

Conflict Management Strategy to Enhance Student Discipline: Case Study at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis

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ABSTRACT

Student indiscipline remains a persistent problem that undermines the creation of a productive and conducive learning environment. Repressive disciplinary measures have often failed to foster students' internal awareness and character development. This study investigates the potential of conflict management strategies as an alternative, educative, and participatory approach to improving student discipline. Employing a qualitative method with a case study design, the research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis Regency. Informants included the principal, subject teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, students, and parents, all selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through non-participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and subsequently examined using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings indicate that conflict management strategies, particularly those involving open communication, humanistic disciplinary approaches, and the reinforcement of teachers' roles as character educators, contributed to the development of discipline grounded in value awareness rather than mere formal compliance. Dialogical interventions, such as discussion forums and peer mediation, effectively reduced conflict escalation and enhanced students' sense of responsibility. Moreover, the role of teachers as moral exemplars and value facilitators was identified as a critical factor in shaping sustainable disciplinary behaviour. These findings suggest that humanistic and collaborative conflict management strategies play a significant role in fostering long-term character formation and responsible conduct among students.

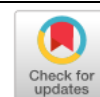
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INTRODUCTION

Student discipline is a fundamental prerequisite for fostering effective teaching and learning across educational systems worldwide. Disruptive behaviour, violations of school norms, and lack of personal responsibility continue to challenge schools' efforts to cultivate conducive learning environments. In Indonesia, these issues are particularly prominent and persist across various educational levels (Gao 2020; Otache 2021). At the senior high school level, common forms of indiscipline, such as habitual tardiness, rule violations, disrespectful interactions, and neglecting academic responsibilities, significantly disrupt the educational climate. These behavioural patterns underscore the urgent need for structured, systematic interventions aimed at managing conflict and embedding disciplinary values within students (Hanan et al., 2023).

Several studies have revealed that conflict management plays a strategic role in improving the pattern of interaction between students, teachers, and all school members to form a strong culture of discipline (Fatihaturahmi et al., 2023). Conflict management in the school environment does not simply refer to the process of resolving disputes or tensions but also to efforts to create harmony through open communication, mediation and restorative approaches (Nasrudin et al., 2021). This approach supports the transformation of conflict into

a means of social and emotional learning, which ultimately contributes to the formation of disciplined and responsible student character (Kurniawan, 2018).

Empirical data from SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis Regency, show that approximately 45% of students exhibit a tendency towards undisciplined behaviour, ranging from minor infractions to actions that require special intervention (Susanto & Dwianansya, 2024). This condition creates an urgency to review the method of managing student behaviour through a more educative and collaborative approach. The conflict management approach is considered to be able to answer these challenges because it is adaptive and not repressive, and provides space for students to reflect on their behaviour (Ulfah & Anwar, 2024).

The literature shows that conflicts are not always negative. If managed appropriately, conflict can be an opportunity to strengthen understanding between individuals and improve social relations in educational contexts (Nainggolan et al., 2023). Within the framework of conflict management, strategies such as open dialogue, the involvement of guidance and counselling (BK) teachers, parental participation, and the application of humane discipline rules are important components for building an inclusive school culture. Handling conflict through restorative approaches also paves the way for creating a more supportive and growth-oriented learning environment for students, rather than simply sanctioning them.

Previous studies have shown that conflict management has been implemented in various educational institutions, but many of them still focus on conflicts between teachers and parents or in the context of school leadership (Sulastriningsih et al., 2023). Meanwhile, studies focusing on direct interactions between teachers and students in the context of everyday conflicts are relatively limited. Therefore, this study focuses on how conflict management strategies can be concretely applied at the student level, especially in relation to discipline formation at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali. This study aims to fill the void in the existing literature and offer a new perspective that is more contextualised.

In reality, many conflict management approaches are still top-down and do not address the personal aspects of students in depth. Nainggolan et al. (2023) showed that most conflict resolution strategies do not consider the psychological and social factors behind student behaviour. This approach has the potential to cause resistance and worsen the situation. Therefore, it is necessary to design a conflict management strategy that is participatory and oriented towards strengthening students' character and self-regulation skills (Gunawan et al., 2022). This approach is expected to result in more sustainable behavioural changes.

Discipline problems at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali often stem from students' dissatisfaction with disciplinary approaches that are authoritarian and do not provide space for dialogue. As explained by Budiman and Suparjo (2021), conventional approaches to handling student offences often fail to build a sense of intrinsic responsibility, and instead create emotional distance between students and teachers. Therefore, an inclusive and restorative conflict management approach is believed to be a more effective and humane alternative solution (Rifa'i, 2023).

Conceptually, this study proposes three main themes in the analytical framework: (1) the role of conflict management in building student discipline; (2) assertive communication and mediation techniques used by teachers in responding to student offences; and (3) the contribution of the school environment to the creation of collaborative interactions between students and teachers (Prianka et al., 2022). By exploring these themes, it is hoped that this article will not only provide phenomenological descriptions, but also be able to encourage critical reflection on current educational practices and provide data-based recommendations.

More specifically, this article puts forward two main arguments. First, that conflict management is not only relevant as a tool to resolve conflicts, but also as a means of character education, particularly in developing self-discipline through strengthening students' social and emotional skills (Septian et al., 2024; Mardhiyah, 2019). Second, an inclusive approach to conflict management can increase student engagement in the learning process and strengthen a sense of belonging to the school community, which in turn has a positive impact on academic achievement and daily behaviour (Sutrisno et al., 2021).

The contribution of this article is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this article expands the understanding of the role of conflict management in the context of student discipline by integrating sociological and pedagogical approaches. Practically, the results of this study are expected to be used by education policy makers, school principals, and teachers in designing more effective, contextualised, and sustainable interventions. One of the most crucial implications is the need for professional training for teachers in conflict resolution and restorative approaches so that they have the capacity to become facilitators of student behaviour change, not just implementers of discipline.

As stated by Jauhari (2021) and Bahri (2021), effective conflict management in the school environment requires collective support from all parties, including students, teachers, parents, and school management. Collaboration across educational actors is crucial to ensure that the approach is consistently implemented and integrated into the learning system. In this case, SMA Negeri 1 Kawali can be used as a representative case study to understand the dynamics and challenges of implementing conflict management in secondary school.

Finally, this article aims to emphasise that a humanistic approach to conflict management not only resolves disciplinary issues in the short term, but also shapes students' character in the long term. Through conflict management strategies that focus on communication, mediation, and student empowerment, schools can become arenas for holistic growth. This approach also strengthens the role of teachers as educators who not only teach, but also nurture and guide emotionally and morally (Supriani et al., 2022).

Thus, the urgency of this research lies in its ability to offer a new perspective in addressing student discipline issues through an approach based on conflict management. In addition to making an academic contribution to educational literature, this research is also expected to encourage innovation in school management practices that are more responsive to the needs of students and the challenges of the times.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine in depth the practice of conflict management in improving student discipline at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis Regency. This approach was selected as it enables a comprehensive understanding of social dynamics, individual experiences, and interactions within the natural context of the school. The research was conducted over a period of two months, focusing on a single study site that was purposively selected due to its relevance to the research topic – specifically, the presence of significant discipline issues alongside the active implementation of conflict management strategies within the school environment.

The research subjects included the principal, subject teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, students, and parents who were selected through purposive sampling technique. The selection of informants was based on their direct involvement in the process of conflict management and student discipline. Data were collected through non-participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to record daily practices related to the application of rules and social interactions, while interviews were used to explore informants' experiences and views. Documentation included school archives such as rules of conduct, records of offences, and reports of student coaching activities.

The collected data were analysed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and inductive inference. To maintain data validity, triangulation of sources, methods, and time was used, as well as member check and peer debriefing techniques. The entire research process was conducted by upholding the principles of research ethics, including maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities and obtaining voluntary participation consent. This approach is expected to produce valid and contextualised findings in accordance with the empirical reality in the field.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Application of Open Communication Strategy in Managing Conflict

This study aims to identify and analyse the implementation of open communication strategies in managing conflict within SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis Regency. Through a qualitative approach, data were collected using in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation from various relevant parties, including the principal, guidance and counselling (BK) teachers, and students. The research findings indicate that conflicts in schools are not solely caused by disciplinary offences, but more often stem from social dynamics involving differences of opinion, disagreements in communication, and students' diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

The results of the analysis show that open communication strategies play an important role in the conflict management process. Four main themes were found to be the determinants of successful open communication in schools, namely: proper recognition of the conflict situation, active involvement of all parties involved, utilisation of appropriate communication channels, and the establishment of a climate of trust between students and teachers. In this context, communication not only functions as a medium for conveying messages, but also as an instrument for building social relations and interpersonal understanding. In an interview, the Principal of SMA Negeri 1 Kawali said:

"We realise that many small conflicts can actually be resolved more quickly if students feel they can talk openly. Therefore, we emphasise to teachers not to judge students immediately, but to give space for dialogue. This goes a long way in creating mutual trust in the school environment."

This statement confirms the institutional awareness of the importance of open communication as a pillar of establishing a healthy conflict resolution culture. This was also agreed by the counselling teacher, who explained:

"One of our jobs is to make sure students feel safe to share their problems. We always try to listen first without giving advice right away. Usually once students feel understood, they start to open up, and solutions are easier to find together."

This data shows that open communication in practice relies not only on verbal information, but also on an empathic approach and the courage to listen without judgement. One concrete form of implementing open communication is the implementation of student discussion forums facilitated by counselling teachers and homeroom teachers. This forum is used as an open space for students to express their views regarding school regulations, social experiences, and problems they face. The use of this forum has been proven to reduce the escalation of conflict between students and increase the sense of ownership of the school environment. In addition, open communication is also manifested in classroom activities such as weekly reflective sessions, where students are given the opportunity to evaluate their experiences collectively with teachers.

The research also found that students' involvement in the communication and decision-making process directly increased their commitment to the agreed solution. When students feel that their views are valued, they tend to be more cooperative and responsible for their own behaviour. This is consistent with the findings of Ferdiansyah (2025) and Nasrudin et al. (2021), who asserted that active participation in communication strengthens the sense of belonging and minimises the potential for continued conflict.

However, implementing open communication is not without its challenges. Some teachers stated that not all students have good communication skills, and some are reluctant to speak openly due to unpleasant past experiences. Therefore, communication skills training is needed for both teachers and students to make the communication process effective and inclusive.

Effective communication is also highly dependent on the use of appropriate communication channels. In this context, the school has developed various forms of communication, such as regular meetings between teachers and students, the utilisation of digital platforms for reporting, and the presence of daily picket teachers who can be accessed

by students for light consultations. These strategies support the creation of psychological closeness between students and teachers and facilitate early detection of potential conflicts.

A climate of trust is a crucial factor that contributes to the success of open communication. This research found that when students feel emotionally safe, they are more open in expressing complaints, feelings, and even criticism of the existing system. Establishing this climate requires consistency on the part of teachers and school management in providing responses that are non-reactive, supportive, and prioritise non-penalistic principles.

Open communication also serves as a means of social learning for students. In the conflict management process, students are trained not only to express their opinions, but also to listen actively. Listening skills are key in avoiding misunderstandings, which are often the root of interpersonal conflicts. This is in line with Mulyaningsih's (2021) opinion that emphasises the importance of communication competence as part of emotional intelligence in education.

In addition to the impact on conflict resolution, the implementation of open communication strategies also contributed to the improvement of student discipline. Students who felt included and valued showed an increase in compliance with school rules as well as exhibiting more reflective and responsible behaviour. This trend marks a shift from punitive compliance to mindfulness-based discipline.

In general, the open communication strategy implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali has contributed to the establishment of a more inclusive, cooperative and value-based school culture. This finding is reinforced by a number of previous studies which state that active, empathic and dialogic communication is an important component in building a democratic and character-oriented education system (Latifa & Afdal, 2022; Kamal & Andhita, 2023; Rahmasari et al., 2024).

Taking into account the various dynamics found in the field, this study recommends that open communication strategies continue to be strengthened through developing teachers' capacity in dialogue facilitation, providing formal and informal communication forums, and establishing school policies that support openness and participation. These efforts are important not only to manage conflict, but also to create an educational ecosystem that supports students' personal and social growth in a sustainable manner.

Humanist Discipline Approach and Mediation as an Alternative to Sanctions

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of implementing a humanist discipline approach and mediation strategy as an alternative to conventional sanctions at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis Regency. The research was conducted through a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. The research subjects included the principal, guidance and counselling (BK) teachers, subject teachers, and students involved in discipline violation cases.

The results of the analysis show that the humanist discipline approach is able to create a learning environment that is more inclusive, supportive and orientated towards character building. Discipline is no longer understood solely as a means of control, but as part of the education process of values and responsibility. In implementing this approach, schools prioritise empathy, dialogue and understanding of the background of student behaviour. This allows for a coaching process that does not cause emotional resistance from students. Students who feel treated with respect are more open to the conflict resolution process and do not feel alienated from the school community.

One of the counselling teachers stated:

"We no longer want to use a punitive approach that is intimidating. When students make mistakes, we talk to them first. It turns out that when they feel heard, they become more open and willing to take responsibility."

This statement is in line with the findings of Sulastriningsih et al. (2023) and Nasrudin et al. (2021), which confirmed that a humanistic approach to discipline enforcement can increase student involvement in the self-improvement process.

Correspondingly, the mediation strategy is used as a conflict resolution mechanism that involves the active participation of students. In this case, the counselling teacher, homeroom teacher, or designated teacher acts as a facilitator who helps students understand the conflict,

evaluate their actions, and agree on a voluntary joint solution. Mediation not only resolves disciplinary issues, but also instils important skills such as active listening, reflective thinking, and respect for others' perspectives. Another counselling teacher explained:

"We conducted the mediation process in an informal atmosphere. We talk to students without pressure. We ask them to think about the consequences of their actions, then we ask them to propose their own solutions. As a result, they become more responsible and do not repeat the same mistakes."

Table 1. Findings from the Application of Humanist Discipline and Mediation

Aspects	Key Findings
Methods of handling offences	Individual dialogue, mediation between parties, joint reflection
Student response	More open, less defensive, feel valued
Teacher role	Facilitator, active listener, character builder
Frequency of offences (current vs previous semester)	Decreased by $\pm 35\%$ after one semester of implementing the approach
Sanctions used	Educational: social duty, behaviour correction, formal apology
Impact on classroom climate	More calm, collaborative, students show greater empathy

Source: Primary data from observations and interviews at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali (2025)

The data shows that humanist approaches and mediation not only prevent conflict escalation, but also create meaningful emotional learning spaces. Students who were previously defensive towards disciplinary action now showed a willingness to voluntarily reflect on their actions.

In this context, mediation serves not only as an alternative, but as a transformational process that improves relationships between students and between students and teachers. Research shows that students involved in the mediation process are more likely to develop empathy and personal responsibility for their actions. This is in line with Syuaib and Mardia's (2023) view that mediation can build sustainable social competence and lead to improved internal discipline.

It is important to note that mediation also changes students' perception of conflict. They no longer see conflict as a form of social punishment, but as an opportunity to learn and improve. This becomes an important turning point in character building. As stated by Nasrudin et al. (2021), perceptions of conflict determine student responses, and mediation strategies are instruments that can turn conflict into a momentum for character learning.

However, the implementation of this approach also faces challenges. Some students show scepticism towards this approach, especially if they are used to a harsher, punitive approach. In addition, special training is needed for teachers so that they are able to carry out mediation effectively and consistently. This was expressed by Hariani and Ikhwan (2022), who emphasised that empathic communication and conflict facilitation skills are competencies that need to be systematically built in teachers' professional development.

This approach also requires the involvement of all school components, including parents. When the values of humanist discipline are instilled consistently, not only in the school environment but also at home, students will adjust more easily and build positive behavioural habits. Thus, the success of this approach relies heavily on collaboration between teachers, students, parents and school management.

Normatively, this approach brings the education system closer to its true purpose, which is to form human beings who not only obey the rules, but also understand the reasons behind the rules, and are able to make conscious and responsible decisions. In the long run, the application of humanist discipline and mediation not only creates a conducive learning environment, but also produces graduates who have strong character and relevant social skills to face the challenges of life.

The overall results of this study indicate that SMA Negeri 1 Kawali has successfully integrated humanist discipline and mediation approaches into the school culture. A significant reduction in offences, increased student openness, and improved interpersonal relationships

between students and teachers are measurable indicators of success. In line with the findings of Fatihaturahmi et al. (2023), discipline models based on dialogue and empathy proved to be more effective than coercive approaches.

As a practical implication, this approach can be modelled for other schools experiencing similar problems. With adequate training, school management support and continuous evaluation, this approach is likely to be replicated contextually. Its success depends not only on technical strategies, but on the ethical and pedagogical commitment of the entire school ecosystem to build a civilised education that focuses on the development of the whole person.

Improving Discipline through Strengthening the Role of Teachers as Character Builders

This study aims to explore and analyse how the role of teachers as character builders can contribute to improving student discipline at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis Regency. Through a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation review. The focus of this research is on how teachers not only carry out supervisory functions, but also become role models in the character building process.

The results show that teachers who actively function as character builders play an important role in creating a positive disciplinary climate. From the interviews conducted, teachers who establish close interpersonal relationships and build empathic communication are proven to be able to create trust from students. Teachers are not only tasked with enforcing rules, but also shaping students' values and attitudes through exemplary and meaningful learning. In line with the findings of Sangaswari et al. (2024), a coaching approach based on relationships and values proved more effective than an approach that relies solely on sanctions.

82% of the students interviewed stated that they were more encouraged to be disciplined when teachers demonstrated a supportive and guiding approach. They revealed that teachers who are willing to listen and provide personalised guidance make them feel valued and not judged (Hasanah, 2023). This reinforces the findings of Nurrachmah (2024) and Paramita et al. (2021), who emphasised the importance of open communication and teacher presence in building discipline attitudes that are based on awareness rather than fear.

Table 2: Research Findings on Strengthening the Role of Teachers in Improving Student Discipline

Aspects of the Teacher's Role	Strategy Applied	Impact on Student Discipline
Empathetic communication	Establish an open dialogue, listen to students' concerns	82% of students felt more valued and encouraged to be disciplined (Hasanah, 2023).
Moral role models	Set an example in discipline, honesty and responsibility	Students are more obedient to rules without external pressure (Sari et al., 2023)
Value-based learning	Incorporate character values in subject matter	Students understand the meaning of the rules more deeply
Involvement in non-academic activities	Facilitate extracurricular activities that support cooperation and responsibility	Students show increased engagement and commitment
Collaboration with parents	Regular communication and coordination in student character development	Consistency between school and home grades improves (Permatasari et al., 2020)
Personalised monitoring and mentoring	Provide individualised attention to students with potential discipline problems	Reduction of classroom offences by 35%

Source: Primary Data Field Research at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali (2025)

The table provides a concrete picture of the relationship between the strategies teachers implement and their impact on students' disciplinary behaviour. The data shows that a relational and value-based approach results in improved discipline that is not only formal (compliance with rules), but also internal (awareness and personal responsibility).

Teachers who act as character builders also actively incorporate moral values in the learning process. Values such as responsibility, honesty, discipline and hard work are not only conveyed theoretically, but also manifested in the daily behaviour of teachers in the classroom. Students noted that teachers' exemplary behaviour was one of the main factors that inspired

them to be disciplined. This is consistent with the findings of Erlangga et al. (2023) and Adawiyah & Arif (2022), who stated that the figure of the teacher as a role model has a significant influence on the formation of student behaviour.

Apart from the classroom, teachers are also involved in character strengthening programmes such as extracurricular activities, social projects, and discipline campaigns. Teachers' involvement in these activities allows them to observe students' character development in non-academic contexts and provide ongoing coaching. Mahbob et al. (2019) and Gusnadi & Wahyuningtyas (2023) mentioned that character education conducted outside the classroom often has more impact on the internalisation of positive values.

Collaboration between teachers and parents also plays an important role in strengthening character development. Teachers who communicate regularly with parents tend to have a fuller understanding of students' backgrounds. This allows for a more personalised coaching strategy that suits each student's condition. Permatasari et al. (2020) suggested that two-way communication between teachers and parents increases the effectiveness of character education because it provides continuity between values at school and at home.

Physical environment factors are also considered in the context of character building. Teachers encourage students to participate in maintaining the cleanliness and orderliness of the school environment as part of a shared responsibility. Cultivating a disciplined attitude toward maintaining the environment contributes to creating a more conducive and comfortable learning atmosphere (Siahaan et al., 2020; Ismanto et al., 2024). Students accustomed to living in an orderly environment tend to exhibit more structured and disciplined behaviour patterns.

However, the implementation of the teacher's role as a character builder does not always run smoothly. Some teachers admitted to experiencing problems in building effective communication with students who have complex family backgrounds or tendencies towards deviant behaviour. Therefore, interpersonal competence training for teachers is urgently needed to ensure that they can reach all students without exception. Kharisma (2017) and Istnaini et al. (2024) underline the importance of social and counselling skills training for teachers to optimally perform their coaching functions.

To ensure the effectiveness of this approach, schools need to continuously evaluate the role of teachers in character development. Evaluation can be performed through daily reflection, classroom observation, and feedback from students. Evaluation not only serves to assess success but also to identify further development needs in coaching strategies (Antony, 2022).

Conceptually, the character-building approach applied by teachers represents a paradigm shift from a punishment-based education system to one that builds moral awareness and responsibility. This change places students as active subjects of learning rather than passive objects of discipline. In the long run, students who are coached with a humanist approach have a greater chance of developing discipline that comes from an understanding of values and not coercion.

In conclusion, strengthening the role of teachers as character builders is proven to make a real contribution to improving student discipline at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali. Through empathic communication strategies, the inculcation of moral values, involvement in character development activities, and collaboration with parents, teachers shape a learning environment that emphasises not only compliance but also value awareness. By shifting the approach from punishment to coaching, schools are fostering a generation that not only abides by the rules but also understands the reasons behind them and makes them part of their personal identity (Faizal, 2024).

This model can be used as a reference for other schools that face similar challenges in terms of discipline. Consistent implementation of this approach, with the support of institutional policies and continuous training, will strengthen the foundation of character education, which is more solid and relevant to building a more disciplined and ethical future for the nation (Kusumasanthi et al., 2023; Fitri & Yuliana, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to explore the implementation of conflict management strategies as an alternative, educational approach to improving student discipline at SMA Negeri 1 Kawali, Ciamis Regency. The research found that three key strategies—open communication, humanistic disciplinary practices, and the active role of teachers as character builders—collectively contributed to fostering a more inclusive, supportive, and value-oriented school climate. Open communication established a foundation of trust, mediation facilitated reflective conflict resolution, and teacher modelling reinforced the internalisation of the school's disciplinary values. These elements functioned synergistically to shift the disciplinary approach from repressive control to one centred on student responsibility and character development.

Despite these findings, this study has several limitations. It focused on a single school site, which restricts the generalisability of the results. The qualitative and descriptive nature of the methodology also limits its capacity to quantitatively measure behavioural change. Furthermore, the effectiveness of conflict management strategies is highly influenced by local sociocultural dynamics, indicating the need for contextual adaptation in different school environments. Future research should adopt a mixed-methods approach and include multiple school settings to generate broader and comparative insights into the role of conflict management in shaping student discipline.

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