



Strategic Human Resource Management and the Thomas-Kilmann Model: A Conceptual Framework for Conflict Management in Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Educational institutions, as social organizations, encounter dynamic conflicts that may disrupt coordination, decision-making, and service quality if not managed systematically. This study aims to analyze the factors contributing to conflict in educational institutions, elucidate the role of human resource management (HRM) functions in conflict prevention and resolution, and formulate a conceptual framework that integrates prevention, resolution, and organizational learning. The method employed is a literature review with a qualitative-descriptive approach and a conceptual synthesis orientation. Secondary data, comprising books and scholarly articles, were analyzed descriptively and analytically through thematic synthesis and conceptual comparison. The synthesis results indicate that conflicts stem from individual differences, ineffective communication, role ambiguity, perceptions of injustice, divergent priorities, leadership styles, and organizational change. The Strategic Human Resource Management approach, integrated with the Thomas-Kilmann conflict-handling styles, enables the selection of contextual strategies. A three-dimensional integrative framework—prevention through HR governance, resolution through appropriate strategies, and organizational learning—offers a systematic conflict management model. These findings are conceptual in nature and reinforce the understanding that conflict is relational-systemic, thereby necessitating structural clarity, procedural justice, and continuous evaluation.

Keywords: Conflict prevention, educational institutions, human resource management, thomas-kilmann conflict resolution model, organizational learning.

1. Introduction

Educational institutions are social organizations mandated to organize learning, develop competencies, shape character, and provide educational services to the community (Asrulla et al., 2025). The fulfillment of this mandate is determined not only by the curriculum, infrastructure, and budget, but also by the quality of human resources (HR) and the effectiveness of working relationships within the organization. School or madrasah principals, teachers, administrative staff, and other supporting elements play interdependent roles in achieving institutional goals. In this context, conflict is part of organizational dynamics that can affect coordination,

decision-making, employee well-being, and the quality of educational services. Conflict may arise from differences in interests, goals, values, perceptions, or needs that are difficult to reconcile (Yusup et al., 2021), whether vertically between leaders and staff, horizontally among teachers, or across functions between work units. Although differences of opinion can encourage policy evaluation and organizational innovation, conflict that is not managed appropriately has the potential to develop into interpersonal tension, reduce trust, and hinder the achievement of educational goals. Therefore, conflict management needs to be positioned as an integral part of HR governance, rather than merely a response to disputes that have already occurred.

Human resource management (HRM) in education encompasses employee needs planning, recruitment and placement, competency development, performance appraisal, provision of compensation or rewards, career development, and management of working relationships (Utamy et al., 2020). Each of these functions can serve as an instrument for conflict prevention as well as a source of problems if implemented without clarity, transparency, and fairness. Disproportionate task assignment, unclear authority, performance assessments perceived as unfair, and unequal opportunities for professional development can trigger individual and group dissatisfaction. On the other hand, conflict addressed through dialogue, open communication, negotiation, and accountable decision-making can result in improved procedures and more constructive working relationships. The urgency of this research lies in the need to shift the approach to conflict handling from reactive incident resolution toward systematic management through HRM functions, starting from the identification of conflict sources, the selection of resolution strategies, to the evaluation and improvement of organizational policies. In Islamic educational institutions, including madrasahs and pesantren, this need is also related to the leadership responsibility to uphold justice, public benefit (*maslahah*), respect for human dignity, and the sustainability of the educational process. Thus, the effectiveness of conflict handling is not sufficiently measured by the cessation of disputes, but also by the institution's ability to address the root causes of conflict and maintain professional working relationships.

Previous studies provide a conceptual foundation for developing this approach. Thomas and Kilmann (1974), as cited by Rinjani et al. (2024), proposed five conflict-handling styles, namely competing, collaborating, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding. This model affirms that the effectiveness of conflict handling depends on the suitability of the strategy to the characteristics of the situation at hand, such that no single style is always appropriate for all conditions. Meanwhile, Siswanto (2026) discusses virtual professional development in conflict management for school leaders, demonstrating the relevance of leadership competency development in addressing conflict dynamics in educational settings. These two perspectives provide

an important foundation: the Thomas-Kilmann model helps explain the choice of conflict-handling strategies, while professional development emphasizes the importance of leaders' capacity to apply those strategies. However, within the argumentative framework of this article, both perspectives need to be linked to HRM functions that shape organizational conditions before conflict occurs, influence its resolution process, and determine follow-up actions after conflict ends. This linkage is important because conflict does not always stem from differences in behavior between individuals, but can also reflect structural issues in task division, policy communication, resource distribution, and performance evaluation mechanisms.

Although the literature on conflict-handling styles and leadership competencies has provided a relevant conceptual basis, this article positions the research gap in the need to integrate these two perspectives more systematically with HRM functions in the context of educational institutions. An approach that focuses solely on conflict resolution styles risks overlooking the organizational conditions underlying disputes, while an approach that emphasizes leader competency development does not in itself explain how HR policies can be used to prevent recurring conflict and promote organizational learning. Thus, the main question to be answered is not merely what strategies can be used to resolve conflict, but how HRM functions and the choice of conflict-handling styles can be integrated into a management framework encompassing prevention, resolution, and evaluation. This need is increasingly relevant for Islamic educational institutions, which must manage professional relationships while upholding ethical responsibilities and educational goals. In its application, the principles of procedural justice, equal opportunity to present information, objectivity in decision-making, and protection of vulnerable parties must serve as fundamental considerations (Siswanto, 2026). Conflicts involving allegations of violence, harassment, discrimination, or threats to safety also cannot be resolved solely through informal approaches, but must be handled in accordance with protection procedures and applicable legal provisions.

Based on this gap, the conceptual novelty of this article lies in integrating HRM functions with the five Thomas-Kilmann conflict-handling styles into a framework encompassing three stages, namely conflict prevention through HR governance, conflict resolution through the selection of appropriate strategies, and evaluation and organizational learning after conflict occurs. This framework positions conflict not merely as a disturbance to be stopped, but as diagnostic information for evaluating clarity of authority, fairness of policies, effectiveness of communication, distribution of workload, and professional competence. The novelty offered is integrative and conceptual in nature, not a claim that each of its components constitutes an entirely new theory. This approach also places ethical considerations in conflict management as a cross-cutting principle, particularly in ensuring that conflict resolution does not

sacrifice the safety, rights, and dignity of the parties involved. By integrating structural, interpersonal, and ethical dimensions, this article is expected to broaden the understanding of the strategic role of HRM in building a fair, collaborative, and continuously improving educational work environment.

In line with this argumentation, this article aims to analyze the factors that potentially give rise to conflict in educational institutions, explain the role of HRM functions in preventing and resolving conflict, and formulate a conceptual framework for conflict handling that integrates prevention, resolution, and organizational learning. Theoretically, this article is expected to contribute to the development of educational HRM studies by linking HR management policies and practices with conflict-handling strategies. Practically, the proposed framework is expected to serve as a reference for principals, madrasah and pesantren leaders, and higher education administrators in identifying sources of conflict, determining contextually appropriate resolution strategies, and evaluating policies to prevent recurring conflict. For future research, this article also provides a conceptual foundation that can be tested and developed through empirical studies in diverse educational institutional contexts.

2. Method

This study employs a library research design with a qualitative-descriptive approach and a conceptual synthesis orientation to analyze the role of human resource management (HRM) in handling conflict in educational institutions (Rhamdan et al., 2021; Haramain, 2026). The research data consist of secondary data sourced from books and scholarly articles addressing the concepts of HRM, organizational conflict, factors causing conflict, educational leadership, conflict-handling styles, and strategies for conflict prevention and resolution. Data collection was carried out through a documentary study of literature relevant to the focus of the study, taking into account the substantive relevance of the sources to the research problem, the clarity of publication identity, and their contribution to the development of the conceptual framework. Literature on the Thomas–Kilmann model and conflict management in educational organizations was used to support the analysis of the choice of resolution strategies, the role of HRM functions, and ethical considerations in conflict handling.

Data analysis was conducted in a descriptive-analytical manner through thematic synthesis and conceptual comparison across sources. The analytical process involved identifying the main concepts and arguments in the literature, grouping information into themes related to the concept of conflict, factors causing conflict, the strategic role of HRM, conflict-handling styles, resolution procedures, and the implications of conflict for educational organizations. Furthermore, ideas across sources were

compared to identify the interconnections between individual, interpersonal, structural, and organizational factors and conflict management strategies. The results of this synthesis were used to formulate an integrative framework encompassing three dimensions, namely conflict prevention through HR governance, conflict resolution through the selection of contextual strategies, and organizational learning through policy evaluation and improvement. Case illustrations were used as examples of the conceptual application of the framework, not as empirical findings. Accordingly, the results of the analysis constitute a theoretical synthesis that has not yet been tested through field data collection.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Human Resource Management and Sources of Conflict in Educational Institutions

Human resource management (HRM) constitutes a series of policies and practices designed to ensure that an organization acquires, develops, motivates, and retains the human resources it requires (Yulianah, 2023). In educational institutions, this function is not oriented solely toward administrative efficiency; it also aims to create working conditions that support teacher professionalism and the quality of services provided to students. The management of people inherently possesses a relational dimension, because decisions concerning task allocation, performance evaluation, rewards, and career development are interpreted by organizational members as indicators of how the institution treats them.

Conflict may be defined as a process in which one party perceives that its interests, goals, or actions are being obstructed by another party (Dalimunthe, 2016). This definition emphasizes the role of perception, indicating that conflict can arise even when an objective impediment has not yet been substantiated. While perceptions remain important to understand, their resolution must be grounded in factual clarification and contextual analysis. In HRM practice, conflicts need to be mapped according to the parties involved, the sources of the problem, intensity, impact on work processes, and the likelihood of recurrence.

Task conflict relates to differences in views regarding the content of work or professional decisions. Process conflict concerns the manner in which work is divided and executed, whereas relational conflict involves personal tension, distrust, or feelings of being undervalued. This distinction assists leaders in selecting appropriate interventions. Differences of opinion concerning teaching methods, for instance, can be addressed through professional discussion, whereas conflicts arising from insults or intimidation require protection measures and more formal follow-up actions.

Effective HRM does not seek to eliminate all differences. A healthy organization continues to provide space for criticism and alternative viewpoints. Its primary

objective is to prevent differences from escalating into destructive behavior, to ensure that decisions are made fairly, and to transform conflict into an opportunity for improving work systems. Consequently, the measure of success is not merely the absence of debate, but the availability of safe mechanisms for expressing objections and resolving problems.

First, individual differences constitute a primary source of conflict. Every educator and educational staff member possesses diverse educational backgrounds, experiences, characters, values, and needs. Some individuals tend to express objections directly, while others remain silent or convey criticism through third parties (Izzan, 2012). Differences in communication style may be misinterpreted as disrespect, lack of cooperation, or closed-mindedness. HRM practices must therefore foster awareness that stylistic differences do not automatically indicate malicious intent.

Second, ineffective communication frequently triggers conflict (Az-Zahra et al., 2026). Changing instructions, delayed information, meetings that produce no written decisions, and the delivery of criticism in front of others can generate distrust. Organizational communication must provide clear formal and informal channels. Important decisions, particularly those concerning schedules, task allocation, budgets, or performance evaluation, should be disseminated through accessible media and accompanied by opportunities for clarification.

Third, role ambiguity and unclear responsibilities contribute significantly to conflict. Overlapping authority may lead several individuals to believe they are entitled to make the same decisions (Ibad et al., 2026). Conversely, important tasks may be neglected because each party assumes that another is responsible. Job descriptions, coordination structures, and standard operating procedures can help mitigate such problems. When role changes are necessary, leaders must explain the rationale and clarify the boundaries of each party's authority.

Fourth, perceived inequity in the distribution of workload and resources often generates disputes (Rifai, 2026). Conflict may arise when certain teachers receive a disproportionate number of additional assignments, training opportunities are unevenly distributed, or facility usage is poorly regulated. Perceptions of injustice intensify when the criteria for distribution are never explained. Institutions should therefore employ transparent bases for allocation—such as competence, teaching load, program needs, experience, and time availability—while maintaining space for evaluation.

Fifth, differences in goals and priorities constitute another source of tension (Nasution et al., 2026). Leaders may prioritize the achievement of institutional indicators, whereas teachers emphasize pedagogical needs and realistic classroom

workloads. Administrative staff may focus on documentary compliance, while other units stress service speed. Divergent priorities do not necessarily imply that one party fails to support the institution. Cross-functional dialogue is required to link these priorities to shared goals and to establish a sensible sequence of work.

Sixth, leadership style and organizational culture influence the emergence and escalation of conflict (Wati & Lasmi, 2026). Authoritarian, inconsistent, or non-participatory leadership can widen the distance between leaders and staff. Conversely, a culture that avoids criticism may allow minor issues to remain unspoken until they develop into major conflicts. Leaders need to model receptivity to feedback, explain the reasons behind decisions, and treat organizational members consistently.

Seventh, organizational change frequently generates conflict (Irawan et al., 2026). Changes in curriculum, information systems, job structures, evaluation mechanisms, or institutional policies often require adjustments in work habits. Resistance may arise from insufficient information, concerns about competence, or uncertainty regarding the impact of change. Involving affected parties from the planning stage, accompanied by training and mentoring, can reduce tension and enhance a sense of ownership.

These factors frequently interact with one another. Disputes that appear personal may in fact be triggered by unclear work-distribution systems. Leaders should therefore refrain from immediately concluding that conflict stems solely from individual attitudes. Examination of documents, chronology, communication patterns, and work structures is essential to avoid unfair decisions.

3.2. Conflict Prevention and Systematic Resolution Procedures: A Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Approach and the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Handling Style

The preventive role of human resource management begins with workforce planning and task allocation (Lestari et al., 2026). Educational institutions must ensure alignment between job requirements, personnel competencies, and assigned workloads. Clear job descriptions help every staff member understand their responsibilities, the limits of their authority, and the coordination pathways. Sound planning also takes into account seasonal additional burdens such as new student admissions, accreditation processes, examinations, and institutional events.

Closely related to planning is the process of recruitment and placement, which also plays a significant role in conflict prevention. Placement decisions that disregard competence or positional requirements can generate frustration and mutual blame (Athifah et al., 2026). Institutions should therefore communicate placement criteria openly and provide developmental support for personnel who still need to

strengthen their capabilities. Transparency does not imply that every decision must be made through voting; rather, every important decision should rest on reasons that can be clearly explained.

Beyond placement, professional development constitutes the next critical step in building preventive capacity. Training in communication, teamwork, negotiation, leadership, and emotion management can equip educators to handle differences more productively. Such training should not stop at theoretical delivery but should employ case simulations closely related to school life, such as scheduling conflicts, differences in assessment, activity coordination, and communication with parents. Reflection after the simulations helps participants identify communication habits that require improvement.

Equally important is the design of performance appraisal systems. Performance appraisal must be designed with clear, relevant, and consistent indicators. When evaluation relies solely on a leader's subjective judgment without feedback, staff members may perceive injustice. Structured performance dialogues allow differences in perception to be examined before they escalate into disputes. Employees need to understand the standards applied, the evidence considered, and the procedures for contesting evaluation results.

In addition to formal systems, an open communication culture must also be cultivated. Regular meetings, consultation forums, feedback mechanisms, and clear complaint channels give organizational members the opportunity to raise issues at an early stage. Leaders must ensure that professionally delivered criticism does not result in retaliation. A sense of psychological safety in expressing opinions enables the institution to obtain information about operational problems before their impact widens.

Complementing these cultural and procedural measures, anti-intimidation, anti-discrimination, and protection policies for both students and staff must be clearly articulated. Ordinary conflicts can be resolved through dialogue, but actions that threaten safety or violate rights require formal procedures. Distinguishing differences of opinion from behavioral violations is essential so that collaborative approaches are not misused to pressure victims into reconciling with perpetrators.

When prevention is insufficient and conflict has already emerged, leaders need a reflective framework for choosing appropriate responses. Thomas and Kilmann developed a framework that distinguishes conflict-handling styles according to the degree of assertiveness in pursuing one's own interests and the degree of cooperativeness in satisfying the interests of the other party. The five styles are competing, collaborating, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding. This model

serves as a reflective tool for leaders rather than as a fixed label of an individual's personality.

Among these styles, competing is employed when decisions must be made firmly and rapidly. In education, examples include stopping actions that endanger students or enforcing non-negotiable safety rules. This approach must be supported by evidence, authority, and clear procedures. If applied to every difference of opinion, competing can generate fear, reduce participation, and discourage staff from sharing important information.

In contrast, collaborating seeks solutions that satisfy the primary interests of all parties involved. This approach is relevant when conflicts concern complex issues, long-term working relationships, or policies that require joint commitment. Leaders can invite each party to explain their needs, map shared interests, and develop several alternatives. Collaboration requires time and openness, yet it can produce more durable resolutions when the parties feel ownership of the decision.

When full collaboration is not feasible, compromising offers a middle path by involving mutual adjustment of some interests to reach an acceptable agreement. This strategy can be applied to schedule distribution, facility utilization, or deadline setting when resources are limited. Compromises must still comply with professional standards and must never treat rights or safety as negotiable. Leaders need to examine whether the agreement is genuinely balanced or whether it disproportionately burdens the party in a weaker position.

Alternatively, accommodating means giving greater space to the interests of the other party. This style may be appropriate when the issue under debate is relatively minor, when the relationship needs to be preserved, or when one party recognizes that the other's view is more accurate. However, repeated accommodation by the same party can create imbalance. Leaders must therefore ensure that willingness to yield does not result from pressure, intimidation, or inability to express one's opinion.

Finally, avoiding constitutes a temporary delay in direct engagement with the conflict. This approach can occasionally be useful when emotions are high, information is still insufficient, or the issue has low impact. Any postponement should be accompanied by a time limit and a plan to revisit the matter. Without such a plan, avoidance becomes neglect. Conflicts involving safety, violence, discrimination, or serious violations must never be ignored merely to preserve a harmonious atmosphere.

The selection of any style must consider urgency, complexity, power relations, impact on students, applicable rules, and the need to maintain working relationships. It is incorrect to regard collaboration as always the best option in every situation. For emergency decisions, firmness may be required; for minor differences,

accommodating or compromising may be more efficient. Leadership competence is demonstrated by the ability to choose a strategy deliberately, explain the rationale for the choice, and evaluate its outcomes.

Once a handling style has been chosen, institutions still require a systematic procedure to guide the resolution process. The first stage is the receipt of reports and conflict mapping. Institutions need to provide channels known to all parties, designate who receives reports, and clarify how confidentiality is handled. Initial information should cover the parties involved, the time of occurrence, the issues raised, available evidence, and the impact on educational activities. At this stage, a report must not be treated as a final conclusion regarding anyone's fault.

Following the initial mapping, the second stage involves the assessment of urgency and risk. Leaders must distinguish ordinary work-related disputes from conflicts involving threats, violence, discrimination, or risks to students. When safety risks exist, appropriate protective measures must take priority. Mediation is not always suitable for every case, especially when there is a severe power imbalance or when serious violations require formal mechanisms.

After risk assessment, the third stage focuses on factual clarification and root-cause analysis. The parties involved are given the opportunity to present their versions of events without intimidation. The leader or facilitator examines documents, rules, schedules, communication records, and relevant statements. The analysis must determine whether the problem stems from misunderstanding, policy ambiguity, conflicting interests, or rule-violating behavior. Separating facts from assumptions helps reduce decisions influenced by rumor or personal proximity.

Building on clarified facts, the fourth stage proceeds to dialogue or mediation. The facilitator establishes communication rules, ensures that all parties have the opportunity to speak, and keeps the discussion focused on the issues. Active listening means striving to understand the other party's intention before offering rebuttals. Open questions can help the parties articulate their needs, impacts, and expectations. The facilitator need not force the parties to agree on a single version of events, but should help them identify safe and workable next steps.

Once dialogue has taken place, the fifth stage consists of generating alternatives and establishing agreements. Alternatives may include task clarification, schedule adjustment, improvement of communication flows, redistribution of work, training, apologies, or monitoring mechanisms. Agreements must be specific: what actions will be taken, who is responsible, when they will be implemented, and how success will be checked. Overly general agreements, such as "mutual understanding," are difficult to evaluate and prone to differing interpretations.

To ensure accountability, the sixth stage involves documentation and follow-up. Documentation should be proportionate, protect privacy, and be accessible only to authorized parties. Follow-up meetings can be held after an agreed period to review the implementation of decisions and the condition of working relationships. If agreements are not implemented or the conflict recurs, the institution must re-examine the underlying causes and activate appropriate escalation pathways.

Finally, the seventh stage turns attention to organizational evaluation. Leaders examine whether the case reveals weaknesses in procedures, workload distribution, communication, or specific competencies. If the conflict arose from unclear tasks, the solution is to improve job descriptions and coordination. If it arose from non-transparent performance evaluation, the institution needs to clarify indicators and provide mechanisms for contesting results. In this way, conflict resolution yields long-term benefits for the organization.

3.3 Case Illustration and Implementation Analysis

As a conceptual illustration, a school is preparing for the admission of new students. The principal assigns a number of additional tasks, including information services, file management, and activity coordination. Several teachers feel they have assumed greater responsibilities than their colleagues. Some teachers express objections through informal conversations, while the leadership considers the distribution to be aligned with organizational needs. Within a few days, communication among team members deteriorates and several tasks are delayed.

If the leadership immediately reprimands the teachers who raise objections, the issue may escalate into a personal conflict and concerns may no longer be voiced openly. A more systematic approach would involve examining the task list, teaching hours, competencies, and the rationale for assigning responsibilities. The leadership then holds a clarification meeting so that teachers can explain the workload they perceive and propose alternatives. At this stage, the primary objective is not to determine who complains the most, but to understand whether the division of labor is realistic and transparent.

A collaborative strategy can be employed to map the needs of each activity and the capacity of each member. If all demands cannot be met, compromise may be implemented through schedule adjustments or task rotation. The leadership also needs to explain the criteria for task distribution so that decisions are not perceived as being based on personal proximity. The agreement is then documented in an updated work allocation, complete with coordinators and deadlines.

Post-activity evaluation constitutes an essential part of the resolution process. The institution can collect feedback regarding the clarity of instructions, the balance of workloads, and the effectiveness of coordination. If problems are identified, the procedures for task distribution for subsequent activities are improved. This

illustration demonstrates that conflict can serve as input for improving the system, but it must be emphasized that the example is not the result of research observation or interviews.

3.4 Implications for Performance, Organizational Climate, and Educational Quality

The first implication concerns the organizational climate. A fair conflict resolution mechanism can strengthen trust because organizational members understand that complaints will be processed according to procedures, rather than solely on the basis of personal relationships. Such trust supports information openness, coordination, and inter-unit cooperation. Conversely, a process perceived as biased may reinforce informal groups and reduce the willingness to collaborate.

The second implication concerns motivation and performance. Prolonged conflict can consume time and attention, disrupt concentration, and diminish the quality of communication. A clear resolution can help employees refocus on their work. Nevertheless, improved performance should not be assumed to occur automatically after a conflict is resolved. Performance is also influenced by competence, facilities, leadership, workload, and organizational support. These relationships need to be examined through measurable indicators.

The third implication concerns services to students and parents. Teachers and educational staff need to coordinate in designing instruction, disseminating information, managing administration, and addressing student needs. Tensions that impede coordination may result in delayed services or inconsistent information. Therefore, the resolution of interpersonal conflicts must also take into account the continuity of educational services.

The fourth implication pertains to the development of a learning organization. Every conflict provides information regarding aspects of work that have not yet been optimized. When an institution engages in reflection without humiliating individuals, conflict experiences can serve as material for improvement. Leadership can identify training needs, update procedures, and review the distribution of resources. This learning culture requires a balance between accountability for behavior and a willingness to improve the system.

Evaluating the impact of conflict management can employ both process and outcome indicators. Process indicators include resolution time, access to complaint mechanisms, involvement of relevant parties, adherence to procedures, and clarity of documentation. Outcome indicators may encompass the implementation of agreements, perceptions of fairness, quality of coordination, frequency of recurring conflicts, and satisfaction with the resolution process. These indicators must not be used in isolation from context; a decline in the number of reports, for instance, does

not necessarily signify a reduction in conflict, as it may instead indicate that employees are afraid to report.

Ultimately, conflict management must be understood as an integral part of quality governance. Institutions capable of addressing differences professionally have a greater opportunity to maintain healthy working relationships and enhance the quality of decisions. However, claims regarding effects on student achievement or institutional performance require empirical research with adequate designs.

3.5 Integrative Framework: Prevention, Resolution, and Learning

Based on a synthesis of the literature, this article proposes an integrative framework comprising three interrelated dimensions. The first dimension is prevention. Its focus is on reducing sources of conflict that can be anticipated through human resource planning, clarity of job descriptions, policy communication, transparency of assessment, development of interpersonal competencies, and clear protection policies. The prevention dimension does not promise the elimination of all conflicts, but it helps organizations address differences with adequate rules and communication channels.

The second dimension is resolution. When conflict occurs, the institution conducts mapping, risk assessment, clarification, root cause analysis, strategy selection, dialogue or mediation, and the establishment of agreements. Each stage must consider procedural fairness and the protection of vulnerable parties. The Thomas-Kilmann style options assist leaders in considering whether a situation requires assertiveness, collaboration, compromise, accommodation, or planned avoidance.

The third dimension is organizational learning. Following resolution, the institution monitors agreements, assesses the possibility of recurring conflict, and improves procedures that have proven problematic. Learning can also be realized through training, revision of work allocation, communication improvement, or refinement of the performance evaluation system. This dimension distinguishes temporary resolution from sustainable organizational improvement.

These three dimensions form a cycle. Prevention provides the foundation for working relationships; resolution addresses disputes that arise; and learning utilizes experience to strengthen subsequent prevention. In practice, this cycle can be incorporated into evaluation meetings, human resource development programs, internal quality assurance systems, and annual work planning. This integration enables conflict to become part of organizational evaluation without normalizing destructive behavior or disregarding individual responsibility.

This framework constitutes a conceptual synthesis offered by the authors, rather than a model that has been empirically tested. Future research may examine whether institutions that implement clear complaint mechanisms, mediation training, and

follow-up evaluation exhibit different perceptions of fairness and levels of recurring conflict compared to institutions that have not yet adopted such measures. Research may also compare the characteristics of public schools, private schools, madrasahs, pesantren, and higher education institutions.

4. Conclusion

Human resource management serves as a strategic framework that not only governs administrative aspects but also prevents, manages, and transforms conflict within educational institutions into opportunities for systemic improvement. The principal findings indicate that conflict originates from individual differences, ineffective communication, role ambiguity, perceptions of inequitable distribution of workload and resources, divergent priorities, leadership styles, and organizational change. The Strategic Human Resource Management approach, integrated with the Thomas–Kilmann conflict-handling styles (competing, collaborating, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding), enables leaders to select contextually appropriate responses based on urgency, impact on learners, and working relationships. Theoretically, these findings broaden the understanding that conflict in educational contexts is relational and systemic in nature, such that its resolution necessitates a combination of clarity in work structures, procedural justice, and organizational learning. Practically, educational institutions can implement a prevention cycle (HR planning, clear job descriptions, policy communication, and interpersonal training), systematic resolution (mapping, risk assessment, fact clarification, dialogue/mediation, and documentation of agreements), and post-conflict learning (procedure evaluation and system improvement) to strengthen organizational climate, work motivation, and the quality of services provided to students and parents.

This study is conceptual in nature and based on a synthesis of literature accompanied by illustrative cases that are not derived from empirical observation or interviews; consequently, the generalizability of the findings remains limited to the theoretical context and has not been empirically tested across various types of educational institutions. Future research is recommended to test the integrative prevention–resolution–learning framework through empirical studies employing adequate designs, to compare the characteristics of public schools, private schools, madrasahs, pesantren, and higher education institutions, and to measure the impact of complaint mechanisms, mediation training, and follow-up evaluation on perceptions of justice, the frequency of recurring conflict, and organizational performance.

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