

From Conflict Resolution to Conflict Translation: Managing Organizational Tensions in Hybrid Islamic Boarding Schools

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Conflict
Translation; Institutional
Logics; Hybrid Organization;
Islamic Boarding School;
Social Capital.

Received : 20, June

Revised : 12, July

Accepted: 22, August

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ABSTRACT

Research on conflict in educational organizations has predominantly viewed conflict as an interpersonal, task, or leadership issue to be resolved. This article argues that hybrid Islamic boarding schools, which combine formal school and residential pesantren systems, generate a distinct form of friction arising from competing institutional logics. Using a qualitative multiple-case study of two state madrasahs in Lamongan, East Java, the study develops the concept of conflict translation as the process of transforming competing institutional demands into negotiated practices and arrangements. Findings show that conflict stems primarily from institutional boundary ambiguity rather than personal antagonism. Leaders function as institutional translators by reframing demands across logics and mobilizing social capital through trust, networks, and reciprocal norms. Conflict translation ultimately produces durable hybrid practices that integrate academic and boarding logics, repositioning conflict from an organizational problem to a source of institutional adaptation.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary school is no longer a simple container for instruction. It has become a complex, multi-functional organization that simultaneously delivers education, provides care and nurturing, forms character and exercises a degree of social control over the young people in its charge. As schools absorb these added mandates, they accumulate distinct value systems, professional groups and operating routines under a single roof. This layering makes the modern school an organizationally dense site in which different conceptions of what the institution is for must coexist, and it makes friction between those conceptions a routine feature of organizational life rather than an aberration to be stamped out.

This density is not merely additive. Weick (1995) observes that organizational members confronted with multiple, simultaneously valid demands must continually make retrospective sense of ambiguous cues before they can act, and schools that layer academic, custodial and moral mandates onto one another are precisely the kind of setting in which such sensemaking work becomes chronic rather than occasional. Two teachers can observe the identical incident and arrive at two equally defensible readings of what just happened and what it requires of them — not because either is mistaken, but because each is reading the event through a different institutional lens. Treating that divergence as a communication failure to be corrected, or a personality clash to be mediated, misdiagnoses its source. The divergence is the structure of the organization expressing itself through its members.

Islamic boarding schools sharpen this condition to a point. They are, in the strict sense, hybrid organizations: they weld a formal school system to a residential boarding (*pesantren* or *ma'had*) system, each carrying its own purpose, authority structure and culture. The fusion is generative, but it also seeds predictable lines of tension — between classroom teachers and dormitory supervisors, between academic rules and rules for communal living, between students' autonomy and disciplinary control, and between the impulse to innovate and the duty to preserve tradition. These are not occasional disputes; they are structural, recurring and built into the very design of the institution.

The condition is not unique to Indonesia, even if its institutional form is. Hybrid organizations that fuse a commercial and a developmental purpose, that combine social-welfare and market logics, or that hold public and professional mandates together, face a structurally similar predicament: they cannot simply pick one logic and discard the other without losing the very identity that makes them useful (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Skelcher & Smith, 2015). What distinguishes the hybrid Islamic boarding school is the intimacy and duration of the fusion. A microfinance organization can, in principle, separate its commercial loan officers from its development staff into different units; a *madrasah* cannot easily separate the teacher who grades a student's exam from the same student's dormitory life, because both academic and boarding logics claim the whole person, around the clock, inside a shared campus. This totalising, twenty-four-hour quality of the hybrid is precisely what makes its internal frictions so

frequent and so consequential, and it is what makes the school an unusually rich site for studying how, not whether, competing logics are made to coexist.

Existing scholarship on educational conflict, however, has tended to look elsewhere. It has concentrated on conflict between teachers and principals, on interpersonal friction, and above all on resolution — the techniques by which a disagreement is settled and quiet restored. Comparatively little attention has been paid to how a hybrid organization metabolises conflict between its competing institutional logics, and even less to how such conflict might be turned into a mechanism of adaptation rather than merely suppressed. The dominant question has been how conflict is resolved; the more revealing question, this article suggests, is how conflict is directed.

This article addresses that gap by developing a model of conflict translation, the process through which an organization converts conflict from a source of disruption into a source of learning. Grounded in fieldwork at two state Islamic senior secondary madrasahs in Lamongan, East Java, it shows how leaders and members read inter-logic tension, negotiate its meaning, adjust institutional boundaries, and ultimately fashion new hybrid practices. Within the local institutional fabric, this communicative negotiation closely mirrors the traditional and deliberative framework of *musyawarah-mufakat* (deliberation-consensus), which functions as a vital public space for rational discourse to bridge conflicting perspectives and foster collective understanding (Zamzam et al., 2023). In doing so it reframes both the empirical object and the theoretical task: from resolving conflict to translating it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict management in educational organizations

The intellectual starting point for any organizational treatment of conflict is the classical sociological insight that conflict is not inherently destructive. Simmel (1955) and, more systematically, Coser (1956), argued that conflict performs positive functions: it clarifies boundaries, releases tension, and can strengthen the very groups it appears to threaten. Organizational behaviour research later refined this intuition by distinguishing types of intragroup conflict, task, relationship and process conflict (Jehn, 1995; Jehn & Mannix, 2001) and by weighing their effects through meta-analysis (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit, Greer & Jehn, 2012). The broad finding is consistent with the classical view: task conflict can be productive when it stays separable from relationship conflict, whereas relationship conflict tends to corrode performance and satisfaction.

This conflict-types vocabulary travels reasonably well into Indonesian educational settings, and recent work confirms its relevance: a study of intragroup conflict among health-profession students in community-based interprofessional education in Indonesia found that the same task-relationship distinction organised how students experienced and managed friction across disciplinary boundaries (Tyastuti et al., 2025). Within the specifically Islamic educational sector, parallel findings recur. Indonesian *pesantren* scholarship has documented how dormitory life routinely produces intrapersonal, interpersonal,

intragroup and intergroup conflict among residents of differing social, cultural and academic backgrounds, and how tiered, deliberative and restorative responses are typically preferred over punitive ones (Fadlilah, Chaniago, Farwati, Fitriani, & Takriyanti, 2026). These studies are valuable, but they remain within the resolution paradigm: their object is the conflict episode and the technique for closing it, not the institutional architecture that keeps generating new episodes of the same kind. The present article takes a different point of departure by treating the recurrence itself, not the episode, as the phenomenon of interest.

Yet this tradition leaves a question unasked. Its guiding concern is largely diagnostic and corrective — *how is conflict resolved?* For organizations whose conflicts are not episodic disagreements but the permanent friction of incompatible mandates, a different question is needed: *how is conflict directed?* That shift — from settling disputes to channelling difference — is the move this article pursues.

Hybrid organization theory

The institutional logics perspective supplies the vocabulary for that shift. Logics are the taken-for-granted belief systems and practices that tell members what goals are legitimate and how work should be done (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012). Organizations facing more than one logic encounter *institutional complexity* (Greenwood et al., 2011), and hybrid organizations, those that combine logics that do not naturally cohere — must manage competing institutional demands as an ongoing condition rather than a temporary disturbance (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Besharov & Smith, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013). Recent work shows that the most resilient hybrids do not resolve this tension once and for all but sustain it through “structured flexibility”, holding rival commitments in dynamic equilibrium (Smith & Besharov, 2019; Smith & Lewis, 2011).

Two further strands of this literature sharpen the conceptual tools available for the present study. First, Battilana and Dorado’s (2010) comparative study of commercial microfinance organizations showed that hybrids without a ready-made template for combining their logics survive by deliberately constructing a shared organizational identity through hiring and socialisation, rather than by mechanically splitting the difference between competing demands — a finding that anticipates the present study’s interest in deliberately constructed, rather than accidental, syntheses. Second, Skelcher and Smith’s (2015) typology of organizational hybridity distinguishes segmented, segregated, assimilated, blended and blocked responses to institutional plurality, depending on how far logics are kept apart structurally or allowed to interpenetrate. Mapped onto this typology, the conflict-translation process developed below describes a movement away from segregation (logics confined to separate organizational zones, such as classroom versus dormitory) and toward a blended response, in which the logics are worked into a single practice rather than merely permitted to coexist side by side. This vocabulary will be useful in the Discussion

when the study's hybrid practices are situated against the wider hybridity literature.

It is also worth registering what this literature, for all its conceptual richness, has not done. Almost all of its empirical sites are secular, professionalised organizations operating in market or quasi-market environments – microfinance institutions, social enterprises, work-integration nonprofits, mass media firms (Liu & Zhang, 2022). Faith-based, residential educational institutions of the kind examined here combine institutional complexity with round-the-clock co-presence of staff and clients in ways that the standard hybridity cases do not fully anticipate, and this combination is precisely what makes the present site theoretically generative rather than merely an additional empirical instance of an already-settled phenomenon.

The hybrid Islamic boarding school is a vivid case of this condition. Its two constitutive logics pull in different directions across a recognizable set of oppositions, summarised below.

Table 1. The two institutional logics of the hybrid Islamic boarding school

Academic logic	Boarding/ pesantren logic
Achievement	Character
Efficiency	Care
Autonomy	Discipline
Innovation	Tradition

Crucially, the conflict that follows is not, at root, conflict between persons. It is *conflict between institutional logics* that happens to be carried by persons – a teacher who reads a student as an academic responsibility colliding with a supervisor who reads the same student as a moral one. This is theoretically stronger ground than interpersonal framings, because it locates the recurring friction in the architecture of the organization rather than in the temperaments of its members.

This distinction matters for method as much as for theory. If conflict were fundamentally interpersonal, the appropriate response would be interpersonal: mediation, communication training, perhaps a change of personnel. But if conflict is, at root, the friction of two legitimate institutional logics meeting at the same desk, the same dormitory corridor or the same parent meeting, then no amount of interpersonal skill-building will make the friction disappear, because the friction is not a defect in the people but a structural feature of the institution they inhabit. Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012) describe institutional logics as operating through a recognisable set of carriers – symbols, practices, sources of legitimacy, sources of authority – and each of these carriers is doubled in the hybrid Islamic boarding school: a symbol of achievement (an examination certificate) sits alongside a symbol of character (a behavioural record book); a source of authority lodged in pedagogical expertise sits alongside a source of authority lodged in religious seniority.

Wherever these doubled carriers meet without a settled protocol for which one governs, ambiguity, and with it conflict, is close to guaranteed.

Conflict translation: a proposed concept

Building on these traditions, this article proposes conflict translation as a distinct organizational process. Conflict translation is defined here as the organizational process of converting competing institutional demands into negotiated practices and new organizational arrangements. The term draws on the idea, central to institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) and to paradox scholarship (Lewis, 2000), that actors do not simply absorb or reject competing demands but actively work on them. Translation goes one step further: it treats the leader and the collective as interpreters who render the claims of one logic intelligible – and acceptable – in the terms of the other.

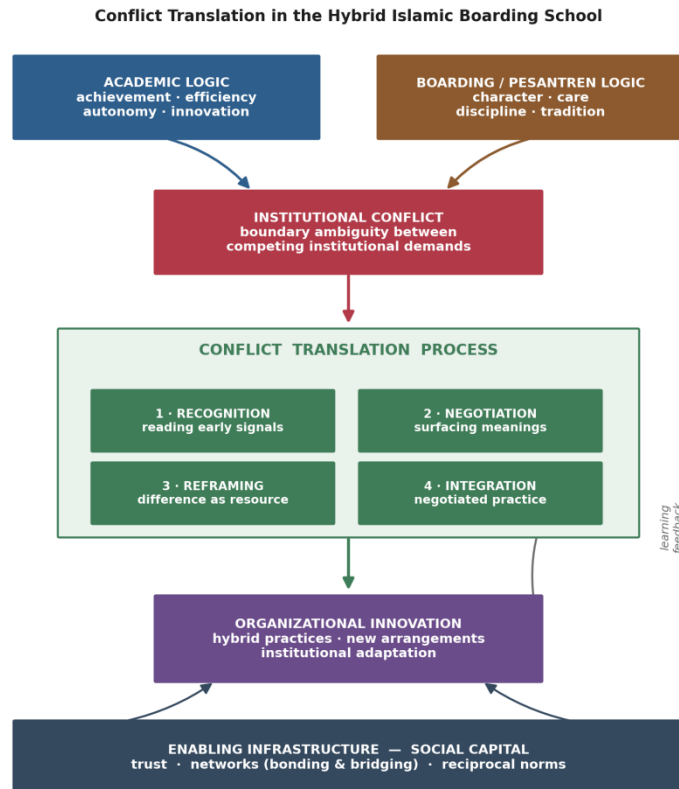
The concept also borrows, more quietly, from the sensemaking tradition. Weick (1995) characterises sensemaking as retrospective, social and grounded in identity: people figure out what an ambiguous event means by relating it to who they already understand themselves to be, and they do this together rather than alone. Conflict translation can be read as a deliberately steered variant of this process. Left to occur spontaneously, sensemaking around an inter-logic dispute could just as easily harden two camps' identities against one another as bring them together; what makes translation distinct is that a leader actively intervenes in the sensemaking process, supplying a frame in which the disputed practice is no longer read as a threat to either side's identity. The translator's craft, in other words, is applied sensemaking: not waiting for a workable shared meaning to emerge on its own, but constructing one and offering it to the parties before the dispute calcifies into a settled, adversarial story about who the other side is.

The process unfolds in four stages: conflict emerges as competing logics surface as friction; actors engage in meaning negotiation, surfacing and weighing the rival interpretations at stake; institutional boundaries are adjusted as roles and jurisdictions are renegotiated; and finally new practices are created that fold the once-opposed demands into a workable hybrid arrangement. The remainder of the article develops this model conceptually and then grounds it in evidence.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework links the four elements introduced above into a single process model. Two institutional logics – academic and boarding – generate institutional conflict that typically appears as boundary ambiguity between competing demands. Rather than being eliminated, this conflict is fed into a translation process comprising recognition, negotiation, reframing and integration. The output is organizational innovation: hybrid practices and new arrangements that constitute the organization's adaptation to its own internal complexity. A learning feedback loop returns the experience of one cycle to the recognition of the next.

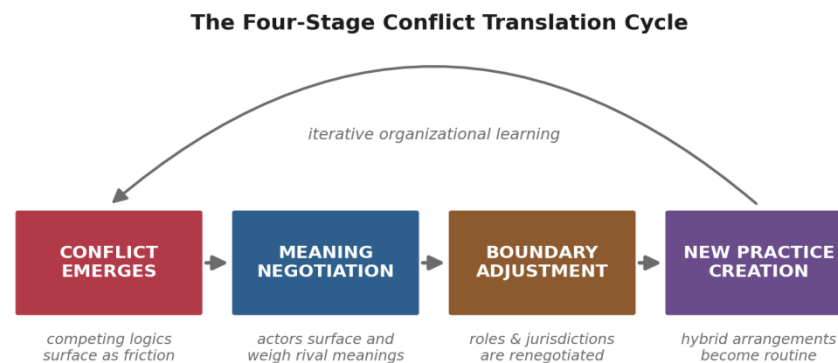
Figure 1. Conceptual framework – conflict translation in the hybrid Islamic boarding school



The model rests on an enabling infrastructure that the empirical material foregrounds: social capital. Trust, networks (both the bonding ties within groups and the bridging ties across them) and reciprocal norms are what make translation possible at all. Where this infrastructure is thick, friction can be surfaced and worked through; where it is thin, the same friction tends to harden into resistance. The translation process can therefore be represented more dynamically as a recurring cycle.

The distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, drawn from Putnam (2000), does conceptual work here that is easy to underestimate. Bonding ties — the dense, exclusive ties among people who already resemble one another, such as a cohort of senior religious teachers who trained together — are excellent at generating solidarity and shared identity, but they can just as easily entrench a single logic's view of events and make rival logics look illegitimate from the inside. Bridging ties — the thinner but structurally pivotal connections that cross group boundaries, of the kind that link a respected senior teacher to both academic and boarding factions at once — are what actually permit a translated frame to travel from one institutional camp to the other. A school that is rich in bonding capital but poor in bridging capital should, on this reading, be especially prone to the kind of polarised, faction-based conflict in which each side has a coherent internal story but no shared vocabulary with which to address the other; the cross-site comparison in the Findings returns to precisely this asymmetry.

Figure 2. The four-stage conflict translation cycle



METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative, multiple-case design, which is well suited to tracing a process such as conflict translation in its natural organizational setting. Two state Islamic senior secondary madrasahs in Lamongan Regency, East Java, were selected using a maximum-variation logic so that contrasting conditions could be compared. Site 1 is an urban madrasah at the centre of Lamongan town, characterised by a more administrative, technocratic structure and high academic expectations. Site 2 is a sub-urban madrasah set among agricultural surroundings, with a more homogeneous, communal and kinship-oriented culture. Both operate an accommodative, non-compulsory *ma'had* alongside the formal school, which makes them genuine hybrids while differing in context.

Informants were sampled to capture the full vertical and horizontal span of each organization: principals, vice-principals, senior and junior teachers, administrative staff, students and parents. Data were generated through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation of meetings and daily interaction, and documentary sources including standard operating procedures and meeting minutes. Analysis was thematic and iterative: transcripts were coded openly, codes were clustered into candidate themes, and themes were tested against the full corpus and across the two sites. Trustworthiness was supported by source and method triangulation, by the use of verbatim informant quotations, and by attention to disconfirming evidence — most notably the cases in which translation faltered.

A number of procedural choices deserve note. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian and Javanese as informants preferred, then transcribed and translated for analysis, with key emic terms (such as *ma'had*, *kiai* and *santri*) retained and glossed rather than translated away, to avoid flattening locally meaningful distinctions into generic management vocabulary. Coding proceeded in two passes: an initial open-coding pass that stayed close to informants' own language, followed by a focused pass that grouped codes around the emerging stages of recognition, negotiation, reframing and integration. Negative cases were deliberately sought rather than set aside: episodes in which a leader attempted to reframe a dispute and the reframing did

not take were retained in the corpus and are discussed in the Findings and Discussion, since they sharpen the boundary conditions under which translation succeeds. Ethical clearance followed the host university's standard procedures for educational fieldwork; informed consent was obtained from all adult informants and from parents on behalf of student informants, anonymity was assured through the role-based labelling used throughout this article (e.g., Principal-1, Junior Teacher-2), and no information that could identify a specific student or family is reported.

RESEARCH RESULT

The findings are organised around three themes that together trace the translation process from its origin in structural ambiguity, through the interpretive work of leaders, to its output in new hybrid practice. Table 3 summarises the themes and their principal empirical anchors.

Table 2. Summary of findings

Theme	Analytical claim	Illustrative empirical anchor
1	Conflict emerges from institutional boundary ambiguity	Dual school-ma'had structure; teacher-supervisor jurisdiction disputes; 14-type typology split evenly (7 vertical / 7 horizontal)
2	Leaders act as institutional translators, not only mediators	Reframing role-play as Islamic storytelling; "what value matters most?" dialogue; social radar; mobilising trust, networks and norms
3	Conflict produces hybrid practices and new arrangements	Peer-mentoring and peer-mediation in the dormitory; co-designed "value-reflection points" in Kurikulum Merdeka; escalating innovation portfolio

Theme 1: Conflict emerges from institutional boundary ambiguity

Across both sites, the most consequential conflicts did not originate in personal dislike. They originated in ambiguity about where one institutional logic ended and the other began. The dual structure of school and ma'had creates two interconnected work spaces with different operational cultures, and the boundary between them is rarely self-evident. A junior academic teacher described exactly this fault line when a student's discipline became contested terrain:

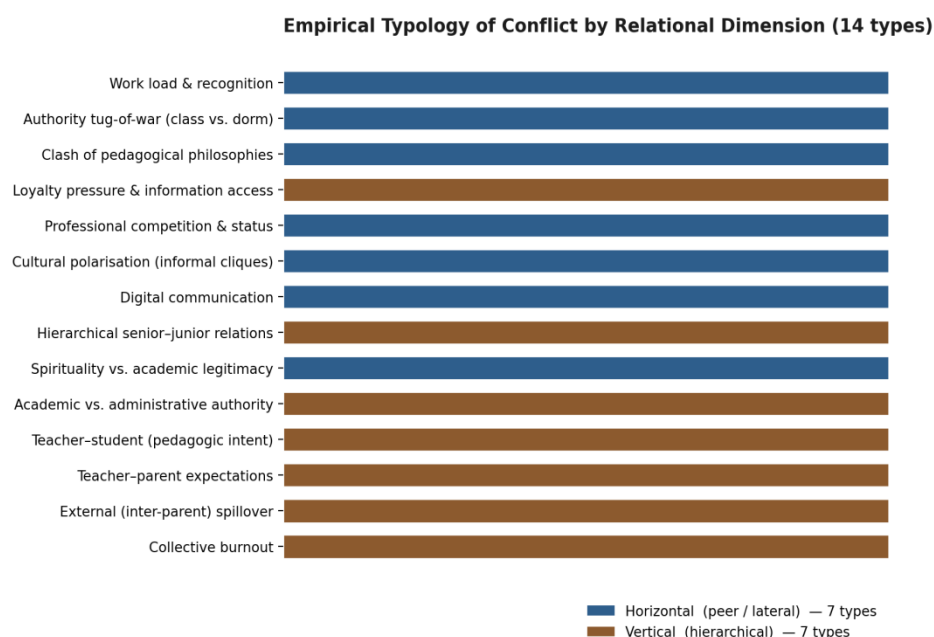
"I once said that discipline problems outside school hours should be the dormitory supervisors' domain. But they judged it to be a consequence of my teaching being too lax. I teach almost twenty hours a week, focused on material and curriculum targets, and suddenly I was seen as not caring about character formation. In the end the principal had to decide, but the atmosphere stayed tense." (Junior Teacher-2)

The same student is read by the academic logic as an academic responsibility and by the boarding logic as a moral one. Neither reading is wrong; the friction lies in the unallocated space between them. This boundary ambiguity recurs wherever the two logics meet, in the standardisation of character reporting, where senior religious teachers resisted being “measured” by a managerial instrument they felt degraded their moral authority, and in the competition between legal-administrative order and pedagogical immediacy that repeatedly set teachers against administrative staff.

This pattern resonates with, but also departs from, conflict reported in other Indonesian Islamic boarding contexts. Pesantren-based studies of dormitory life describe conflict arising chiefly from differences of personality, academic and language ability, rule violation and cultural background among co-residing students – that is, conflict located largely within the boarding logic itself, among peers who already share an institutional frame (Fadlilah et al., 2026). What the present data add is a second, orthogonal axis: conflict that arises not among peers within one logic but across the seam between two logics, where a teacher and a supervisor each apply a coherent, defensible frame to the same student and arrive at incompatible verdicts. The two axes are not mutually exclusive – a dormitory dispute among students can itself become entangled with the academic-boarding seam once a teacher and a supervisor disagree about how it should be handled – but distinguishing them sharpens the diagnosis: peer conflict within a single logic typically responds to deliberative and restorative techniques of the kind documented in that literature, whereas boundary conflict between logics, of the type emphasised here, requires the additional and qualitatively different work of translation.

Mapping the full corpus produced a typology of fourteen conflict types. Strikingly, they divide evenly by relational dimension, seven horizontal (peer-to-peer) and seven vertical (hierarchical) which signals that inter-logic tension is distributed across the whole organization rather than concentrated at any single seam.

Figure 3. Empirical typology of conflict by relational dimension



The two sites weighted this typology differently. At the urban Site 1, conflict clustered around internal power, information access and social relations – loyalty pressure, cultural polarisation among informal cliques, and hierarchical senior-junior relations. At the sub-urban Site 2, conflict clustered around professionalism and pedagogy, workload and recognition, the academic–boarding authority tug-of-war, and an especially sharp clash of pedagogical philosophies. A senior, discipline-oriented teacher captured the latter:

“Children today actually need clear rules and firm discipline. The young teachers often say that approach is outdated; they want games, group projects, methods that are too relaxed. In teaching meetings we argue a lot, they say I am too hard, I say they are too soft.” (Senior Teacher-2)

Against this, a junior teacher defended a progressive, technology-oriented stance, noting that proposals to use AI tools were sometimes treated as alien to the madrasah’s tradition even though students already live in a digital world. The disagreement is recognisably a collision of innovation against tradition, that is, of one logic against the other rather than a clash of personalities.

Read together, the two site profiles suggest that institutional boundary ambiguity does not express itself identically everywhere; it is filtered through local organizational culture even as its underlying source remains the same dual-logic structure. The urban site’s more administrative, technocratic character appears to channel boundary ambiguity into contests over power, loyalty and information – that is, into who controls the narrative about a disputed event – whereas the sub-urban site’s more communal, kinship-oriented character appears to channel the identical underlying ambiguity into contests over the correct pedagogical philosophy itself. Neither pattern is more or less “real” than

the other; both are downstream expressions of the same structural fault line running through the organization, refracted by the surrounding social texture of each campus. This refraction effect becomes important again in the Discussion, where it helps explain why the same leadership techniques produced different outcomes at the two sites.

Theme 2: Leaders act as institutional translators

If the first theme locates the source of conflict, the second locates the decisive organizational response. The two principals did far more than mediate between disputing parties; they translated between competing values, rendering the claims of one logic intelligible in the vocabulary of the other. This translational work is the conceptual heart of the study, and it began long before any open dispute, with what one principal called a social radar:

"Conflict usually isn't visible straight away, but you can feel it in the change of atmosphere – a meeting goes quieter than usual, or a group starts holding its own discussions. I deliberately sit with the teachers outside the formal forum, just for coffee, to catch the mood. Small signals often appear there before they become big." (Principals-1)

Detection is only the first move. The translational act proper is reframing, taking a practice coded as a threat by one logic and re-describing it in terms the other logic can endorse. The clearest instance arose when the curriculum reform asked teachers to adopt interactive, role-play methods that senior religious teachers dismissed as unserious. Rather than overrule the resistance, the principal re-narrated the new method as continuous with tradition:

"I had to come down personally, talk one-to-one with this senior teacher, and explain that role-play is also part of the traditional wisdom of Islam – storytelling, the tales of the prophets. Only then did he begin to understand. But it took three months, and it drained me emotionally." (Principal-1)

Here the academic logic's demand (active, student-centred pedagogy) is not imposed against the boarding logic; it is translated into the boarding logic's own idiom (the prophetic storytelling tradition), so that adopting it no longer feels like surrender.

This move sits comfortably within a wider pattern documented in studies of kiai leadership in Indonesian Islamic institutions, where a leader's moral authority is exercised less through formal command than through personally modelled example and through the selective, situated invocation of religious tradition to lend new practices legitimacy (Karim et al., 2023). What the present data add to that picture is the specifically translational direction of the move: the principal did not invoke tradition merely to justify his own authority, but to give the senior teacher a face-saving route into a practice that originated outside the boarding logic altogether. The labour involved should not be romanticised. The principal's own account – three months, and emotionally draining – signals that translation of this depth is effortful, slow and personally costly, a point the

Discussion returns to when considering the sustainability of leader-centred translation.

The second principal performed an analogous translation on the terrain of value rather than method, defusing sectoral ego by asking members to name the value they most prized in their work and then constructing a shared hierarchy in which every role's value was recognised as equal:

"When ego appears, I invite people to sit together and ask: what value matters most in our work? The answers vary – integrity, justice, discipline. From there we build a consensus that all roles stand within an equal hierarchy of values for our shared life. With this reframing, sectoral ego shrinks, because people feel their value is still recognised without having to feel superior to others." (Principal-2)

Translation of this kind cannot run on the leader's words alone; it runs on social capital. Both principals deliberately mobilised the organization's relational infrastructure. They worked through trusted, influential figures so that policy arrived in a peer's voice rather than as a directive from above:

"Take Kurikulum Merdeka. If I keep doing the talking, it can be seen as just a superior's policy. But when Pak Nur tells his colleagues that, after long discussion, he sees the benefit, acceptance comes faster. Influence doesn't always have to come from position. Sometimes a message from a peer lands better." (vice-Principals-1)

They likewise treated trust and reciprocal norms as objects of deliberate construction – explaining the reasons behind policy to build trust, and asking that disagreement be voiced early and openly to establish a norm of candour. At the sub-urban site, where trust ran high, contentious policies were accepted as functional necessities; at the urban site, where trust was more fluctuating, the same policies first triggered suspicion and had to be justified repeatedly before they were accepted. Trust, in other words, set the exchange rate of translation: high trust converted the energy of conflict into motivation, whereas low trust let it slip toward resistance.

It is worth being precise about what the leaders in this study were, and were not, doing. They were not simply charismatic figures whose personal magnetism happened to smooth over disagreement; both gave accounts of translation as a deliberate, learned and at times exhausting craft, distinct from natural charisma. Nor were they neutral arbiters who weighed two sides and split a difference; a genuine compromise would have given each logic half of what it wanted, whereas what both principals produced was closer to a synthesis in which each logic recognised something of its own concerns in the resulting practice. This is the precise sense in which "translator" is the more accurate label than "mediator": a mediator helps two parties reach a settlement between their positions, while a translator changes the language in which a position is stated so that it becomes intelligible, and ultimately acceptable, within a framework it did not originate from.

Theme 3: Conflict produces hybrid practices

The pay-off of translation is visible in its output: durable practices that fold the once-opposed logics together. These hybrid practices were not handed down as instructions; they were the creative residue of conflict that had been read, negotiated and reframed. In the dormitory, the pressure of higher behavioural targets pushed supervisors to invent new arrangements rather than simply tighten control:

"When I started giving the ma'had staff higher targets to reduce student violations, they felt burdened at first. But from that demand, new initiatives appeared. In one unit they began developing a peer-mentoring system – senior students given more responsibility to guide the younger ones, not just to supervise. In another, staff involved students in drafting the dormitory rules, and it turned out more orderly because students felt included rather than coerced. There is now even a peer-mediation system: if there is friction between students, they learn to settle it through deliberation first, before staff step in." (vice-Principal-1)

Each of these is a hybrid: peer mentoring marries the boarding logic's care and discipline to the academic logic's developmental, capacity-building orientation; participatory rule-making marries communal tradition to a more autonomous, deliberative student role. The same hybridising move appeared in the academic core, where the second principal turned the curriculum reform over to the contending factions and let them argue their way to a synthesis:

"I didn't dictate how to implement the new curriculum. I invited representatives of the factions to sit together and said: this curriculum gives us freedom; now argue out how to apply it here without losing our identity. The debate was sharp. The outcome was a consensus that every learning unit must have a point of reflection on Islamic values, designed together. Because it was the result of their own contest of ideas, they felt strong ownership of it." (vice-Principal-2)

The co-designed "value-reflection point" is conflict translation in miniature: the academic logic's freedom and the boarding logic's value-formation are not traded off but built into a single instructional unit. Over time, such translated conflict compounded into an escalating portfolio of innovation. What began as routine, normative programmes matured – across successive years – into documentary films and podcasts on student life and substance-abuse prevention, and then into social-entrepreneurship projects, environmental initiatives and peer mental-health support groups. The competition that produced them stayed within the bounds of solidarity because, as the principals put it, the rivalry was for the madrasah, not against one another. Conflict, once translated, had become the organization's engine of adaptation – the cycle of Figure 2 running forward.

Read against Skelcher and Smith's (2015) typology of hybridity responses, the practices catalogued in this theme sit closest to what that framework calls a blended response: rather than keeping academic and boarding logics in separate

organizational compartments, the schools fused them into single practices — a mentoring relationship, a curricular unit, a dormitory rule — in which neither logic's presence cancels the other's. This is a stronger and rarer outcome than the selective coupling that other hybrid organizations have been shown to rely on, in which intact elements of each logic are projected to different audiences without ever being combined into one another (Pache & Santos, 2013). The hybrid Islamic boarding school, lacking separate audiences to which it could present separate faces — the same student inhabits classroom and dormitory simultaneously — may be structurally pushed toward blending precisely because selective coupling is not available to it as an exit option.

DISCUSSION

The central theoretical contribution of this study is a shift in the unit of analysis and in the question asked of it. The conflict-types tradition asks *how is conflict resolved?* and tends to treat conflict as a problem to be contained (Jehn, 1995; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Reframing the object as conflict between institutional logics (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Greenwood et al., 2011) makes a different question tractable: *how is conflict translated?* The corresponding move is conceptual as much as practical — from conflict management to conflict translation, and from conflict-as-problem to conflict-as-institutional-adaptation.

This repositioning extends paradox and hybridity scholarship in a concrete direction. Where that literature establishes that resilient hybrids sustain rather than dissolve their competing commitments through structured flexibility (Smith & Besharov, 2019; Smith & Lewis, 2011), the present study specifies one micro-mechanism by which that flexibility is actually accomplished on the ground: a leader, working as translator, re-describes the demand of one logic in the idiom of the other, so that integration becomes possible without anyone's identity being negated. Translating role-play into prophetic storytelling, or building a value-reflection point into a liberalised curriculum unit, are not compromises that split the difference; they are syntheses that let both logics be honoured at once.

The findings also speak back to the hybridity-typology literature reviewed earlier. Battilana and Dorado (2010) showed that hybrids without an inherited template survive by deliberately building a shared organizational identity; the present study shows one of the discursive mechanisms by which such an identity gets built moment to moment, in the small, repeated acts of reframing that a translator performs across a school year. Skelcher and Smith's (2015) typology, in turn, helps explain why this site moved toward blended rather than segmented or segregated responses to its institutional plurality: when the same student's body occupies both the classroom and the dormitory across the same twenty-four hours, segmentation is not a real organizational option, and the school is pushed toward integrative solutions almost by structural necessity. Conflict translation, on this reading, is not one technique among several equally available to any

hybrid; it is closer to the technique that this particular kind of total, residential hybrid is forced to develop if it is to survive its own design.

The study also identifies the condition under which translation succeeds. Social capital – trust, networks and reciprocal norms (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 2000) – functions as the enabling infrastructure of translation. The cross-site contrast is instructive: at the high-trust sub-urban site, deliberately stimulated tension was metabolised into motivation and innovation, whereas at the lower-trust urban site the same stimulation risked tipping into latent resistance. Conflict translation is therefore not a universal technique but a *trust-conditioned* capability; absent sufficient relational infrastructure, attempts to channel conflict productively may instead accelerate fragmentation.

These claims should be read against the study's own limits. The evidence is qualitative and drawn from two madrasahs in a single regency, which is appropriate for tracing a process in depth but does not establish how frequently translation succeeds versus fails across the wider population of Indonesian hybrid Islamic boarding schools, nor how the pattern would look in pesantren that are residential and compulsory for every student rather than accommodative and optional, as both sites here were. The retrospective character of much of the interview material also means that successful translation episodes may be remembered and narrated more vividly, and perhaps more flatteringly to the leaders who performed them, than episodes that misfired, even though the design deliberately sought out disconfirming cases. A longitudinal design following the same schools through leadership transitions, or a larger comparative sample spanning compulsory and non-compulsory ma'had arrangements, would be needed to test how far the four-stage model and its trust-conditioning generalise beyond the two cases reported here.

A final, sobering observation concerns durability. In both organizations, conflict translation was practised as a cultural craft rather than codified as procedure. There was no written standard operating procedure for it; the capability lived in the persons of particular leaders and in tacit collective wisdom. This leader-centric quality makes the achievement fragile: a change of leadership could carry the capability away with it. Institutionalising translation – giving social capital the administrative scaffolding that would let trust and reciprocity outlast any individual – emerges as the principal unmet challenge for hybrid schools that have learned to translate their conflicts well.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hybrid Islamic boarding schools do not need the elimination of conflict. Because their friction is built into the coexistence of two institutional logics, the demand for a conflict-free organization is both unrealistic and counter-productive. What these schools need instead is organizational capacity of a particular kind: the capacity to read conflict before it hardens, to translate difference across logics rather than suppress it, and to produce new structures from the encounter.

Conflict translation names that capacity and specifies its stages – recognition, negotiation, reframing and integration – along with the social-capital infrastructure that makes it work.

The deeper point is that conflict, in an organization of this kind, is not a sign that something has gone wrong with the school. It is closer to a sign that the school is doing exactly what it was built to do – holding two legitimate but non-identical purposes together under one roof – and that the holding requires continual, active work rather than a one-time settlement. A madrasah that reported zero friction between its academic and boarding sides would not be a healthier hybrid; it would more likely be a hybrid in which one logic had quietly swallowed the other, at the cost of whatever that logic alone cannot provide. Recognising conflict as the normal exhaust of a functioning dual-logic structure, rather than as a malfunction, is itself the first and most consequential reframe that this article asks its readers, including practising school leaders, to make.

For practice, the implication is that leaders of hybrid schools should cultivate translational rather than merely adjudicative skill, invest in the trust and networks that translation consumes, and – critically – begin to codify their hard-won relational practices so that they survive succession. For research, the findings invite longitudinal study of how translation becomes (or fails to become) institutionalised, and comparative work in other hybrid settings where competing logics meet. The study's own scope – two madrasahs in a single regency – bounds the transferability of its claims, but the process it describes is likely to travel wherever organizations are built from logics that will not dissolve into one another. In such organizations, difference is not a burden to be removed but a dialectic to be translated into progress.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future research is encouraged to examine the institutionalization of conflict translation in a broader range of hybrid educational settings, including compulsory residential pesantren and other faith-based organizations. Longitudinal and comparative studies across regions and leadership transitions would provide deeper insights into the sustainability of conflict translation and the role of social capital in shaping organizational adaptation. Quantitative approaches may also complement the present findings by testing the proposed four-stage conflict translation model in diverse contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents of the participating state madrasahs in Lamongan, East Java, for their valuable cooperation and willingness to share their experiences. The authors also acknowledge the support provided by Universitas Negeri Surabaya and Universitas Islam Darul Ulum Lamongan in facilitating this research.

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