) and leadership style ($\beta = 0.309$, $p = 0.013$) significantly contributed to conflict management skills, with emotional intelligence emerging as the stronger predictor. The research model demonstrated good fit (CFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.05) and accounted for 44.4% of the variance in conflict management skills. These findings highlight the importance of developing emotional intelligence-based leadership integrated with adaptive leadership styles to enhance conflict management effectiveness.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study integrates the emotional intelligence model and situational leadership theory into a single conceptual framework, empirically tested within the Indonesian educational context, particularly in Muhammadiyah schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian Muhammadiyah schools represent a unique educational ecosystem where principals must simultaneously navigate complex organizational dynamics, integrate Islamic values with contemporary educational practices, and manage diverse stakeholder expectations [1], [2]. Within this multifaceted environment, school principals function as pivotal leaders responsible for creating conducive learning atmospheres through effective conflict management. The organizational complexity inherent in Muhammadiyah institutions involves intricate relationships among teachers, students, parents, religious community leaders, foundation boards, and educational authorities, each possessing distinct priorities and expectations that

frequently generate multidimensional conflicts requiring sophisticated leadership interventions and culturally sensitive management approaches [3], [4].

Emotional intelligence has emerged as a fundamental competency for organizational effectiveness and psychological well-being, particularly in high-demand professional contexts such as educational leadership, where social and emotional complexities predominate [5]-[7]. Contemporary educational organizations increasingly require principals who possess advanced emotional intelligence capabilities to recognize, understand, and regulate both their own emotions and those of organizational members during conflict situations [5], [8], [9]. Research demonstrates that principals with well-developed emotional competencies and adaptive leadership styles are significantly more effective in resolving conflicts constructively, thereby establishing positive organizational climates and enhancing educational quality outcomes [10], [11]. Goleman's comprehensive emotional intelligence model encompasses five critical dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills, which correlate with numerous beneficial organizational outcomes, including enhanced job performance, increased job satisfaction, improved mental health, and superior service quality [12]-[14].

Despite substantial theoretical development, significant empirical gaps persist in understanding how emotional intelligence and leadership style function synergistically to enhance conflict management effectiveness within educational contexts. Current research reveals troubling contradictions: while some studies demonstrate robust positive associations between emotional intelligence and conflict management effectiveness in healthcare and business settings [6], other investigations report weak or statistically non-significant relationships, particularly within hierarchical educational environments where power dynamics may moderate these relationships [15]-[17]. Furthermore, research findings diverge considerably regarding optimal leadership styles for conflict resolution, with some studies supporting participative approaches while others advocate directive styles depending on cultural and organizational contexts [18]. The theoretical integration of emotional intelligence models with situational leadership theory remains empirically unvalidated, particularly within culturally specific educational environments such as Indonesian Islamic schools. This represents a critical knowledge gap that limits theoretical understanding and practical application of these leadership competencies in educational conflict management.

Field observations and empirical evidence suggest that Indonesian school principals often face challenges in conflict management, primarily due to limited emotional intelligence and ineffective leadership styles. Systematic observations reveal that interpersonal conflicts among teachers, teacher-student disputes, and school-parent disagreements often escalate unnecessarily due to principals' limited emotional competencies and failure to adapt leadership approaches to situational demands [18]. This problem is particularly acute in Muhammadiyah schools, where leaders must balance strict adherence to Islamic educational principles with participative management approaches that accommodate diverse community stakeholder perspectives. The urgency of this research stems from the direct negative impact of ineffective conflict management on academic quality, teacher retention rates, student achievement outcomes, and overall school climate. Recent Indonesian studies have identified significant associations between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management effectiveness [18], [19]. However, no research has systematically examined how emotional intelligence and leadership style function collaboratively within the unique organizational culture of Muhammadiyah schools, which integrates Islamic values with modern educational practices.

This study addresses these critical gaps by developing and empirically testing an integrated theoretical model that combines Goleman's emotional intelligence framework with situational leadership theory to predict conflict management effectiveness in Indonesian educational contexts. The research provides systematic empirical evidence for the relative and combined contributions of emotional intelligence and leadership style to conflict management skills, establishing a foundation for evidence-based leadership development programs tailored to culturally specific educational environments. The primary research objective is to examine the extent to which emotional intelligence and leadership style contribute to principals' conflict management skills within Indonesian Muhammadiyah schools. Specific objectives include: (1) analyzing the direct relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management effectiveness; (2) determining the independent contribution of leadership style to conflict management capabilities; (3) evaluating the combined predictive power of emotional intelligence and leadership style; and (4) developing evidence-based recommendations for leadership training programs and principal selection processes that integrate emotional competency development with adaptive leadership skill training.

This research generates several novel contributions to educational leadership theory and practice with significant implications for leadership development in culturally complex educational environments. Theoretically, the study integrates emotional intelligence and situational leadership theories within a single empirical framework specifically tested within Indonesian educational contexts, extending Goleman's emotional intelligence model to educational leadership while demonstrating situational leadership theory applications in conflict management within culturally complex environments. Practically, the findings will inform the development of culturally appropriate leadership competency frameworks, guide evidence-based principal

selection processes, and shape comprehensive training programs that systematically integrate emotional intelligence development with adaptive leadership skills. The study provides the first empirical evidence of these relationships within Muhammadiyah educational settings, contributing to culturally responsive leadership development approaches that honor Islamic educational values while enhancing modern educational management effectiveness. The research is expected to transform how principal preparation programs are designed and implemented, moving beyond traditional technical competency-focused approaches to comprehensive leadership development that addresses the emotional and adaptive dimensions of educational leadership in diverse cultural contexts.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional explanatory design, following STROBE guidelines for observational studies to ensure methodological rigor and transparency in reporting [21], [22]. The cross-sectional design was selected to examine relationships among variables at a single time point, enabling simultaneous analysis of contribution patterns between predictor variables (emotional intelligence and leadership style) and the criterion variable (conflict management skills). The explanatory design facilitates testing of theoretical relationships through structural equation modeling (SEM) to establish the magnitude and significance of direct effects among research variables [23]. This design choice was appropriate for investigating the predictive relationships among variables while acknowledging limitations in establishing causal inferences.

The target population comprised Muhammadiyah school principals within the Regional Leadership Board of Muhammadiyah (Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah, PWM) of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, with the accessible population including active principals of Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK) under Muhammadiyah District Leadership Boards (Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah, PDM). Inclusion criteria were: (1) actively serving principals with a minimum one-year tenure, (2) currently performing leadership duties during the study period, and (3) voluntary participation consent. Exclusion criteria included principals on leave, not actively performing duties, or recently retired during the research period.

Sample size determination utilized Soper software for SEM analysis, accounting for the number of observed and latent variables in the theoretical model. With anticipated effect size ($\lambda = 0.3$), statistical power ($1 - \beta = 0.95$), and significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the software recommended a minimum sample of 119 participants. However, due to practical constraints within the Muhammadiyah school system, this study involved 49 principals, representing a significant limitation that affects parameter estimate stability and generalizability. Convenience sampling was employed, recruiting participants during district-level meetings attended by available SMA and SMK principals in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Statistical power analysis revealed that with $n=49$, the achieved power for detecting medium effect sizes ($f^2 = 0.15$) in multiple regression was approximately 0.65, falling below the conventional 0.80 threshold. This indicates limited power to detect more minor effects and represents a critical limitation requiring cautious interpretation of findings. The small sample size may increase Type II error probability and reduce the precision of parameter estimates in the SEM analysis.

All instruments were initially developed in English and translated into Indonesian through thorough back-translation procedures. Two bilingual education experts independently translated the instruments from English to Indonesian, followed by back-translation to English by two different experts to verify semantic equivalence. Discrepancies were resolved through discussions among the translation team. Pilot testing involved 15 Muhammadiyah school principals to evaluate cultural appropriateness, understanding, and relevance to Indonesian educational contexts, with minor terminological adjustments made to align with Indonesian school settings.

Table 1. Data Collection Instrument Grid

1. Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Theoretical Base	Dimensions	Items	Example Items	Reliability (α)
Emotional Intelligence	Goleman's Model	Self-awareness	5	I recognize the emotions I am currently feeling	0.89
		Self-regulation	5	I can control my emotions when under pressure	0.87
		Self-motivation	5	I remain optimistic despite setbacks	0.85
		Social awareness	5	I can understand other people's feelings well	0.91
		Social skills	5	I communicate effectively with others	0.88

2. Leadership Style

Variable	Theoretical Base	Dimensions	Items	Example Items	Reliability (α)
Leadership Style	Situational Leadership Theory	Directive	5	I provide clear instructions about tasks	0.83
		Supportive	5	I show concern for subordinates' well-being	0.86
		Participative	5	I involve subordinates in decision-making	0.84
		Delegative	5	I allow subordinates to work independently	0.82

3. Conflict Management

Variable	Theoretical Base	Dimensions	Items	Example Items	Reliability (α)
Conflict Management	Thomas-Kilmann Model	Collaboration	6	I try to find solutions that benefit all parties	0.85
		Competition	6	I pursue my own concerns when in conflict	0.79
		Compromise	6	I seek middle-ground solutions in conflicts	0.81
		Accommodation	6	I sacrifice my own wishes to satisfy others	0.77
		Avoidance	6	I avoid confrontation in conflict situations	0.83

Demographic variables collected included gender, marital status, length of tenure as principal, educational background, and type of school led (Senior High School or Vocational High School) to describe participant characteristics and control for potential confounding variables in the analysis [24]. Data collection occurred from March to May 2024 using two systematic methods following recommended survey research practices [25]. The first method involved direct instrument administration to school principals during district-level meetings, while the second utilized online questionnaire distribution via digital survey links sent through email. Initial contact was established with the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership Board of the Special Region of Yogyakarta to obtain official approval and institutional support. Before instrument administration, participants received detailed explanations of research objectives and provided written informed consent [26]. The data collection process adhered to research ethics principles by ensuring respondent identity confidentiality and participants' right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

Ethical approval was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee, with moral standards based on the Declaration of Helsinki observed throughout the research process. Participants provided informed consent after receiving comprehensive information about study objectives, benefits, risks, and procedures. Research data were stored securely with access limited to authorized research team members. Participants retained the right to be informed of research findings and could access result summaries upon study completion. Data analysis employed comprehensive descriptive and inferential statistical procedures [24]. Descriptive statistics included measures of central tendency (mean), dispersion (standard deviation), and distribution shape assessment using skewness values, with scores within ± 2 range indicating acceptable normality for parametric analysis [27]. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α), with values above 0.70 considered acceptable for research purposes. Correlation analysis utilized Pearson's correlation coefficients to examine bivariate relationships among variables and identify potential multicollinearity issues before multivariate analysis. This preliminary analysis was essential for understanding relationship strength and direction while detecting convergent and discriminant validity evidence.

The theoretical model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the WLSMV estimator, which provides robustness to deviations from multivariate normality assumptions. Model fit evaluation employed multiple recommended indices: Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) [28]-[30]. Acceptable model fit was indicated by CFI and TLI values above 0.90, RMSEA values below 0.08, and SRMR values below 0.08. Bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 iterations and 95% confidence intervals were applied to test contribution significance and provide robust parameter estimates.

Multiple regression analysis examined simultaneous contributions of predictor variables to conflict management skills, calculating R-squared values, standardized beta coefficients, confidence intervals, and statistical significance levels. SEM analysis was conducted using R version 4.0.5 with the "lavaan" package, which provides comprehensive tools for testing structural relationships among research variables [31]. The

analytical approach enabled examination of both direct effects and model fit while accounting for measurement error in latent variable modeling. Power analysis limitations were acknowledged throughout the analysis, with effect size interpretations considered within the context of the achieved statistical power. The analytical strategy prioritized practical significance alongside statistical significance, recognizing that the limited sample size may affect the detection of more minor but potentially meaningful effects in educational leadership contexts.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics

A total of 49 Muhammadiyah school principals participated in this study, representing a demographic profile that reflects traditional leadership patterns within Indonesian Islamic educational institutions. The sample demonstrated predominant male representation (69%), extensive leadership experience (92% with ≥ 10 years tenure), and mature age composition (53% over 50 years old), indicating Muhammadiyah's organizational preference for seasoned leadership with substantial institutional knowledge. The prevalence of Permanent Foundation Teachers (63%) compared to Civil Servants (37%) reveals the organization's commitment to internal cadre development, ensuring leaders possess a deep understanding of Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy and integration of Islamic values.

These demographic characteristics carry significant theoretical implications for leadership effectiveness in educational conflict management. Research demonstrates that age, experience, and employment background substantially influence leadership competencies and emotional intelligence development [32], [33]. The mature, experienced composition suggests favorable conditions for sophisticated emotional regulation and conflict management capabilities, as emotional intelligence typically develops through accumulated life experiences and professional challenges. The predominance of internal cadre development (Foundation Teachers) indicates organizational socialization effects that may enhance cultural competence and stakeholder relationship management, critical factors in educational conflict resolution. This demographic profile provides essential context for interpreting the study's findings and establishes the foundation for generalizing results to similar Islamic educational contexts in table 2.

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Male	34	69
Female	15	31
Age Groups		
Younger (< 40 years)	10	20
Middle-aged (40-50 years)	13	27
Senior (> 50 years)	26	53
Employment & Experience		
Civil Servant	18	37
Foundation Teacher	31	63
Experienced (≥ 10 years service)	45	92
Less experienced (< 10 years)	4	8

The respondents' profile (from table 2) reveals a predominance of male principals (69%), reflecting the general pattern of educational leadership in Indonesia, where principal positions remain predominantly held by males. The age distribution reveals that the majority are senior leaders over 50 years (53%), with middle-aged principals (40-50 years) representing 27% and younger principals under 40 comprising only 20%. This mature composition suggests that Muhammadiyah school leadership prioritizes experience and maturity, which theoretically supports the development of emotional intelligence and conflict management capabilities.

Employment status shows that 63% are Permanent Foundation Teachers compared to 37% Civil Servants, reflecting Muhammadiyah's commitment to internal cadre development. Notably, 92% of principals have served for 10 years or more, indicating substantial leadership experience and organizational stability. This profile of experienced principals aligns with research emphasizing the importance of tenure in developing emotional leadership skills. The predominance of senior, experienced principals suggests leadership stability in Muhammadiyah schools, which may enhance conflict management effectiveness through accumulated organizational experience [34], [35].

3.2 Descriptive and Correlation Analysis

Descriptive analysis revealed that all research variables demonstrated acceptable distributional properties for parametric statistical procedures. Emotional intelligence exhibited a mean of 42.63 (SD = 3.21, skewness = -0.39), leadership style showed a mean of 3.89 (SD = 0.42, skewness = 0.18), and conflict management skills demonstrated a mean of 47.21 (SD = 2.94, skewness = 0.22). All skewness values fell within the acceptable ± 2 range, confirming distributional normality assumptions. Instrument reliability was excellent across all measures, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.80 (emotional intelligence $\alpha = 0.88$, leadership style $\alpha = 0.85$, conflict management $\alpha = 0.83$), surpassing recommended thresholds and supporting measurement validity in this cultural context. The complete descriptive statistics and correlations between variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlations between research variables

Variable	M	SD	A	α	1	2	3
1. Emotional intelligence	42.63	3.21	-0.39	0.88	–		
2. Leadership style	3.89	0.42	0.18	0.85	0.272	–	
3. Conflict management skills	47.21	2.94	0.22	0.83	0.615**	0.453**	–

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; A = skewness; α = Cronbach's alpha; ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Correlation analysis revealed theoretically significant and practically meaningful patterns among research variables. The strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and conflict management skills ($r = 0.615$, $p < 0.001$) provides robust support for theories positioning emotional competencies as fundamental to effective conflict resolution, extending previous findings from healthcare settings [5], [6], [12] to Indonesian educational contexts. This substantial association suggests that principals who can effectively recognize, understand, and regulate emotions demonstrate markedly superior conflict management capabilities, consistent with Goleman's emotional intelligence framework [7], [36], [37]. Leadership style demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with conflict management skills ($r = 0.453$, $p < 0.001$), supporting situational leadership theory's emphasis on behavioral adaptability in conflict situations. This finding aligns with research demonstrating leadership style contributions to strategic decision-making effectiveness [18], [38], while extending applications to educational conflict management contexts.

The non-significant correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership style ($r = 0.272$, $p > 0.05$) represents a theoretically important finding with significant practical implications. This independence suggests that emotional competencies and leadership behavioral patterns develop through distinct pathways and may be influenced by different experiential and training factors [39], [40], [41]. From a theoretical perspective, this independence supports multidimensional models of leadership effectiveness, indicating that emotional abilities and behavioral preferences represent separate but complementary competency domains. Practically, this finding suggests that effective conflict management can be achieved through various combinations of emotional intelligence and leadership approaches, providing flexibility in leadership development strategies and accommodating individual differences in competency profiles.

3.3 Structural Model Analysis and Contribution of Emotional Intelligence

The structural equation model demonstrated excellent fit indices according to established SEM criteria, with CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05 (90% CI [0.04, 0.06]), and SRMR = 0.07, collectively indicating that the proposed theoretical model aligns well with empirical data and is appropriate for substantive interpretation. These fit statistics exceed recommended thresholds and provide confidence in the model's theoretical validity and practical utility. The use of multiple fit indices was essential to ensure that the proposed theoretical model aligned with the observed empirical data [42], [43]. The standardized path coefficients and model fit indices are presented in Figure 1.

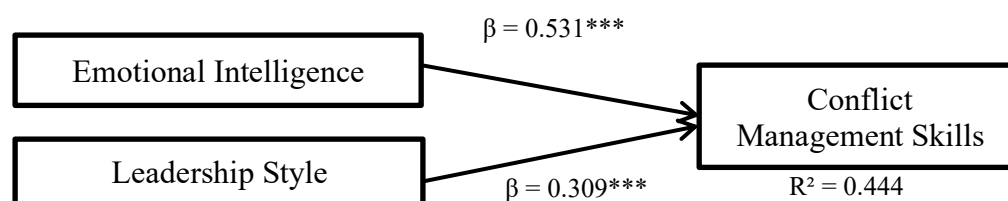


Figure 1. Structural Model of the Contribution of Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Style to Conflict Management Skills

Model Fit: $\chi^2 = 124.36$, $df = 87$, $p < 0.001$ CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.07

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; * $p < 0.05$

Emotional intelligence emerged as the primary predictor of conflict management skills ($\beta = 0.531$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that a one standard deviation increase in emotional intelligence corresponds to a 0.531 standard deviation increase in conflict management effectiveness. This substantial effect size demonstrates the fundamental importance of emotional competencies in educational leadership conflict resolution. The finding extends previous research from healthcare contexts [6] to academic settings, while providing more substantial evidence than studies reporting weaker associations in hierarchical environments [16]. The robust relationship observed in this study may reflect the collaborative organizational culture characteristic of Muhammadiyah institutions, which emphasizes consultation (*syura*) and collective welfare (*maslaha*) as core Islamic leadership principles.

The significant contribution can be explained through Goleman's five-dimensional framework: self-awareness enables principals to identify emotional triggers and prevent conflict escalation; self-regulation facilitates calm, objective responses during emotionally charged situations; motivation drives constructive solution-seeking that benefits all stakeholders; social awareness provides capacity to understand conflicting parties' emotions and needs; and social skills enable effective communication, negotiation, and consensus-building in complex stakeholder environments. These competencies are particularly crucial in Indonesian educational contexts, where principals must navigate diverse stakeholder relationships, including teachers, students, parents, religious leaders, and foundation boards [44], [45].

Leadership style contributed significantly, but with a smaller magnitude, to conflict management skills ($\beta = 0.309$, $p = 0.013$), supporting situational leadership theory while demonstrating its complementary role to emotional intelligence. This finding extends previous research on leadership style contributions to strategic decision-making [46], [47], [48] by demonstrating specific applications in educational conflict management. The contribution reflects the importance of behavioral adaptability, where directive approaches serve crisis situations requiring quick decisions, supportive styles facilitate emotional healing in interpersonal conflicts, participative approaches engage stakeholders in collaborative resolution processes, and delegative styles enable distributed conflict management through organizational capacity building.

3.4 Integrated Model Analysis and Comparative Findings

Multiple regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence and leadership style jointly account for 44.4% of variance in conflict management skills ($R^2 = 0.444$, $F(2,46) = 19.73$, $p < 0.001$), representing substantial explanatory power that exceeds many previous studies in educational leadership. This significant joint contribution demonstrates the value of integrated theoretical approaches that combine emotional competencies with behavioral adaptability, rather than examining these factors independently. The variance explained suggests that while these competencies are essential, approximately 55.6% of conflict management effectiveness derives from other factors not discussed in this study, indicating opportunities for future research exploring additional predictors such as organizational climate, cultural competence, and institutional support systems. The detailed regression results, including standardized coefficients and confidence intervals, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Principals' Conflict Management Skills

Predictor	β	SE	t	p	95% CI
Emotional Intelligence	0.531	0.10	5.31	<0.001	[0.330, 0.732]
Leadership Style	0.309	0.12	2.58	0.013	[0.069, 0.549]

Note: β = standardized beta coefficient; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; $R^2 = 0.444$; $F(2,46) = 19.73$, $p < 0.001$

Comparative analysis with previous research reveals several important distinctions. Unlike studies showing weaker associations in hierarchical educational environments [15], this research demonstrates robust relationships that may reflect the unique collaborative culture of Muhammadiyah organizations. The stronger associations observed here suggest that Islamic educational values emphasizing consultation and collective welfare may create organizational contexts more conducive to emotional intelligence application in conflict management. The effect sizes obtained exceed those reported in many Western educational leadership studies [9], [49], [50], possibly indicating cultural factors that enhance the relevance of emotional competencies in Indonesian educational contexts.

The relative contribution analysis demonstrates emotional intelligence as the stronger predictor ($\beta = 0.531$) compared to leadership style ($\beta = 0.309$), suggesting that emotional competencies form the foundational requirement for effective conflict management, with leadership behavioral adaptability providing important but supplementary contributions. This hierarchy has practical implications for leadership development prioritization, suggesting that emotional intelligence development should receive primary emphasis in training programs, with leadership style flexibility integrated as a complementary competency.

3.5 Cultural Context and Muhammadiyah-Specific Implications

The Muhammadiyah educational context presents unique conflict management challenges requiring principals to incorporate Islamic leadership principles justice (adl), consultation (syura), and collective welfare (maslaha) while handling tensions between religious orthodoxy and educational innovation. These tensions appear in disputes over dress codes, prayer obligations, curriculum content, and modern teaching methods that may clash with different stakeholder views of Islamic educational philosophy. The organizational values emphasizing brotherhood (ukhuwah), justice (adl), and progress (tajdid) create both supportive frameworks and inherent challenges for managing conflicts. Principals must balance conflicting expectations from conservative and progressive community members while upholding the dual goals of academic excellence and religious integrity. The mostly internal staff composition (63% Foundation Teachers) indicates deep organizational socialization, which may improve effectiveness in managing value-based conflicts, potentially explaining the stronger links between emotional intelligence and conflict management compared to secular educational settings.

This study provides three significant theoretical contributions. First, it represents the first empirical integration of Goleman's emotional intelligence model with situational leadership theory within Indonesian Islamic educational contexts, demonstrating that these traditionally separate frameworks enhance understanding of leadership effectiveness in culturally complex environments. Second, the finding of independence between emotional intelligence and leadership style challenges assumptions about their interrelationship, suggesting that effective conflict management can be achieved through diverse combinations of emotional and behavioral competencies. Third, the research extends emotional intelligence theory beyond Western secular contexts to Islamic educational settings, revealing how religious values influence the application and effectiveness of emotional competencies. The findings generate critical practical implications for educational leadership development. Leadership preparation programs should prioritize emotional intelligence development as the foundational competency, integrating Islamic leadership principles with systematic training in self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social skills. Principal selection processes should incorporate validated emotional intelligence assessments alongside traditional qualifications, evaluating candidates' capacity for emotional regulation, stakeholder empathy, and cultural sensitivity. Organizational support systems should provide ongoing professional development through mentoring, coaching, and professional learning communities that recognize the unique challenges of value-based conflicts in religious educational settings.

Several critical limitations affect interpretation and generalizability. The small sample size ($n = 49$) substantially limits statistical power (achieved power = 0.65), affecting parameter estimate precision and potentially preventing detection of meaningful more minor effects. The cross-sectional design prevents causal inferences about developmental pathways between emotional intelligence, leadership style, and conflict management effectiveness. Focus on Muhammadiyah schools restricts generalizability to other educational contexts, while exclusive reliance on self-report measures introduces potential social desirability bias and standard method variance. Cultural validation remains limited to Indonesian contexts and convenience sampling may have introduced selection biases affecting external validity. Future research should address these limitations through complementary approaches. Longitudinal studies tracking leadership development would enable causal inferences and identification of developmental patterns in emotional intelligence and conflict management competencies. Comparative research across diverse educational contexts would enhance understanding of cultural and organizational moderating factors. Investigation of potential mediating variables (organizational climate, teacher trust, community values) and moderating variables (school size, socioeconomic status, religious conservatism) could reveal mechanisms and boundary conditions for these relationships. Intervention studies testing integrated training programs and multi-source assessment approaches incorporating teacher and supervisor ratings would address standard method variance limitations while providing comprehensive leadership effectiveness evaluations.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.531$, $p < 0.001$) and leadership style ($\beta = 0.309$, $p = 0.013$) significantly predict principals' conflict management skills, jointly explaining 44.4% of variance in effectiveness. The findings confirm that principals who can recognize and regulate emotions while adapting leadership approaches demonstrate superior conflict resolution in Indonesian Muhammadiyah schools. Based on empirical findings, this research proposes the "Culturally-Responsive Educational Leadership Effectiveness Model" (CRELEM) integrating four components: (1) Emotional Foundation as the primary driver, (2) Adaptive Leadership Behavior as complementary competency, (3) Cultural Integration incorporating Islamic principles (justice/adl, consultation/syura, collective welfare/maslaha), and (4) Stakeholder Navigation managing complex educational relationships. CRELEM demonstrates that effective leadership in religious contexts requires integrating universal emotional competencies with culturally-specific values and adaptive behaviors.

Practically, leadership preparation programs must prioritize emotional intelligence development while integrating Islamic values and adaptive leadership skills. Principal selection should incorporate emotional

intelligence assessments alongside traditional qualifications, evaluating emotional regulation, cultural sensitivity, and stakeholder empathy. Implementation should follow a phased approach: developing culturally-adapted assessment tools, pilot testing integrated programs, and expanding successful interventions system-wide. This research establishes emotional intelligence as fundamental to educational leadership effectiveness while contributing to CRELEM as a new theoretical framework applicable to religious educational contexts globally. The findings provide practical solutions for enhancing educational quality through culturally-responsive conflict management that maintains religious authenticity while promoting leadership excellence in diverse educational environments.

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