



## INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND ISLAMIC VALUES-BASED CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN PESANTREN ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF PESANTREN AR-RAUDLATUL HASANAH

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the dynamics of internal organizational communication and conflict management at Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah in Medan. Using a qualitative approach, the research explores how communication patterns among teaching staff function in maintaining coordination and resolving workplace conflicts. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with three informants representing different organizational levels: the Vice Director, a senior teacher, and a newly appointed teacher. The findings reveal that internal communication in the pesantren is characterized by structured vertical communication reinforced by intensive horizontal interactions among teachers. Conflicts that arise are generally triggered by differences in perception, miscommunication, and coordination issues rather than deep personal disputes. The study also demonstrates that Islamic values such as musyawarah, tabayyun, ukhuwah, tasamuh, and amanah play a significant role as normative frameworks guiding communication and conflict resolution. These values shape a distinctive conflict management model that combines dialogue, mediation, and leadership authority to maintain organizational harmony and institutional stability.*

**Keywords:** internal communication, conflict management, Islamic values, pesantren organization, organizational communication.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Internal organizational communication is a crucial element in maintaining the stability of working relationships, the effectiveness of coordination, and the harmony of interactions among members of an organization (Kholil et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2022).

In educational institutions, particularly value-based institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), internal communication functions not only as a means of delivering information but also as a mechanism for coordination, the formation of organizational culture, and the reinforcement of moral values that serve as the foundation of institutional life (Anand et al., 2025; Purwowododo & Zaini, 2024). The effectiveness of internal communication significantly influences an organization's ability to manage workplace dynamics, including handling conflicts that arise among its members (Handoko et al., 2024).

In the context of educational organizations, conflict is an unavoidable phenomenon. Differences in perceptions, conflicting interests, and misunderstandings during the communication process often become factors that trigger conflict in the workplace (Guo, 2025; Taylan & Weber, 2023). Conflicts may also arise due to unclear information, differing interpretations of organizational policies, and variations in individual communication styles within the organization (Folger et al., 2024; Raleigh et al., 2023). If not properly managed, conflict can disrupt working relationships, reduce organizational effectiveness, and hinder the achievement of institutional goals. Therefore, internal communication plays a strategic role in identifying sources of conflict, facilitating dialogue among organizational members, and developing constructive conflict resolution mechanisms (Dalimunthe et al., 2024; Guo, 2025).

*Pesantren*, as Islamic educational institutions, possess distinctive organizational characteristics (Hadi, 2022; Kawakip & Sulanam, 2023). The leadership structure in *pesantren* is generally hierarchical, with the *kiai* or leader serving as the central figure of both moral and administrative authority (Rofiqi et al., 2026). At the same time, *pesantren* life is characterized by a high level of interaction among leaders, teachers, and students who live in a relatively closed environment and engage with one another for twenty-four hours a day (Hudayana, 2022; Ju'subaidi et al., 2025). This situation creates a unique dynamic of organizational communication, in which formal and informal communication occur simultaneously in everyday life. In such circumstances, the potential for conflict among organizational members, including conflicts among teaching staff, becomes an inevitable part of organizational dynamics.

Several previous studies have examined organizational communication and conflict management in various educational contexts. Ju & Dong (2023) emphasizes

that open and dialogic communication can help organizations manage conflict constructively. Research by Davidaviciene & Al Majzoub (2022) shows that conflict within organizations does not always have negative consequences; instead, it can enhance the quality of decision-making when managed effectively. Meanwhile, studies on organizational communication in Islamic educational institutions indicate that religious values such as *musyawarah* (deliberation), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *tabayyun* (clarification) can function as social mechanisms that help maintain harmonious working relationships (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

However, most previous studies have focused on organizational conflict within corporate settings or general formal educational institutions. Research that specifically examines the role of internal communication in managing conflicts among teaching staff in *pesantren* environments remains relatively limited. Furthermore, studies on organizational communication in *pesantren* generally emphasize aspects of leadership or organizational culture, while the dynamics of internal communication in managing conflicts among teachers have not been extensively analyzed in depth.

These limitations in previous research indicate the need for a more comprehensive understanding of how internal organizational communication functions in managing conflicts within *pesantren* environments. *Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* in Medan is one of the Islamic educational institutions with a structured organizational system and a relatively large number of teaching staff. In the dynamics of daily work, the intensive interaction among leaders, teachers, and staff inevitably involves the potential emergence of differences in perception, miscommunication, and workplace conflict that require effective management mechanisms.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the patterns of internal organizational communication and the conflict management mechanisms that occur among teaching staff at *Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah*. This research is expected to contribute to the development of organizational communication studies, particularly in understanding how internal communication grounded in Islamic values can play a role in building constructive conflict resolution mechanisms within *pesantren* educational institutions. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a practical reference for Islamic educational institutions in developing effective internal communication strategies to maintain harmonious working relationships

within the organization.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODE**

This study employs a qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of internal organizational communication in managing conflicts among teaching staff at Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah (Creswell, 2021). A qualitative approach was chosen because the study seeks to explore the experiences, perspectives, and communication practices that occur naturally within the social and organizational context of the pesantren environment.

The research was conducted at Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah, located on Jalan Letjen Jamin Ginting KM. 11, Medan City. Data collection was carried out through a field visit on November 13, 2025. The focus of the study was directed toward the dynamics of internal communication in managing conflicts that had occurred among teaching staff within the past six months.

Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberately selecting individuals based on specific considerations relevant to the objectives of the study (Pahwa et al., 2023). The informants consisted of three individuals representing the organizational structure of the pesantren: the Vice Director as a member of the leadership, a senior teacher with more than ten years of service, and a newly appointed teacher with relatively limited work experience. The selection of these informants was intended to obtain diverse perspectives regarding internal communication practices and conflict management within the pesantren environment.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide (Rabionet, 2022). The interviews were carried out face-to-face to explore the experiences, perceptions, and communication practices implemented by the teaching staff in dealing with organizational conflicts. In addition, the researcher also conducted observations of communication situations occurring within the pesantren environment in order to enrich the understanding of the research context.

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and focusing on interview data relevant to the research focus. The reduced data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate the interpretation process. The final stage involved drawing conclusions through a gradual verification process of the research findings.

To enhance the validity of the data, this study applied source triangulation by comparing information obtained from informants who occupy different positions within the pesantren's organizational structure. In addition, member checking was conducted by reconfirming the interview results with the informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected the experiences and perspectives expressed by the participants.

During the research process, the researcher also paid careful attention to ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent from the informants before conducting interviews, maintaining the confidentiality of the informants' identities, and ensuring that the data collected were used solely for academic research purposes. Through the implementation of these procedures, the study is expected to achieve an adequate level of credibility and reliability in explaining the dynamics of internal communication and conflict management within the pesantren environment.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Dynamics of Internal Communication and Conflict Management at Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah**

The findings of this study indicate that internal communication at Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah operates within a structured pattern while being supported by a high intensity of interpersonal interaction. These findings were obtained from interviews with three informants representing different structural levels within the institution, namely the Vice Director, a senior teacher, and a newly appointed teacher. All three informants demonstrated that internal communication in the pesantren

does not merely function as a medium for delivering instructions but also serves as a mechanism for coordination, social control, organizational culture formation, and conflict management. In this context, internal communication cannot simply be understood as a technical process of message exchange; rather, it functions as a relational system that sustains the stability of the Islamic educational organization.

### **Vertical Communication as the Main Axis of Organizational Coordination**

Field findings show that the dominant communication pattern in Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah is vertical communication, particularly in the form of top-down communication. Key information, directives, and policies originate from leadership and are subsequently conveyed to division heads and teachers as technical implementers. This pattern is reflected in the explanation of the Vice Director, who emphasized that every strategic decision is discussed within the leadership deliberation structure and then communicated hierarchically to the units below (Saup et al., 2026). The senior teacher also confirmed that most work instructions come from superiors and are implemented according to the established chain of command.

From the perspective of organizational communication theory, these findings illustrate the classical function of vertical communication as described by Goldhaber, namely as a means of information distribution, organizational control, and alignment of objectives across structural levels (Israel, 2022). In educational organizations such as pesantren, this vertical pattern holds significant relevance because pesantren institutions tend to position leadership as the center of both moral and administrative authority. Therefore, vertical communication does not merely function to assign tasks but also to legitimize the direction of organizational policy (Frølich et al., 2025).

However, the findings also reveal a critical aspect. The dominance of the top-down pattern may create distortions in meaning when instructions are interpreted differently by teachers at the operational level. This is evident from the statements of the Vice Director and the senior teacher, who noted that conflicts often originate from differing perceptions in understanding leadership directives. This suggests that a well-structured communication system does not automatically guarantee shared understanding. In organizational communication theory, this condition indicates that

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communication effectiveness is determined not only by the clarity of channels but also by the alignment of interpretations among organizational actors.

### **Horizontal Communication and Daily Interaction as Pillars of Organizational Harmony**

In addition to vertical communication, this study also found that horizontal communication plays an important role in maintaining work coordination and reducing the potential for conflict (Gaur, 2026; Suhendar & Halimi, 2023). The senior teacher emphasized that because teachers live and carry out activities within the same environment for twenty-four hours a day, communication can occur at any time through direct interaction. The newly appointed teacher also stated that although they work in different rooms, communication still runs smoothly through direct conversations as well as informal information exchanges.

These findings indicate that the pesantren organization operates not only through formal structures but also through horizontal relationships formed through physical and social proximity. In organizational communication theory, horizontal communication functions to strengthen coordination between units, accelerate information exchange, and build work solidarity (Prouska et al., 2023). In the context of pesantren, this function becomes even more significant because interactions extend beyond formal working hours and continue throughout daily life.

Analytically, the intensity of such interaction creates two possibilities. On one hand, it strengthens social cohesion and facilitates clarification (*tabayyun*) when problems arise. On the other hand, high interaction intensity may also increase the possibility of friction if not properly managed. In other words, interpersonal closeness within the pesantren is not solely a factor of harmony but may also become a space where tension is reproduced when miscommunication, seniority issues, or imbalanced workloads occur. The statement from the newly appointed teacher about the need to reduce the culture of seniority illustrates that organizational harmony does not automatically emerge from proximity; instead, it must be cultivated through equitable communication.

### **Organizational Conflict: Between Miscommunication, Perceptual Differences, and Role Tension**

Field data indicate that conflicts within the pesantren environment are generally perceived as a natural phenomenon in large organizations (Prasetyo et al., 2024). The Vice Director explained that conflicts typically originate from differences in teachers' perceptions of leadership instructions. The senior teacher added that conflicts often arise from incomplete information, message distortion through addition or reduction, and differences in work rhythms across divisions. Meanwhile, the newly appointed teacher viewed conflicts as more frequently emerging in the form of personal issues or disciplinary violations.

When interpreted through organizational conflict theory, these findings indicate that conflicts within the pesantren take two primary forms. The first is task and coordination conflict, which stems from differences in interpretation, division of responsibilities, and role understanding. The second is personal and disciplinary conflict, which relates to individual behavior perceived as deviating from institutional norms. This distinction is important because each type of conflict requires different management approaches.

Within Rahim's theoretical framework, conflicts in the pesantren can be understood as resulting from differences in operational objectives, perceptions of messages, and organizational role positions (Rahim, 2023). Interestingly, the findings suggest that conflict in the pesantren is not primarily viewed as a destructive threat but rather as a consequence of intensive organizational interaction. This indicates that the institution implicitly recognizes that conflict is not always negative but must be directed so that it does not damage *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and organizational effectiveness.

### **Conflict Management Styles: Dominant Integrating and Compromising, Selective Dominating**

The findings show that conflict resolution mechanisms in Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah are conducted gradually. Minor conflicts are typically resolved through direct dialogue between the parties involved. If the conflict persists, supervisors or

leaders act as mediators. For serious disciplinary violations, however, the leadership takes firm measures, including formal summons and the possibility of sanctions.

When interpreted using Rahim's Conflict Management Styles, this pattern reflects the dominance of the integrating and compromising styles in everyday work-related conflicts. The integrating style is evident when conflicting parties are encouraged to meet directly, conduct *tabayyun* (clarification), and jointly seek solutions. The compromising style appears when conflict resolution occurs through deliberation among divisions to reach decisions acceptable to all parties (Chambers, 2023). In this context, the *pesantren* tends to avoid escalation and prioritize restoring working relationships.

However, for certain cases considered to involve disciplinary matters, moral standards, or institutional authority, the *pesantren* adopts an approach closer to the dominating style, where leaders make firm decisions without prolonged negotiation. Organizationally, this pattern can be understood as an effort to maintain the institution's normative boundaries. Critically, however, this dominant approach also indicates that not all conflicts are managed through deliberative mechanisms; in certain circumstances, organizational stability is prioritized over participatory processes.

Thus, conflict management in the *pesantren* is situational rather than singular. Task-related conflicts are addressed through integrative deliberative approaches, whereas serious violations are handled through control and sanctions. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions do not rely solely on normative values but also implement differentiated conflict strategies based on the severity of the issue.

### **Islamic Values as Mechanisms for Organizational Conflict Resolution**

One of the most significant findings of this research is that Islamic values function not merely as organizational cultural slogans but as mechanisms for communication and conflict resolution (Dalimunthe, 2022; Ramdani et al., 2024; Ritonga et al., 2024). All three informants mentioned values such as *musyawarah* (deliberation), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *tabayyun* (clarification), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *amanah*

(trustworthiness), and the values of the Panca Jiwa as the foundation of internal communication.

From the perspective of organizational communication, these values can be interpreted as a normative communication framework, a set of guiding principles that regulate how messages are conveyed, how differences are processed, and how conflicts are resolved. Musyawarah serves as a deliberative principle that creates space for participation in decision-making. Tabayyun functions as a mechanism for clarification that prevents informational bias and misunderstanding. Ukhuwah and tasamuh operate as relational ethics that prevent differences from developing into division. Meanwhile, amanah and honesty serve as the foundation of trust that sustains the credibility of organizational communication.

Therefore, Islamic values in the pesantren should be understood not merely as individual moral principles but as a symbolic infrastructure of the organization that directs conflict resolution toward restorative patterns (Amiruddin et al., 2025). In organizational theory terms, these values help create a communication culture that emphasizes relational restoration rather than merely solving technical problems. This represents an important contribution of the study, as it demonstrates that conflict resolution in Islamic educational institutions can be understood as a combination of structural mechanisms and cultural values.

However, it is also important to critically note that the presence of these values does not automatically eliminate conflict. Conflicts still arise due to communication problems, workload issues, and perceptual differences. This indicates that Islamic values function not as absolute preventers of conflict but as a normative framework that helps manage conflict so that it does not develop destructively.

### **Leadership as the Nexus of Communication and Conflict Authority**

The study also confirms that leadership holds a central role in internal communication and conflict management (Handoko et al., 2024). The Vice Director explained that leadership involvement in teaching activities makes relationships with teachers more fluid and communicative. The senior teacher stated that conflicts unresolved at lower levels are usually escalated to supervisors (Maritz, 2024). The

newly appointed teacher also observed that leadership decisions are decisive in cases of serious disciplinary violations.

From the perspective of organizational communication, this finding indicates that leaders function as both communication gatekeepers and conflict regulators. Leaders are not merely transmitters of messages but also interpreters of policy, mediators, and guardians of the organization's normative boundaries. This condition aligns with the characteristics of pesantren institutions, where leadership is positioned not only as an administrative role but also as a moral authority.

Critically, the centrality of leadership has two implications. On one hand, it accelerates decision-making and strengthens the consistency of organizational culture. On the other hand, excessive dependence on leadership figures may limit the autonomy of horizontal communication and narrow opportunities for conflict resolution at lower organizational levels. Therefore, the effectiveness of internal communication in the pesantren is also determined by the extent to which leaders can balance control functions with the empowerment of communication among organizational members.

### **Contributions of the Findings to Organizational Communication Studies in Islamic Educational Institutions**

Overall, this study demonstrates that internal communication in the pesantren operates through a combination of hierarchical vertical communication structures, intensive horizontal communication, and Islamic values functioning as the normative framework of the organization. In the context of conflict management, this combination produces a hybrid conflict resolution model: dialogical for work-related conflicts, mediative for conflicts involving multiple parties, and firm for serious disciplinary violations.

These findings contribute to the development of organizational communication studies in Islamic educational institutions in three ways. First, the study confirms that the effectiveness of internal communication is determined not only by formal channels but also by the quality of daily interactions and relational closeness among organizational members. Second, the research demonstrates that Islamic values can

be analyzed as operational organizational mechanisms rather than merely normative discourse. Third, the study shows that conflict in pesantren institutions is not solely a dysfunctional phenomenon but part of organizational dynamics that can be managed through ethical, hierarchical, and value-based communication practices.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that internal communication at Pesantren Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah plays an important role as an organizational mechanism in maintaining work coordination, fostering harmonious relationships among teaching staff, and managing conflicts that arise within the pesantren environment. The communication pattern observed indicates the dominance of structured vertical communication through leadership-to-subordinate channels, which is simultaneously reinforced by horizontal communication that occurs intensively in daily interactions among teachers. In this context, conflicts that arise generally do not stem from deep personal disputes but are more frequently triggered by differences in perception, miscommunication, and a lack of coordination synchronization among different divisions.

Conceptually, this study contributes to the development of organizational communication studies within Islamic educational institutions by demonstrating that the effectiveness of internal communication in pesantren is not solely determined by the clarity of formal communication structures but also by the strength of normative values embedded in the organizational culture. Islamic values such as *musyawarah* (deliberation), *tabayyun* (clarification), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *amanah* (trustworthiness) are shown in this study to function not merely as moral principles but also as mechanisms of organizational communication and conflict resolution. Thus, this research confirms that in the pesantren context, internal communication operates through a combination of hierarchical structures, intensive interpersonal relations, and an Islamic value framework that shapes a distinctive pattern of conflict resolution.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study carry important implications for pesantren management, particularly in managing conflicts among

teaching staff. The leadership of the pesantren needs to strengthen internal communication channels that are not only top-down in nature but also provide more open opportunities for feedback from teachers to leadership. Routine evaluation forums that have been implemented can be further developed into two-way communication spaces that not only deliver instructions but also facilitate clarification, expression of aspirations, and prevention of miscommunication. In addition, the management of conflicts among teaching staff should be directed toward strengthening the culture of *tabayyun*, promoting internal mediation mechanisms, and reducing seniority-based practices that may hinder open communication. Through these efforts, the pesantren will not only be able to resolve conflicts after they arise but also develop preventive communication systems that support organizational stability.

For teaching staff, this study highlights the importance of fostering warm, clear, and mutually respectful communication in everyday working relationships. Meanwhile, for leadership, the findings emphasize that adaptive leadership capable of integrating deliberation, persuasive approaches, and firmness in certain situations is a key factor in maintaining organizational harmony. Therefore, strengthening the communication capacity of both leaders and teachers becomes a strategic step that pesantren institutions can undertake to prevent the escalation of workplace conflicts.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations, as it involved only three informants and focused on a single pesantren. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand its scope by involving a larger number of informants from different organizational levels, including division heads, administrative staff, or even students (*santri*), in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of internal communication within pesantren institutions. Future studies may also adopt comparative approaches across different pesantren or examine the relationship between internal communication and other variables such as leadership, organizational culture, job satisfaction, or institutional effectiveness. In this way, the development of organizational communication studies in Islamic educational institutions can become richer, more contextual, and more relevant to the practical management of pesantren in Indonesia.

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