



## PRINCIPAL'S COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGY IN HANDLING TEACHER CONFLICT TO IMPROVE HARMONIZED RELATIONSHIP IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

<sup>1</sup>Nur Kholis Usman, <sup>2</sup>Yuliani, <sup>3</sup>Mi'at, <sup>4</sup>Khairul Efendi, <sup>5</sup>Ahmad Suriansyah, <sup>6</sup>Ratna Purwanti

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6</sup>Universitas Lambung Mangkurat

E-mail : [1amiramazaya@gmail.com](mailto:amiramazaya@gmail.com), [2yuliani25101983@gmail.com](mailto:yuliani25101983@gmail.com), [3miadadventrue@gmail.com](mailto:miadadventrue@gmail.com),  
[4kependi1986@gmail.com](mailto:kependi1986@gmail.com), [5a.suriansyah@ulm.ac.id](mailto:a.suriansyah@ulm.ac.id), [6ratna.purwanti@ulm.ac.id](mailto:ratna.purwanti@ulm.ac.id)

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Corresponding Author:

Nur Kholis Usman

Email Corresponding :

[amiramazaya@gmail.com](mailto:amiramazaya@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Conflicts among teachers in a school setting are a natural occurrence, often arising from differing viewpoints and individual traits. The principal's role in managing these conflicts through effective communication is vital in maintaining a harmonious and supportive work environment. This research investigates the communicative strategies applied by the principal of SD Negeri 2 Pantai in resolving teacher conflicts and fostering relational harmony within the school. Using a case study approach, data were gathered through interviews, observation, and document review. The results show that strategies such as open dialogue, mediation, and the promotion of a collaborative work culture significantly contribute to minimizing conflicts while boosting teacher motivation and teamwork. The study recommends that school principals enhance their communication and conflict resolution competencies to create a more positive and harmonious school climate.

**Keywords:** *Conflict management, principal leadership, teacher harmonization, Communication, Language.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts in school settings are an inevitable reality, often stemming from differences in personality, teaching styles, perspectives, and professional interests among teachers. These internal disputes can disrupt school dynamics, deteriorate teacher relationships, and ultimately hinder the achievement of educational goals. As central figures in educational leadership, school principals must proactively address conflicts through strategic communication to foster a harmonious working environment that supports collaboration, motivation, and teacher performance (Adriyani & Darmiyati, 2024; Arifin, 2020; Marzuki, 2018).

Teacher performance and job satisfaction are significantly influenced by the school's organizational climate. Inadequate conflict management may lead to job dissatisfaction, burnout, and weakened team synergy (Nurjanah, 2019; Nurtanto et al., 2021; Jaya et al., 2025). Therefore, principals are expected to act not only as administrators but also as communicative mediators who can balance individual teacher needs with collective school goals. According to Agusta et al. (2024), the principal's role is essential in shaping service satisfaction within educational institutions. This implies that effective communication during conflict resolution contributes to broader educational service quality.

Robbins and Judge (2013) explain that organizational conflict is typically

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rooted in competing goals, values, or access to resources. In school settings, this may manifest in disagreements over teaching responsibilities, leadership style, and pedagogical practices. To prevent these from escalating, school principals must possess the emotional intelligence and leadership capacity to mediate disputes and restore professional harmony. As highlighted by Halimatussa'diyah, Aslamiah, and Suriansyah (2024), school leadership is deeply intertwined with character education and the cultivation of a value-based institutional culture.

Developing a communicative approach in resolving teacher conflict requires sensitivity, empathy, and interpersonal skills. Principals must build trust and open channels of communication to ensure that teachers feel heard and respected. This process is in line with the findings of Irma, Asniwati, and Purwanti (2023), who emphasized that the demonstration of respectful behavior and effective dialogue helps reinforce moral and emotional values within the school community.

Moreover, a school principal's strategy in managing conflict must be rooted in a positive school culture, which serves as the foundation for professional interaction. According to Celia and Aslamiah (2024), organizational culture influences teachers' perceptions of their work environment and their willingness to collaborate. In environments with strong cultural values, teachers are more likely to engage in constructive dialogue rather than confrontation. Additionally, when principals lead with vision and moral grounding, as described by Nor and Aslamiah (2025), they can transform

school challenges into opportunities for growth.

Conflicts can also be triggered by external demands such as curriculum changes, community expectations, and educational policies. In this regard, school leaders must adopt adaptive strategies to maintain internal cohesion. Aslamiah et al. (2023) stress the importance of responsive leadership strategies, especially during periods of transition, such as the adaptation to new norms or policies. Addressing conflict with flexibility and communication allows principals to uphold instructional quality while preserving social cohesion among teachers.

To ensure lasting solutions, principals should apply both preventive and responsive conflict management strategies. Fawwaz (2024) advocates for empowering stakeholders through participation, indicating that involving teachers in decision-making builds a sense of ownership that can reduce the frequency and intensity of conflicts. Similarly, Cinantya, Aslamiah, and Suriansyah (2024) suggest that transformational leadership, which motivates and inspires, is particularly effective in navigating complex human dynamics within schools.

Furthermore, effective communication should be supported by technological tools that facilitate real-time information sharing, transparency, and accountability (Lesiana et al., 2023; Jaya et al., 2025b; Mahesti et al., 2025). The use of digital platforms in conflict management can bridge gaps in understanding, reduce misinformation, and promote fairness. Hayati et al. (2024) emphasize that integrating media and visual tools in the educational process

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enhances engagement and clarity principles that can also be extended to conflict communication strategies.

Ultimately, conflict management is not solely about resolving disputes; it is about fostering a culture of professionalism and solidarity. Teachers who feel respected and understood are more likely to be committed, innovative, and collaborative in their teaching roles (Purwanti, Aslamiah, & Suriansyah, 2024). In this context, school principals must continuously build their leadership and communicative capacities, as highlighted by Cinantya et al. (2024), to sustain an environment where both teachers and students thrive.

In this regard, the present study aims to explore the communicative strategies employed by school principals in managing teacher conflict and how these strategies contribute to building harmonious relationships within the school environment. By focusing on real practices and their impact on school dynamics, this study provides valuable insights into the intersection of leadership communication and educational harmony.

## 2. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the principal's communicative strategies in managing interpersonal conflicts among teachers to foster a harmonious working environment at SD Negeri 2 Pantai. The qualitative method was chosen to provide an in-depth and contextual understanding of the social dynamics within the school setting (Marzuki, 2018; Sugiyono, 2021; Sari et al., 2022). A case study approach allowed the researcher to examine

specific leadership communication practices in a real-life context (Halimatussa'diyah et al., 2024).

Data collection techniques included field observations, analysis of internal school documents, and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders such as the principal, teachers, and administrative staff. Triangulation was used to ensure data credibility and validity. As emphasized by Purwanti, Aslamiah, and Suriansyah (2024), direct involvement and participatory methods are essential in capturing the cultural and social dynamics of school organizations.

The selection of SD Negeri 2 Pantai was based on its diverse teacher backgrounds and its notable record in handling interpersonal conflicts effectively. According to Cinantya and Aslamiah (2024), differences in personal characteristics within educational institutions can lead to conflict if not managed wisely, thus requiring effective communicative leadership from school principals.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques, focusing on identifying interaction patterns, types of conflicts, and the resolution efforts undertaken by the principal. This analysis aimed to depict the practical implementation of communicative leadership in fostering collaboration, mutual respect, and shared responsibility among school staff (Fawwaz, 2024; Irma et al., 2023).

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were upheld, ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of all participants. Ethical principles such as informed consent and respect for privacy guided the research process (Akhmad Riandy Agusta et al., 2024).

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Thus, the findings from this study aim to offer a comprehensive insight into how effective communication by school leaders contributes to conflict resolution and the cultivation of a positive school climate.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****3.1 *Principal's Communicative Strategies***

In managing teacher conflict and fostering a harmonious school environment, the principal's communicative strategy serves as a core leadership component. Findings from the study reveal that school principals utilize a range of deliberate communication approaches such as empathetic listening, dialogic openness, and situational assertiveness to address conflicts among teachers. The application of open and responsive communication allows teachers to express grievances and find constructive resolutions. This aligns with the view of Aslamiah et al. (2023) who assert that leadership communication in the new normal era must be adaptive, dialogic, and inclusive to accommodate various perspectives. Furthermore, principals were observed to employ both formal and informal channels such as staff meetings, one-on-one sessions, and informal gatherings to convey clarity of expectations and to build trust. According to Cinantya et al. (2024), effective communication rooted in religious and character-based values contributes significantly to creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in educational settings. In this study, the principal's ability to act as a mediator and facilitator, rather than merely an authoritative figure, helped reduce misunderstandings and created

opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. This is in line with Robbins and Judge (2019), who emphasize that effective communication is fundamental for minimizing workplace conflict and sustaining organizational harmony. Therefore, the principal's role as a communicator is not merely about delivering messages, but about constructing meaning, building emotional connections, and mediating tensions toward a collective goal.

**3.2 *Conflict Resolution Strategies among Teachers***

The study shows that conflicts among teachers typically arise from workload imbalance, differences in pedagogical beliefs, and interpersonal misunderstandings. The principal's strategic intervention in these areas often involves mediation, role clarification, and promoting a culture of collaboration. Drawing from Rahim (2017), conflict in organizations can be managed through integrative strategies where parties seek win-win solutions by focusing on mutual interests rather than positions. In the context of this research, principals who utilized collaborative approaches such as peer mentoring, team teaching, and shared decision-making were more successful in minimizing conflicts and turning them into learning opportunities. Moreover, conflict management is closely tied to organizational culture, as argued by Arifin (2020) and Nurjanah (2019), where schools with strong cultural foundations are more capable of transforming tensions into positive change. Principals were also found to actively involve senior teachers or

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teacher coordinators as mediators, thus encouraging peer-level conflict resolution. This delegation strategy not only enhances teacher leadership but also reduces the top-down burden on the principal, reflecting what Nurtanto et al. (2021) describe as strategic leadership in distributed organizational models. Importantly, such efforts require consistency and transparency, as inconsistent handling of conflict may foster distrust. The findings reinforce that conflict, if approached through a strategic and communicative lens, can serve as a catalyst for professional growth and organizational learning.

### ***3.3 Impact on Harmonized Relationships in the School Environment***

The deliberate communicative and conflict resolution strategies implemented by principals have a measurable impact on building a harmonious school climate. Harmony, in this sense, refers not to the absence of conflict but the presence of mutual respect, emotional safety, and collaborative professionalism among teachers. According to Zubaidah (2020), school harmony is often a direct reflection of leadership practices that emphasize relational equity and open communication. In the studied schools, teachers reported improved collegial relationships, increased willingness to collaborate, and reduced interpersonal tension following consistent principal interventions. These relational improvements contribute significantly to teacher motivation and performance, as supported by Zulkarnain and Ruslan

(2018), who noted that leadership practices directly influence teachers' morale and work ethic. In one case, the principal's emphasis on weekly reflective dialogues and recognition rituals created a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, which aligns with the findings of Marzuki (2018) regarding the role of organizational culture in school improvement. Furthermore, harmony in the school environment positively affects not only teachers but also students and the broader educational community. This supports the assertion by Adriyani and Darmiyati (2024) that effective classroom and school management begins with relational harmony among adults in the learning environment. Ultimately, the school becomes a cohesive ecosystem where conflict is not suppressed but managed constructively through strong leadership and purposeful communication.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the principal's communicative strategy plays a key role in handling teacher conflicts and fostering a harmonious school environment. Effective communication enables principals to mediate disputes, build mutual understanding, and create a positive school climate. The ability to listen actively, convey clear messages, and maintain neutrality helps prevent conflicts from escalating and encourages collaboration among teachers.

The implication of this finding is that school principals need to continuously improve their communication and interpersonal skills to manage conflicts more effectively. A harmonious relationship among teachers supports a more productive learning atmosphere, improves teamwork, and

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enhances the overall quality of education in the school.

For future research, it is recommended to explore similar strategies in different educational settings and to involve more perspectives, such as those of teachers and students. Further studies could also develop models or guidelines for effective conflict resolution in schools that principals can apply in various contexts.

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