

**PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT:
CAUSES AND RESOLUTION STRATEGIES**

**KEPEMIMPINAN KEPALA SEKOLAH DAN KONFLIK INTERPERSONAL
GURU: PENYEBAB DAN STRATEGI PENYELESAIANNYA**

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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal conflict in the school environment is an unavoidable phenomenon in the dynamics of modern educational organizations. Intense interaction between teachers, differences in social backgrounds, professional values, and performance demands often trigger conflicts that have an impact on the work climate and the quality of learning (Rahmawati & Hasanah, 2025). In this context, the leadership of the principal has a strategic role as a policy director, conflict mediator, and shaper of the school organizational culture (Ahmad & Suryani, 2025). This article aims to comprehensively review the results of research in the last two years (2024–2025) related to the leadership of principals and teachers' interpersonal conflicts, focusing on the causes of conflicts, conflict dynamics, and resolution strategies. The method used was a literature study of 15 articles from national and international journals. The results of the study showed that teachers' interpersonal conflicts were influenced by communication factors, differences in professional perceptions, workload, organizational culture, and the principal's leadership style. Effective conflict resolution strategies are highly determined by transformational, ethical, and collaborative leadership that emphasizes dialogue, justice, and teacher empowerment (Putra & Sari, 2025; Wahyuni & Prabowo, 2025).

Keywords: Principal's Leadership, Interpersonal Conflict, Teachers, Conflict Management

ABSTRAK

Konflik interpersonal di lingkungan sekolah merupakan fenomena yang tak terhindarkan dalam dinamika organisasi pendidikan modern. Interaksi intens antar guru, perbedaan latar belakang sosial, nilai-nilai profesional, dan tuntutan kinerja seringkali memicu konflik yang berdampak pada iklim kerja dan kualitas pembelajaran (Rahmawati & Hasanah, 2025). Dalam konteks ini, kepemimpinan kepala sekolah memiliki peran strategis sebagai pengarah kebijakan, mediator konflik, dan pembentuk budaya organisasi sekolah (Ahmad & Suryani, 2025). Artikel ini bertujuan untuk meninjau secara komprehensif hasil penelitian dalam dua tahun terakhir (2024–2025) yang berkaitan dengan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan konflik interpersonal guru, dengan fokus pada penyebab konflik, dinamika konflik, dan strategi penyelesaian. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dari 15 artikel dari jurnal nasional dan internasional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konflik interpersonal guru dipengaruhi oleh faktor komunikasi, perbedaan persepsi profesional, beban kerja, budaya organisasi, dan gaya kepemimpinan kepala sekolah. Strategi penyelesaian konflik yang efektif sangat ditentukan oleh kepemimpinan transformasional, etis, dan kolaboratif yang menekankan dialog, keadilan, dan pemberdayaan guru (Putra & Sari, 2025; Wahyuni & Prabowo, 2025).

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah, Konflik Interpersonal, Guru, Manajemen Konflik

INTRODUCTION

Schools as educational organizations are complex social systems, in which there is continuous interaction between individuals with diverse professional backgrounds, characters, and interests (Fadli & Nasution, 2024). Teachers as the main actors in the learning process not only carry out pedagogical roles, but also interact in organizational structures that demand intensive cooperation, coordination, and communication. This condition makes schools a potential space for interpersonal conflicts.

Teachers' interpersonal conflicts often arise in the form of differences in views on learning methods, division of tasks, performance assessments, and daily work relationships (Rahmawati & Hasanah, 2025). Conflicts that are not managed effectively can have a negative impact on teachers' work motivation,

school climate, and the quality of educational services (Lestari & Rahman, 2024). Conversely, constructively managed conflicts can be a source of organizational learning and improve the quality of decision-making.

In this context, the principal has a central role in managing teachers' interpersonal conflicts. The principal not only functions as an administrator, but also as a learning leader and human resource manager (Anwar & Hakim, 2024). The leadership style of the principal greatly determines whether conflict develops into a destructive conflict or instead becomes a functional conflict that encourages organizational improvement (Ahmad & Suryani, 2025).

Various studies over the past two years have shown increasing attention to the relationship between principals' leadership and teachers' interpersonal

conflicts. However, these findings are still scattered and have not been comprehensively integrated. Therefore, this article aims to conduct an in-depth literature review to identify the patterns that cause teachers' interpersonal conflicts, the leadership role of principals, and effective conflict resolution strategies based on the results of cutting-edge research.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a literature review method with a narrative-analytical approach. The data source was obtained from 15 national and international journal articles published in the 2024–2025 period and discussed the topic of principals' leadership and teachers' interpersonal conflicts (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2025).

The criteria for selecting the article include: (1) the relevance of the topic to the focus of the study, (2) the clarity of the research methodology, and (3) the contribution of the findings to the development of leadership concepts and conflict management in schools. The analysis process is carried out through the stages of theme identification, categorization of findings, comparative analysis between studies, and synthesis of research results to produce conceptual conclusions (Nurhadi & Safitri, 2024).

This approach was chosen because it allows the authors to explore the trends of empirical findings, identify similarities and differences in research results, and formulate theoretical and practical implications for the leadership of principals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Teacher Interpersonal Conflict in School Organization

Interpersonal conflict in school organizations can be understood as a mismatch of interests, perceptions, or values between individuals who interact in the work environment (Saputra & Yuliani, 2024). These conflicts are generally personal, but they have far-reaching implications for organizational performance.

In the context of schools, teachers' interpersonal conflicts often arise due to differences in educational backgrounds, teaching experience, and professional orientation (Rahmawati & Hasanah, 2025). Such conflicts can be either latent

or open, depending on how the parties involved manage the differences.

The literature shows that conflict does not always have a negative impact. Conflicts that are managed constructively can encourage reflection, innovation, and improve the quality of teamwork (Nurhadi & Safitri, 2024). However, conflicts left unproperly managed have the potential to damage professional relationships and lower teacher performance.

Factors Causing Interpersonal Conflict in Teachers

The results of the review show that teachers' interpersonal conflicts are influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include differences in personality, communication style, and professional values (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2025). Teachers with less assertive or defensive communication styles are more prone to conflict with colleagues.

In addition, differences in perceptions about roles and responsibilities also trigger conflicts. Teachers often have different interpretations regarding performance standards, division of tasks, and work priorities (Putra & Sari, 2025). When these differences are not communicated openly, interpersonal conflict becomes difficult to avoid.

External factors are related to the school organizational system, such as high workload, limited resources, and school policies that are considered unfair (Siregar & Lubis, 2025). High work pressure makes teachers more sensitive to differences and magnifies the potential for conflict.

Principal's Leadership and Conflict Dynamics

The leadership of the principal is a key factor in the dynamics of teachers' interpersonal conflicts. School principals have formal and informal authority to regulate employment relations, shape organizational culture, and mediate conflicts that arise (Anwar & Hakim, 2024).

Transformational leadership is characterized by the ability of the principal to inspire, motivate, and empower teachers. Research shows that transformational leadership is able to reduce the intensity of interpersonal conflicts by creating a positive and

communicative work climate (Ahmad & Suryani, 2025).

Conversely, authoritarian leadership tends to increase the potential for conflict because teachers feel less involved in decision-making and less professionally valued (Fadli & Nasution, 2024).

Ethical and Collaborative Leadership

Ethical leadership emphasizes fairness, transparency, and integrity in decision-making. Principals who implement ethical leadership are able to build teacher trust, so that conflicts can be resolved objectively and dialogically (Arifin & Wulandari, 2025).

In addition, collaborative leadership encourages the active involvement of teachers in problem-solving. This approach allows teachers to feel that they have a shared responsibility in resolving conflicts, so that professional relationships are maintained (Wahyuni & Prabowo, 2025).

Preventive Strategies for Conflict Resolution

Preventive strategies aim to prevent conflicts from developing into open conflicts. These strategies include strengthening a collaborative culture, improving interpersonal communication, and conflict management training for teachers (Nurhadi & Safitri, 2024).

The principal can initiate regular discussion forums and reflective activities to increase mutual understanding between teachers. With effective communication, the potential for conflict can be minimized early (Lestari & Rahman, 2024).

Curative Strategies for Conflict Resolution

Curative strategies are carried out when interpersonal conflicts have arisen. Mediation by school principals is the most commonly used strategy because it allows conflicting parties to express their views openly (Saputra & Yuliani, 2024).

The dialogical and empathetic approach in mediation has proven to be more effective than the coercive approach because it is able to maintain professional relationships and increase a sense of justice (Yusuf & Hanafiah, 2024).

Managerial Implications for School Principals

The results of this review show that school principals need to develop conflict

management competencies as an integral part of leadership competencies. These competencies include interpersonal communication skills, empathy, and ethical decision-making (Ahmad & Suryani, 2025).

In addition, school principals need to build school systems and cultures that support constructive conflict resolution through participatory and transparent policies (Siregar & Lubis, 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on a literature review of the past two years, teacher interpersonal conflict is a complex phenomenon influenced by individual factors, organization, and the leadership style of the principal (Fadli & Nasution, 2024). Transformational, ethical, and collaborative leadership of principals has been shown to play an important role in managing and resolving teachers' interpersonal conflicts constructively (Ahmad & Suryani, 2025; Arifin & Wulandari, 2025; Wahyuni & Prabowo, 2025). Therefore, strengthening the leadership competence of school principals in conflict management is a strategic need in improving the quality of education.

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