

SUFISM-BASED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTSHolid Batsal¹, Su'ud Intan², and Khoifaturrahman³¹ At-Taqwa Islamic Institute Bondowoso, Bondowoso, Indonesia² At-Taqwa Islamic Institute Bondowoso, Bondowoso, Indonesia³ At-Taqwa Islamic Institute Bondowoso, Bondowoso, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:**

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Abstract

Islamic educational institutions frequently experience conflicts involving teachers, students, administrators, and organizational structures, yet prevailing approaches remain largely administrative and technical, without integrating the spiritual values central to their identity. This study addresses the lack of a comprehensive framework that connects conflict management, Sufism, and Islamic education by examining how Sufi principles may inform and enrich conflict-resolution practices. The research aims to identify relevant scholarly literature from the past 10–15 years, classify conflict-management approaches within Islamic educational settings, explore Sufi values such as *sabr*, *ikhlas*, *tawadhu'*, *tasamuh*, *muhasabah*, and *tazkiyatun nafs*, formulate Sufi-based conflict-management principles, develop a theoretical model linking spirituality and organizational behavior, and provide practical recommendations for educational leaders. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), the study analyzes primary and secondary sources from academic journals, books, and scientific publications. Data were collected through structured search protocols, inclusion–exclusion criteria, quality appraisal, and content analysis. The findings reveal that Sufi virtues directly correspond to emotional, relational, and behavioral factors underlying conflicts in Islamic educational institutions. The synthesis demonstrates that Sufism offers a practical spiritual-organizational approach capable of addressing interpersonal tensions and strengthening institutional harmony. The study concludes that integrating Sufi values into conflict-management frameworks can enhance organizational coherence while reinforcing the ethical mission of Islamic education. It further argues that Sufism is not merely a theological tradition but a resource for transformative leadership, emotional regulation, and value-based governance. Limitations of the review open pathways for future empirical and interdisciplinary research.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Islamic education, Sufism



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, pesantren, and Islamic schools encounter diverse forms of conflict arising from interactions among educational stakeholders, including teacher–student tensions, disputes among teachers, disagreements between teachers and leaders, and friction between administrative staff and management (Nadziro dkk., 2023). These conflicts often emerge due to work pressure, ineffective communication, variations in leadership style, and value differences embedded within the institutional culture. Traditionally, conflict resolution in these institutions relies on administrative approaches such as negotiation, compromise, or mediation, which emphasize technical solutions rather than spiritual considerations. However, Islamic educational institutions are inherently grounded in moral and spiritual identity, which should play a significant role in conflict resolution processes. The lack of alignment between technical approaches and spiritual identity results in superficial conflict management outcomes. Therefore, it becomes essential to explore alternative frameworks that incorporate spiritual dimensions, including Sufism, to enrich conflict management strategies in Islamic educational settings.

Literature findings indicate that modern conflict management theories are insufficient to address the complexity of conflicts in Islamic educational environments because these theories prioritize organizational rationality and neglect spiritual factors that greatly influence human behavior. Frameworks such as the Thomas–Kilmann model, Robbins’ conflict process theory, and organizational behavior concepts provide technical strategies but overlook emotional and spiritual dimensions central to interactions within Islamic institutions. Meanwhile, Sufi values—such as patience, humility, sincerity, tolerance, wisdom, and self-purification—offer deep insights into emotional regulation and harmonious social relationships, yet they remain minimally integrated into mainstream conflict management theories. Existing studies are fragmented, focusing separately on Sufism as leadership ethics, organizational spirituality, or personal morality, without developing a comprehensive model linking Sufism to conflict management. This gap underscores the need for a systematic review that unifies these perspectives and assesses their potential application within Islamic educational contexts.

This study aims to identify scientific literature discussing the intersection of conflict management, Sufism, and Islamic education over the past ten to fifteen years. Conducting such identification is essential for understanding patterns, academic contributions, and conceptual developments relating to the integration of Sufi values in educational conflict management. The study also seeks to analyze and classify conflict management approaches applied within Islamic educational institutions based on evidence from previous literature. Furthermore, it intends to reveal key Sufi values—such as patience, sincerity, humility, tolerance, self-reflection, and self-purification—as fundamental spiritual principles that contribute to reducing

conflict. Another goal of this research is to formulate practical Sufism-based conflict management principles suitable for Islamic educational institutions and to develop a theoretical framework that explains how Sufism can function as a spiritual-organizational approach in resolving conflicts. Ultimately, this study offers practical recommendations for school leaders, teachers, and policymakers in integrating Sufi values into institutional governance.

Considering the empirical realities of conflict and the scholarly gap regarding the integration of Sufism into conflict management, this research becomes both relevant and necessary. Conventional conflict management approaches have not produced comprehensive solutions because they fail to address the spiritual and emotional roots of conflict among individuals in Islamic educational institutions. In contrast, Sufi values possess strong potential to cultivate emotional stability, gentleness, and wisdom—qualities essential for effective conflict resolution. Developing a theoretical and practical model of conflict management grounded in Sufism would therefore align more authentically with the spiritual identity of Islamic educational institutions. Based on these arguments and the study's stated objectives, this research asserts that integrating Sufism into conflict management is not only theoretically significant but also an urgent need to enhance social harmony and institutional governance within Islamic educational environments.

Conflict management within Islamic educational institutions refers to a systematic process of identifying, understanding, and regulating tensions that arise between individuals or groups to maintain stability and productivity (Afifah dkk., 2024; Dewi dkk., 2024; Supendi, 2022). As a concept, conflict management does not merely involve resolving disputes but encompasses preventive strategies that anticipate potential misunderstandings caused by differing perceptions, values, workloads, or communication styles. Contemporary literature views conflict as a phenomenon that can foster innovation and organizational growth when addressed constructively (Afrilianty dkk., 2025; Nurjaman dkk., 2025; Shutadi dkk., 2025). In Islamic educational settings, the concept becomes more intricate because conflicts also intersect with moral, spiritual, and cultural dimensions that characterize the institution. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of conflict management should include structural, interpersonal, psychological, and spiritual perspectives to align effectively with the unique nature of Islamic educational organizations.

The categorization of conflict management typically includes interpersonal conflict, intrapersonal conflict, group conflict, structural conflict, and value-based conflict. Interpersonal conflict often stems from differences in communication styles, expectations, or professional pressures among teachers, students, and staff (Bathara & Adab, 2024; Inayah dkk., 2024; Mukhtar Syaib & Mardia, 2023). Intrapersonal conflict occurs when individuals experience inner tension related to their professional responsibilities and spiritual commitments. Group conflicts emerge between teaching teams or administrative units with differing interests or visions. Structural conflicts result from incompatible policies, organizational hierarchies, or procedural inconsistencies. Meanwhile, value-based conflicts arise when moral and religious principles clash within the institutional environment. Each category requires distinct strategies that must be adapted rather than generalized. Understanding these categories allows Islamic educational institutions to formulate conflict management approaches that are accurate, balanced, and in harmony with their spiritual and organizational identity.

Sufism is conceptually defined as the process of spiritual purification aimed at bringing individuals closer to God through sincere intention, self-discipline, and the strengthening of moral consciousness (Ilallah dkk., 2022; Mushofa dkk., 2025; Muvid, 2020). Classical Islamic scholarship views Sufism as a path toward ethical perfection through practices such as self-reflection, inner struggle, and the purification of the soul (Anwar & Murtadho, 2025; Harahap dkk., 2023; Ihwan, 2025). This definition positions Sufism not merely as ritual devotion but as an ethical and psychological discipline that fosters clarity of thought and wisdom in action. In social contexts, Sufism serves as a framework for character development that promotes

patience, humility, sincerity, and emotional stability (Sihombing & Bahafi Alamsyah, 2024; Udin dkk., 2025; Ulfa & Nurhayati, 2025). These qualities render Sufism highly relevant to interpersonal relations, particularly within Islamic educational institutions that require harmony and emotional resilience. Thus, Sufism provides a spiritual foundation that contributes significantly to conflict management through reflective, calm, and transformative approaches.

The categorization of Sufism is generally divided into ethical Sufism, practical Sufism, and philosophical Sufism, each representing distinct spiritual orientations. Ethical Sufism emphasizes character formation through virtues such as patience, humility, gratitude, and sincerity, serving as the foundation for emotional regulation. Practical Sufism focuses on rituals and spiritual exercises such as remembrance, meditation, and disciplined worship aimed at strengthening focus and inner tranquility. Philosophical Sufism examines metaphysical principles concerning the relationship between God, humanity, and existence. These three forms of Sufism complement one another and collectively shape moral awareness and emotional intelligence among educators and students. By comprehending these diverse expressions of Sufism, Islamic educational institutions can integrate spiritual values more systematically into organizational life and conflict management practices.

Islamic education is defined as a process of nurturing individuals to become faithful, knowledgeable, and virtuous through the transmission of knowledge, cultivation of values, and reinforcement of behaviors aligned with Islamic teachings (Najamudin & Hidayat, 2024; Panji dkk., 2023). This definition highlights that Islamic education extends beyond academic instruction to include moral and spiritual formation. Modern scholarship views Islamic education as a holistic system that integrates intellectual, moral, emotional, and social dimensions to develop complete human beings. Institutions such as madrasahs, pesantrens, and Islamic schools aim to internalize Islamic values through curriculum design, teacher modeling, institutional culture, and communal practices. Consequently, the definition of Islamic education is inseparable from the principles of *tarbiyah*, *ta'dib*, and *ta'lim*, which structure the development of human character. Thus, Islamic education provides a framework for managing conflicts ethically, wisely, and spiritually.

The categorization of Islamic education includes dimensions of objectives, curriculum, methodology, institutional forms, and organizational culture. In terms of objectives, Islamic education aims to develop individuals who embody intellectual competence and spiritual integrity. From a curricular perspective, Islamic education integrates religious sciences with general knowledge to produce balanced learners. Its methodologies emphasize exemplary behavior, dialogue-based teaching, value internalization, and spiritual orientation in learning. Institutionally, Islamic education appears in the form of madrasahs, pesantrens, Islamic integrated schools, and various religious learning centers. Organizational culture within these institutions stresses values such as brotherhood, discipline, responsibility, and respect. These categories demonstrate the comprehensive nature of Islamic education and highlight the need for conflict management approaches that extend beyond administrative techniques to spiritual methods that support harmony and institutional effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

The object of this study is the dynamics of conflict occurring within Islamic educational institutions—namely madrasahs, pesantrens, and Islamic schools—which often face a wide spectrum of interpersonal and organizational tensions. These conflicts include disputes between teachers and students, disagreements among teachers, friction between teachers and school leaders, tensions between administrative staff and management, and conflicts related to curriculum development and organizational culture. Such conflicts typically arise from work pressure, inadequate communication, differing leadership styles, and clashes of values within the institution. Most conflict management strategies applied in Islamic schools remain

administrative and technical, relying on negotiation, compromise, and mediation without integrating the spiritual dimensions that form the core identity of Islamic education. Meanwhile, Sufism offers spiritual values such as patience, humility, sincerity, tolerance (tasamuh), wisdom (mudarah), and tazkiyatun nafs as foundations for emotional regulation and harmonious relationships. However, the integration of Sufism into conflict management practices has rarely been examined comprehensively. Prior studies remain fragmented—some explore Sufism within leadership ethics or organizational spirituality, but none systematically synthesize its contributions to conflict management in Islamic educational settings. Given that Islamic education requires conflict resolution models that are effective, professional, and spiritually grounded, a systematic investigation is necessary to formulate principles and patterns of Sufi-based conflict management.

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as its primary research design, using a structured review of scholarly sources to synthesize existing knowledge on conflict management and Sufism within Islamic educational institutions. Primary data consist of academic literature discussing conflict occurrences in madrasahs, pesantrens, and Islamic schools—ranging from teacher–student conflicts, teacher–teacher disagreements, tensions between teachers and leadership, staff–management conflicts, to curricular and cultural disputes. These conflicts generally stem from occupational stress, ineffective communication, divergent leadership styles, and value-based disagreements. The literature also highlights the dominance of administrative conflict resolution approaches that overlook spiritual aspects inherent to Islamic educational identity. Meanwhile, Sufism emphasizes virtues such as patience, humility, sincerity, tolerance, wisdom, and spiritual purification, yet its integration into conflict management remains underexplored. Previous research on Sufi-based conflict management is fragmented across themes of leadership ethics and organizational spirituality without offering a systematic synthesis. Secondary data include books, journal articles, and scientific studies that discuss conflict management, Sufism, and Islamic education more broadly. Together, these data sources allow the SLR to identify gaps, construct themes, and provide a comprehensive understanding grounded in diverse scholarly perspectives.

This study draws upon multiple theoretical frameworks to construct a comprehensive analytical foundation. In contemporary management studies, conflict is understood as a strategic process that can be directed toward constructive outcomes. A central framework is the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), which identifies five conflict-handling styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Each style reflects different levels of assertiveness and cooperativeness, offering insights into how individuals in Islamic educational settings respond to tensions. Complementing this, Robbins’ theory of conflict management emphasizes three dimensions: sources of conflict, conflict processes, and resolution techniques. Robbins identifies communication breakdowns, rigid structures, and personal differences as primary conflict triggers while outlining resolution methods such as negotiation, facilitation, mediation, and organizational restructuring. In Islamic educational contexts, Organizational Behavior theory is relevant as it examines how institutional culture, values, and structure shape conflict responses. Theories by Deutsch and Fisher further contribute by framing conflict in educational institutions as potentially constructive when managed through cooperation, empathy, and human-centered approaches. The research also integrates Sufi theoretical constructs, especially tazkiyatun nafs as articulated by Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim, which emphasize emotional control, purification of the soul, and elimination of destructive traits such as anger, envy, and ego. Sufi virtues—patience, humility, sincerity, tolerance, self-reflection, and positive regard toward others—form psychological and moral foundations for conflict reduction. Concepts such as *ihsan* and *riyadhah an-nafs* further promote moral excellence and disciplined spiritual training, both essential for conflict harmony. These spiritual frameworks align with Islamic educational management theories emphasizing *syura*, justice, trustworthiness, and ethical leadership.

Spiritual leadership theory reinforces this by highlighting meaningful vision, intrinsic motivation, and ethical empowerment as essential traits of leaders capable of resolving conflicts wisely and compassionately. Collectively, these theories provide the philosophical and analytical basis for examining Sufi-infused conflict management.

The research process follows a rigorous Systematic Literature Review (SLR) procedure to ensure transparency, replicability, and scholarly reliability. The first step involves formulating clear and specific research questions aligned with the study's objective of identifying and synthesizing Sufi-based conflict management principles within Islamic educational institutions. A detailed research protocol is then developed, including search strategies, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and quality assessment procedures. Data collection is conducted by systematically searching electronic academic databases using predetermined keywords related to conflict management, Sufism, Islamic education, and organizational behavior. After identifying relevant publications, the studies are screened for eligibility based on methodological rigor, relevance to the research objective, and conceptual contribution. The selected studies undergo a quality appraisal using established assessment tools. Data extraction is performed through structured coding sheets to capture relevant themes, conceptual models, findings, and methodological characteristics. This structured process ensures that the review minimizes bias and maintains conceptual consistency throughout the analysis.

This study employs content analysis as its primary data analysis technique, enabling a systematic examination and interpretation of the collected literature. Content analysis involves organizing, coding, and categorizing textual data to identify meaningful patterns, recurring themes, conceptual relationships, and theoretical insights relevant to conflict management, Sufism, and Islamic education. Through inductive and deductive coding, the analysis synthesizes diverse scholarly findings into coherent conceptual frameworks. The process includes comparing themes across studies, identifying consistencies and discrepancies, and mapping the contribution of Sufi values to conflict management practices within Islamic educational institutions. This analytical approach allows the study to generate a structured synthesis and form a comprehensive understanding of how spiritual principles can enrich conflict management models. Ultimately, content analysis supports the development of an integrated conceptual framework that reflects both empirical evidence and theoretical constructs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature on conflict management reviewed in this study presents a wide range of concepts, definitions, and frameworks describing how conflicts emerge and are handled within organizations. Across the collected sources, conflict is commonly defined as a form of disagreement or tension arising from differences in goals, perceptions, values, or interests among individuals or groups. The literature describes several recurring sources of conflict, including communication barriers, role ambiguity, task interdependence, leadership style discrepancies, and organizational structural issues. Models such as the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) and Robbins' conflict process theory are frequently referenced, outlining strategies such as competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating as typical responses to conflict. The reviewed publications also describe formal mechanisms used in organizational settings such as negotiation, mediation, group facilitation, and managerial intervention. Several studies document that conflicts often occur in educational organizations due to workload, authority distribution, policy implementation, and interpersonal relationships between educators, students, and administrators.

The reviewed literature collectively explains that conflict is viewed as an inevitable phenomenon within institutions and is influenced by structural, interpersonal, and situational factors. Communication-related conflicts are explained as the result of unclear messages, differing interpretations, or insufficient information flow. Conflicts related to leadership styles are explained through variations in decision-making approaches, degrees of authoritarianism, and inconsistencies in applying policies. Studies further explain that conflict-handling strategies are chosen based on situational demands, personality traits, and hierarchical positions within an organization. The literature describes collaboration and compromise as strategies most frequently recommended in educational contexts, while avoidance or competition tends to be applied in situations involving power imbalances or sensitive organizational issues. In explaining these findings, the literature highlights that effective conflict management requires structured procedures, clear communication channels, and supportive organizational culture.

The descriptive patterns identified in the conflict management literature show a direct relationship with the existing challenges in Islamic educational environments. The reviewed publications describe conflicts that resemble those often reported in madrasahs, pesantrens, and Islamic schools, such as interpersonal disagreements, communication failures, and leadership-related tensions. The explanation of conflict-handling strategies in the literature corresponds with the predominantly technical and administrative approaches observed in Islamic educational settings. The literature does not extensively describe spiritual or value-based conflict management models, which aligns with the gap identified in this research. As such, the relationship between the described data and the research problem reflects that while conflict management frameworks are well established, they do not incorporate Sufi values that could potentially enrich conflict-resolution practices in Islamic educational institutions.

The reviewed literature on Sufism provides descriptions of core concepts, spiritual practices, and ethical values that characterize the Sufi tradition. Common themes include *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), *mujahadah* (spiritual exertion), *riyadhah an-nafs* (disciplining the self), *ihsan* (excellence in conduct), *tawadhu'* (humility), *sabr* (patience), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and *tasamuh* (tolerance). Several publications describe Sufism as a process of cultivating inner tranquility and spiritual awareness through practices such as *dhikr*, contemplation, self-reflection, and ethical conduct. The literature frequently references classical Sufi thinkers such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, and Rumi, highlighting their emphasis on emotional control, ego reduction, and harmonious interpersonal relations. The reviewed studies also describe the social dimension of Sufism, which encourages compassion, empathy, and peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities.

In explaining the data, the literature portrays Sufism as a comprehensive spiritual framework that regulates emotions, behavior, and interpersonal interactions. Purification of the soul is explained as the process of eliminating traits such as anger, envy, arrogance, and hostility, which are described as primary sources of social tension. Humility and sincerity are explained as psychological attitudes that reduce ego-driven reactions during interpersonal disagreements. Patience and tolerance are explained as moral virtues that allow individuals to control impulsive responses and avoid escalating conflict. The literature also explains that Sufi teachings encourage self-awareness, introspection, and moral responsibility, which collectively support calmness, respect, and harmony in relationships. Overall, Sufism is explained as not only a spiritual path but also an ethical system with strong potential relevance to interpersonal and organizational settings.

The descriptive and explanatory patterns found in the Sufism literature relate directly to the research problem because they reveal spiritual and ethical values that align with the needs of Islamic educational institutions experiencing recurring conflicts. The reviewed studies describe Sufi virtues that correspond to behavioral attributes needed for managing interpersonal tensions, such as patience, humility, sincerity, and self-control. The explanations provided in the literature describe emotional regulation and moral refinement, which match the types of

responses required to address communication breakdowns, leadership conflicts, and interpersonal disputes frequently found in Islamic schools, madrasahs, and pesantrens. The relationship between these data and the research problem indicates that Sufism contains conceptual elements that could be integrated into conflict management practices, thereby addressing the gap identified in the conflict management literature.

The collected literature on Islamic education describes Islamic educational institutions as organizations that operate on religious values, spiritual goals, and moral formation principles. The publications consistently describe that Islamic schools, madrasahs, and pesantrens emphasize character development, ethical behavior, discipline, and religious learning as core components of their educational mission. The literature identifies various institutional actors including teachers, students, administrators, and religious leaders who interact within structured organizational settings. Several studies describe internal challenges such as curriculum changes, leadership transitions, administrative coordination, and interpersonal relationships that influence institutional dynamics. Others document the presence of conflicts arising from differences in pedagogical approaches, communication patterns, workload distribution, and authority structures within Islamic educational institutions.

The reviewed literature explains that Islamic educational institutions face complex organizational realities due to the integration of religious missions with administrative responsibilities. Conflicts are explained as emerging from diverse expectations among teachers, students, and leaders concerning educational outcomes, discipline systems, and institutional culture. The literature explains that Islamic educational institutions are governed by moral and spiritual values, but their conflict-resolution practices tend to rely on conventional administrative mechanisms. The relationship structures, leadership patterns, and decision-making processes in Islamic education are explained as factors influencing how conflicts arise and are managed. The literature also explains that Islamic educational environments are expected to reflect Islamic ethical principles, although practical challenges often disrupt the ideal conditions.

The described and explained data on Islamic education relate closely to the research problem because they show that conflicts in Islamic educational settings are frequent, multifaceted, and influenced by organizational structure and interpersonal dynamics. The literature describes conflicts similar to those identified in the context of Islamic schools, madrasahs, and pesantrens, linking them to communication barriers, leadership practices, and administrative demands. The explanations provided in the publications show that while Islamic institutions emphasize moral and spiritual values, these values are not consistently integrated into formal conflict-management procedures. This relationship highlights the gap that the research seeks to address: the need for a conflict-management model that aligns with Islamic principles by incorporating Sufi-based values into the organizational practices of Islamic educational institutions.

Table 1. Research Findings Based on the Study Objectives

No.	Assessment Aspect	Score
1	Identify scholarly literature on the relationship between conflict management, Sufism, and Islamic education (last 10–15 years).	The reviewed literature indicates a fragmented but growing scholarly interest in integrating spirituality with organizational and educational management. Studies on Islamic education frequently discuss leadership ethics and value-based governance, while Sufism is examined mostly as a moral framework. However, only a limited number explicitly connect Sufism with conflict management, revealing a significant conceptual gap that the present study addresses.

2	Analyze and classify conflict-management approaches emerging in Islamic educational institutions.	The synthesis shows that Islamic schools, madrasahs, and pesantren predominantly employ administrative–technical approaches such as negotiation, mediation, compromise, and procedural discipline systems. Some studies highlight culturally influenced styles such as musyawarah and collective deliberation. However, few frameworks incorporate emotional–spiritual regulation, suggesting the absence of spiritually grounded conflict-management strategies.
3	Identify relevant Sufi values for conflict management (sabr, ikhlas, tawadhu', tasamuh, muhasabah, tazkiyatun nafs).	The literature consistently emphasizes these values as foundations for emotional control, relational harmony, and ego refinement. Sabr supports self-restraint in heated interactions; ikhlas stabilizes intentions; tawadhu' reduces hierarchical tension; tasamuh fosters tolerance; muhasabah enables self-critique before blame; and tazkiyatun nafs purifies destructive impulses. Each value aligns with psychological and relational dimensions of conflict.
4	Formulate Sufi-based principles of conflict management applicable to Islamic educational institutions.	Findings point to four core principles: (1) Inner purification before external resolution (tazkiyah as a prerequisite for organizational harmony); (2) Humility-centered communication rooted in tawadhu' and tasamuh; (3) Emotionally intelligent leadership grounded in sabr and ikhlas; (4) Reflective decision-making through muhasabah and spiritual consultation. These principles structurally complement mainstream conflict-management models.
5	Develop a theoretical framework describing Sufism as a spiritual–organizational approach to conflict reduction and resolution.	The integrated framework positions Sufism as a multidimensional mechanism affecting intrapersonal regulation, interpersonal ethics, and institutional culture. Sufi virtues function as psychological buffers that reduce destructive conflict and enhance cooperative behavior. When incorporated into organizational behavior and educational leadership theories, Sufism provides a holistic paradigm linking spirituality with governance and relational dynamics.
6	Provide practical recommendations for leaders in Islamic educational institutions.	Recommended practices include embedding Sufi values into leadership training, establishing reflective forums such as muhasabah circles, integrating tazkiyatun nafs into teacher development programs, promoting humility-based communication norms, and designing policies that align conflict-resolution procedures with spiritual ethics. These recommendations support both administrative effectiveness and spiritual coherence within educational governance.

The findings of this study indicate that the three bodies of literature—conflict management, Sufism, and Islamic education—reveal a significant conceptual gap that has not been adequately addressed in prior scholarship. Conflict management studies predominantly emphasize structural and procedural mechanisms, while Sufism literature highlights spiritual and ethical formations, and Islamic education research documents recurring conflicts rooted in communication, leadership, and organizational culture. When these datasets are analytically compared, it becomes evident that Islamic educational institutions tend to rely heavily on administrative conflict-resolution procedures that do not incorporate the moral-spiritual values

central to their institutional identity. The systematic mapping of sources also uncovers that Sufi virtues resonate with the emotional and relational issues frequently observed in educational conflicts, yet these virtues have not been formalized into an operational model. Overall, the synthesis suggests that integrating Sufi-based ethical principles into conflict-management frameworks could provide a more holistic, value-consistent approach for Islamic educational institutions.

Comparative analysis with previous studies demonstrates that this research offers a clearer and more integrated conceptual bridge than prior works, which tended to address Sufism and organizational behavior separately. Studies on leadership ethics or spiritual management have acknowledged the value of spiritual dispositions, yet they rarely extend these insights into systematic conflict-management frameworks. Meanwhile, educational research focusing on Islamic institutions has primarily examined conflicts descriptively rather than proposing spiritually grounded resolutions. By synthesizing findings across three domains through a systematic literature review, this study contributes a more comprehensive analytical perspective that previous works have not provided. It highlights how Sufi virtues directly correspond to the psychological, interpersonal, and structural dynamics underlying conflicts in Islamic schools, madrasahs, and pesantrens. Thus, the strength of this study lies in its ability to articulate an integrative model that surpasses earlier fragmented studies, positioning Sufism not merely as a moral ideal but as an actionable organizational resource.

The findings of this study reflect the substantial potential of Sufi-based principles to reshape the way Islamic educational institutions conceptualize and manage conflict. The integration of values such as patience, humility, openness, and self-purification suggests a paradigm that transcends technical solutions and addresses the deeper emotional and relational layers that often fuel disagreements. This reflection highlights that educational conflicts are not solely administrative phenomena but are deeply connected to human behavior, spiritual maturity, and ethical awareness. Recognizing this reality underscores the benefit of aligning conflict-management strategies with the foundational values that Islamic institutions are meant to cultivate. The findings therefore serve as a reminder that a spiritually informed approach is not merely complementary but essential, as it reinforces the institution's educational mission while fostering healthier interpersonal relationships and organizational harmony.

The implications of this study extend across theoretical, practical, and policy dimensions. Theoretically, the study opens pathways for integrating spiritual-organizational approaches into the broader discourse on conflict management, offering a culturally and religiously grounded alternative to conventional models. Practically, the findings provide actionable guidance for educators, administrators, and institutional leaders seeking approaches that align with Islamic values while enhancing institutional harmony. The results imply that conflict management in Islamic educational settings should no longer be confined to procedural interventions but should incorporate structured spiritual-ethical training anchored in Sufi teachings. At the policy level, the findings suggest that ministries, educational boards, and pesantren authorities may consider formalizing spiritual-ethical components in leadership development and teacher-training programs. These implications collectively demonstrate that adopting Sufi-based conflict-management principles could strengthen institutional identity while improving relational and organizational well-being.

The findings materialized in their present form because the three domains examined—conflict management, Sufism, and Islamic education—operate on distinct yet complementary conceptual foundations that have historically evolved in isolation. Conflict-management scholarship, rooted in organizational behavior theory, prioritizes procedural efficiency, structural clarity, and behavioral strategies. Meanwhile, Sufism is grounded in moral psychology and spiritual transformation, emphasizing inner purification and emotional discipline. Islamic educational literature, on the other hand, documents real organizational challenges while simultaneously upholding the institution's spiritual mission. The analysis

reveals that these domains intersect precisely on issues of relational tension and emotional management, but previous research failed to integrate them into a unified framework. Thus, the synthesis produced by this study reflects not only the conceptual richness of each field but also the methodological strength of the systematic review in identifying convergent themes that individual studies overlooked.

Based on these analytical insights, several strategic actions emerge as essential for Islamic educational institutions. Leaders and policymakers should begin by incorporating Sufi-based emotional and ethical training into professional development programs for teachers and administrators, ensuring that conflict-resolution practices reflect institutional values. Institutions should develop guidelines that operationalize virtues such as patience, humility, and self-reflection into clear behavioral expectations during conflict situations. It is also recommended that organizational structures be redesigned to encourage contemplative dialogue, structured mediation infused with spiritual principles, and reflective practices such as muhasabah sessions among staff. Additionally, stakeholders should integrate Sufi-inspired leadership models into governance frameworks to promote calm decision-making, empathetic communication, and conflict sensitivity. By adopting these actions, Islamic educational environments can foster more harmonious relationships and strengthen institutional identity while addressing conflicts in ways that are spiritually meaningful and educationally effective.

CONCLUSION

The most striking finding of this research is that Sufi principles—often perceived as abstract spiritual ideals—closely align with and directly address the root causes of conflicts in Islamic educational institutions. This discovery challenges the long-standing assumption that conflict management must rely primarily on administrative or technical procedures. Instead, the study reveals that spiritual virtues such as humility, patience, and self-purification possess concrete organizational relevance, offering a transformative approach that reorients conflict management from mere problem-solving to character-building and relational healing. The realization that classical Sufi teachings map seamlessly onto modern organizational challenges demonstrates the unexpected compatibility between spiritual psychology and contemporary educational governance. This finding underscores that Sufism is not merely a theological tradition but a practical framework capable of reshaping daily interactions and leadership behaviors within Islamic educational settings.

This study contributes significantly to the theoretical advancement of Islamic education and organizational management by articulating a new integrative framework that merges conflict-management theory with Sufi moral psychology. Theoretically, it expands the discourse by demonstrating that spiritual-organizational approaches can serve as legitimate and analytically robust models within modern educational contexts. Practically, the research offers concrete insights that can be applied by school leaders, teachers, and policymakers, providing a blueprint for embedding Sufi-based values into professional development, governance practices, and institutional culture. The proposed integration not only enhances conflict-resolution effectiveness but also reinforces the spiritual mission of Islamic educational institutions, positioning them as environments where ethical behavior and emotional discipline are cultivated through deliberate organizational strategies. The dual contribution strengthens both academic inquiry and practical application in ways rarely addressed in prior research.

Although this study is comprehensive in its systematic review, its scope remains limited to published literature within the last 10–15 years, which means earlier classical or historical perspectives on Sufism and educational governance were not fully explored. This limitation does not weaken the study but rather highlights promising opportunities for future research. Subsequent studies may expand the temporal range of the review, incorporate empirical investigations in real educational settings, or develop intervention models tested through action

research. Researchers could also examine variations across different types of Islamic institutions or compare Sufi-based conflict-management approaches with other spiritual-organizational frameworks. These directions open pathways for deeper theoretical refinement and practical innovation, ensuring that the conceptual model proposed in this study continues to evolve and inspire further scholarly engagement.

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