

The Relationship Between Education Level and Household Conflict Management: An Empirical Study Within the Framework of Islamic Family Law

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Article	Abstract
<p>Article History : Received : March, 30, 2026 Reviewed: May, 01, 2026 Accepted : May, 19, 2026 Published : June, 03, 2026</p>	<p>Using the Thomas-Kilmann model and Islamic family law principles, this study comprehensively examines the importance of intellectual level in mediation techniques for resolving domestic disputes. This study, which uses a qualitative-empirical methodology, finds differences in conflict resolution patterns: subjects with high intellectual levels are more likely to adopt the Collaboration and Compromise modes, which are in line with the values of Shura and Mu'asyarah bil Ma'ruf, while subjects with a secondary education background are more likely to be trapped in Competitive or Avoidant behavior that risks exacerbating family divisions. According to Maqasid al-Shariah, a person's academic qualifications play an important role in changing the conflict resolution paradigm from an authoritative approach to a more logical emotional dialectic, which strengthens family resilience within the corridor of welfare.</p>
<p>Keywords: Education Level, Conflict Management</p>	

INTRODUCTION

Household sustainability is a crucial component of overall social stability in Indonesian society, particularly in rural areas (Afifah et al., 2024). As social beings, humans are highly dependent on others, and partners play a crucial role in life. Marriage, a sacred bond, is a legitimate way to build relationships (Hardianti & Nurwati, 2020; Malisi, 2022; Suryatni, 2021). The husband-wife relationship is typically viewed within a hierarchical structural framework with distinct gender-based roles in traditional Islamic family law. Interpretations of traditional scriptures such as the Quran and Hadith clearly reflect this division of roles. According to this perspective, the wife is supposed to manage the household and care for the children, while the husband is seen as the leader and primary breadwinner (Daharis et al., 2025). In Islam, the ideal home should be full of love, affection, and peace. Husband and wife in an Islamic family need to be aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses and understand their rights and responsibilities (Nafisah & Jihad, 2025; Pulungan et al., 2024). Families, especially marriages, serve to achieve affection, love, and peace, although conflict within the household is common. Managing conflict significantly impacts household harmony, and the inability to manage conflict can lead to separation, divorce, or domestic violence (Amalia et al., 2017; Muzan et al., 2022).

Although often viewed negatively, conflict is an inevitable and natural part of every interaction within a household. According to Surah An-Nisa' verses 34-35 of the Qur'an and Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), there are strict and hierarchical rules for resolving marital disputes, also known as *nusyuz* or *syiq q*. The best standard for a constructive conflict management approach is these Islamic conflict resolution principles (Nisa, 2024; Tsaqib & Fathonih, 2023).

Both husband and wife will have rights and responsibilities within the household if the marriage fulfills its pillars and requirements. Married life will be peaceful, calm, and happy if these rights and responsibilities are fulfilled properly (Fitri et al., 2024). Couples who are unable to resolve their differences end up divorcing (*tal q*), which is a legitimate act but is hated by Allah, thus endangering the goal of *sakinah* (peace and harmony). One of the main signs of failed conflict

management is the increasing or high divorce rate (Ratnawati & Rahmawati, 2024; Syatibi et al., n.d.). Article 114 of the Quran (KUHP) defines divorce as the dissolution of a marriage as a result of a divorce suit filed by the husband or wife. Article 65 of Law Number 7 of 1989 concerning Religious Courts states that "Divorce can only be carried out before a court after the court concerned has tried and failed to reconcile the two parties." This explanation is based on the principles of Article 115 of the Quran (KUHP) (Daharis, 2024).

Education is a vital process in the development of human thought and behavior, not merely an attempt to impart knowledge (Alinata et al., 2024; Hasbullah, 2020). Education functions as "reasoning capital" or reasoning capital in the context of family relationships, enabling people to approach difficulties methodically. According to the cognitive perspective, there is a linear relationship between an individual's educational attainment and their capacity to process information and regulate emotions. Highly educated individuals are said to possess the psychological maturity to compromise and negotiate in situations of domestic dispute rather than being trapped in detrimental communication patterns (Rahmadani et al., 2025).

This is in line with Human Capital theory, which views education as an investment that improves the quality of human resources, such as managerial skills in the business sector and emotional intelligence (Hani et al., 2025). The use of soft skills learned during a long educational process is conflict management. A person is more likely to be exposed to discussions about equality, human rights, and non-confrontational dispute resolution techniques if they have a higher level of education. From the perspective of Islamic family law, this phenomenon finds similarities in the concepts of *Rahmah* and *Muwaddah*, where education acts as a bridge to understanding *Maqashid al-Shari'ah* (legal objectives) in marriage, specifically realizing benefits and avoiding harm (*dar'u al-mafasid*). Couples with lower levels of education are more likely to resort to emotional strategies or seek help from extended family too quickly. Conversely, conflict resolution is often handled more tactfully among couples with higher levels of education, but this can lead to deeper divisions (*shiqaq*) if not accompanied by a solid understanding of Islamic law.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an empirical study design with a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach to investigate the relationship between education level and domestic conflict management within the framework of Islamic Family Law (*fiqh munakahat*), as demonstrated by previous studies (Nur et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025). The qualitative approach was chosen because of its ability to deeply explore respondents' subjective experiences related to *silaturahmi* mediation (QS. An-Nisa: 35), the principle of husband's *qiwamah*, and preferred conflict resolution techniques, which are difficult to measure quantitatively. The main objective is to examine how differences in educational background specifically elementary-junior high school, high school, diploma (D2), and undergraduate (S1) levels influence the tendency to use the five Thomas-Kilmann Instrument (TKI) conflict modes: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating, in the context of sharia deliberation and *ta'aruf*. The study population consisted of Muslim married couples in Batam, Riau, who had experienced marital conflict in the past five years. The sample was stratified by education level and length of marriage (1–30 years) to provide background context without comparing marital age. A purposive sample of 20 couples (40 informants) was selected. The inclusion criteria were: marriage for at least five years, prior conflict (e.g., economic or parenting disputes), and voluntary participation. The purposive sampling technique ensured diverse representation, in accordance with the principle of justice in Islamic research (*adl fi al-bahits*).

The primary data collection instrument was a semi-structured in-depth interview designed based on the specifications of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), supplemented by participant observation and supporting documents such as records of sharia mediation from the Religious Courts. The independent variables (education level, measured by diplomas and history of sharia studies) and the dependent variables (conflict management, indicated by problem identification, deliberation, and resolution based on fatwas by contemporary scholars such as Yusuf Al-Qardhawi)

were comprehensively explored. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation (husband-wife interviews and external observers), theoretical triangulation with Islamic Family Law principles, and member checking. Reliability was achieved through an audit trail of transcript recordings.

The research procedure was carried out in stages: preparation (university ethics clearance and informed consent), data collection over three months (February–April 2026) through home visits and virtual sessions, and analysis. Data analysis adopted the Miles and Huberman (1994) model adapted to Islamic thematic content analysis. This included data reduction (codification of themes such as "sharia education and modes of collaboration between migrant workers"), data presentation (education-conflict relationship matrix), and conclusion drawing (pattern matching with Islamic Family Law theory). Research ethics adhered to the principles of trust and confidentiality (Qur'an, Al-Hujurat: 12), with written consent from all respondents. This design enabled contextual empirical conclusions to be drawn, where findings were verified through sharia principles, thus contributing to the development of an Islamic education-based model for household conflict management in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examines how formal education levels influence couples' conflict resolution strategies. Nine couples with varying educational backgrounds (from elementary school to college) participated in in-depth interviews that revealed the unique dynamics of marital dispute resolution.

Respondents' Conflict Management Style Profile

Based on the level of collaboration and aggressiveness, the Thomas-Kilmann theory categorizes conflict management into five categories. First, according, is a highly aggressive but uncooperative approach where one party tries to achieve its own goals without considering the other party; this is effective in emergency situations but can damage relationships. On the other hand, according, accommodating is highly cooperative but not coercive; one party is willing to compromise to maintain peace or because the other party values the issue more (Fariha, 2025).

When someone decides to back down or postpone resolving a conflict because they believe it's not the right time or that the issue is too small, they are exhibiting avoidance, which is an indecisive and uncooperative attitude. Compromise, which aims to find a middle ground so that both parties receive some of what they want, even if neither is completely satisfied, falls somewhere in the middle. Last but not least, collaboration is a cooperative and assertive approach that seeks to find a "win-win" solution by integrating the ideas of all stakeholders to produce a better outcome than either party could achieve alone.

Based on the Thomas-Kilmann classification, the following are the conflict management style tendencies found in respondents:

Respondent	Education (Husband and Wife)	Dominant Style	Characteristics of Settlement
R1	SMP-SMK	Compromising	Looking for a solution to solve the problem quickly
R2	SLTA-S1	Collaborating	Wives are usually more analytical during deep conversations.
R3	SMK-SMK	Competing	High sectoral ego, frequent disputes.
R4	SMP-SD	Accommodating	Wives often submit to their husbands' authority.
R5	SMK-D2	Collaborating	Fairly equal two-way communication.
R6	SMP-SD	Avoiding	To keep the peace, avoid disputes.
R7	SD-SMP	Compromising	The husband gives space to his highly educated wife.
R8	SMP-SMP	Avoiding	Silence is like a thousand words when there is a problem.
R9	SD-SD	Accommodating	The negotiation strategy used was

simple and the situation was acceptable.

Analysis of the Relationship between Education and Conflict Management

1. Formal Education as a Determinant of Communication Patterns

A person's mental processes and language skills are strongly influenced by their formal education, and these factors directly impact how they handle conflict at home. Essentially, higher education tends to provide people with more systematic emotional regulation and analytical skills, leading to a more argumentative and reasoned communication style as opposed to a reactive and emotional one. Highly educated individuals are typically more accustomed to a systematic approach to problem-solving, allowing them to identify the source of domestic problems without engaging in personal attacks (Jauhari et al., 2025).

Formal education influences diction and articulation skills in family conflict resolution. In communication theory, the ability to use "I" statements, such as "I feel disrespected when..." rather than "You always ignore me," is observed in couples with higher levels of education. This makes relationships less defensive and creates space for more constructive conversations. Education also fosters a broader perspective, making people more open to alternative viewpoints and cooperative or compromising approaches to dispute resolution, rather than domineering or competitive ones.

However, formal education can sometimes have unintended consequences if it causes couples to become less intellectually compatible (Remilda, 2022). Conflict can escalate when one partner uses language to dominate intellectually (intellectual bullying) because the other partner feels threatened or their emotions are misinterpreted. Therefore, when combined with emotional intelligence, formal education is most effective in the home environment as a predictor of communication patterns; problems are analyzed using logic honed in school, and relationships are repaired using empathy.

The data shows that couples with higher levels of education (such as R2 and R5) tend to use the Collaborative style. Higher education provides a person with the cognitive ability to evaluate problems rationally, rather than emotionally. This is consistent with the Islamic Family Law concept of Consultation (Surah Asy-Shura: 38), which calls for constructive dialogue to resolve problems.

Formal education can be understood as a primary determinant of communication patterns within a household, as it is through education that individuals acquire ways of thinking, language skills, and emotional management, which are then applied in daily interactions, including with their spouses. The higher a person's education level, the more skilled they are in analyzing problems, organizing ideas logically, and expressing feelings in a more assertive yet non-aggressive manner. This leads to more open, dialogical, and constructive communication. How does education influence communication patterns.

- a. Shaping thinking and language styles. Formal education trains individuals to use logic, distinguish facts from emotions, and choose more appropriate diction when expressing objections. In the context of a household, this means that educated couples tend to avoid shouting or judging, but instead use "I" statements (such as "I feel..."), resulting in more empathetic communication and reduced defensive conflict.
- b. Influencing the balance of power in communication. Research on couples with different educational levels shows that the partner with the higher education level often tends to dominate the decision-making process, resulting in dominant or semi-dominant communication patterns. Conversely, when the husband and wife have equal educational attainment, communication tends to be more balanced, two-way dialogue, and mutual respect, resulting in a more harmonious relationship.
- c. Encouraging open communication and deliberation. In Islamic family traditions, the ideal communication pattern is democratic dialogue conducted through deliberation (*musyawarah*)

(consensus), where each family member is given the opportunity to express their opinion. Education enhances individuals' ability to participate in deliberation, understand differing perspectives, and respect shared decisions, so that communication patterns are no longer one-way and authoritarian, but collaborative and participatory.

Highly educated couples tend to be better able to address conflict as a topic of discussion, rather than blame, because education has equipped them with reflective thinking skills, more structured language skills, and more mature emotional management. In the context of interpersonal communication, higher education strengthens a person's capacity to distinguish between concrete events and subjective evaluations. Therefore, when conflict arises, partners are more likely to express their experiences and feelings clearly, rather than direct criticism at their partner's character.

Formal education also hones the use of constructive communicative language, such as "I" statements, which allow individuals to express objections without threatening the other party. In the domestic context, this results in a decrease in defensive communication and an increase in openness, as couples feel safer expressing deficiencies or dissatisfaction without anticipating a sharp confrontation. Furthermore, higher education generally correlates with broader social and psychological insights, making couples more prepared to accept that differences of opinion and conflict are natural dynamics in relationships, not indications of failure or disinterest.

The ability to engage in conflict as a discussion also demonstrates mature empathetic communication, where partners strive to understand the other party's position and feelings, rather than solely pursuing their own interests. Within the framework of couple communication, higher education facilitates the use of respectful, two-way dialogue, transforming conflict from a battleground into a space for negotiation aimed at mutual resolution. As a result, the quality of communication within the household becomes more mature, open, and solution-based, which in turn contributes to improved psychological well-being and family harmony.

Formal education plays an important role in shaping the thinking patterns, language skills, and communication patterns of married couples, but alone, it does not guarantee marital harmony. This is because communication patterns within the family are not solely determined by academic knowledge but are also influenced by non-cognitive factors such as emotional intelligence, religious values, and family culture and traditions. Emotional intelligence, for example, determines the extent to which a person is able to recognize, manage, and express their emotions appropriately, as well as understand their partner's emotions, resulting in more empathetic communication and less prone to spontaneous reactions.

On the other hand, religious values and religious beliefs also shape how couples interpret roles, obligations, and boundaries in domestic interactions. In the context of Islamic Family Law, values such as

2. Dominance of Avoiding and Accommodating Styles in Low-Education People

Lack of access to aggressive communication skills and intellectual self-confidence often contributes to the tendency of people with low educational backgrounds to use accommodating and avoiding strategies. Low levels of education are often associated with a more traditional or fatalistic perspective on household dynamics, where disagreements are viewed as threats to be avoided rather than as problems to be addressed. Avoiding becomes a defensive strategy when people are unable to reason or fear escalating confrontation beyond their verbal control (Maulana et al., 2024).

However, the dominance of the accommodating style among these groups is often fueled by unequal social and economic power dynamics. Without adequate knowledge, people may feel they lack the bargaining power to fight for what they believe in, so they give in to maintain peace at home or avoid abandonment. Because the real issues are never addressed and instead buried for a false sense of security, this pattern creates a cycle of passive communication in which one party continues to suppress their own desires. Over time, this can lead to emotional distress.

From a sociological perspective, a lack of knowledge often limits access to literature or teaching on marriage equality and individual rights (Damanik et al., 2025). Therefore, accommodating behavior is often misinterpreted as a sign of "devotion" or "patience," but in terms of conflict management, it is simply a time bomb that delays resolution. Couples sometimes fall into the trap of "silence is golden" (Avoidant) or "As long as the other person is happy" (Accommodative) when they lack the communication skills developed through formal education. Unfortunately, this prevents partnerships from developing toward collaborative emotional maturity. Respondents who only completed elementary or junior high school education, such as R4, R6, and R9, tend to avoid or adapt. Limited Conflict Literacy: People with low education levels often lack the emotional vocabulary needed to engage in productive debate.

The dominance of avoiding and accommodating styles in individuals with low levels of education can be understood as an adaptive response to limited cognitive skills, communication skills, and self-confidence in negotiating personal interests. Low levels of formal education are generally associated with limited access to the development of critical thinking skills, the use of appropriate diction, and an understanding of rights and boundaries in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, individuals tend to choose the safest communication style, namely avoiding direct confrontation or immediately giving in to maintain superficial peace.

The avoiding style is evident when individuals choose not to explicitly address conflict, change the topic, or even remain silent when complex issues arise, considering the conflict a threat rather than a problem that can be resolved rationally. In the context of low-educated couples, a lack of emotional vocabulary and argumentative skills makes them hesitant to voice objections, fearing that the conflict will escalate or spiral out of control. As a result, issues are bottled up, allowing conflict to build up and potentially emerge in other forms, such as passivity, emotional alienation, or despair, even though the relationship appears peaceful on the surface.

The accommodating style occurs when one party is willing to sacrifice their own interests to maintain the relationship, often at the expense of their personal needs, due to a perceived lack of social, economic, or knowledge capital to negotiate an equal position. In families with low levels of education, this pattern is often normatively understood as a form of "patience" or "devotion," so that individuals see it not as a form of inequality but rather as a moral obligation. In the long term, the dominance of the accommodating style has the potential to cause psychological distress, as persistently suppressed dissatisfaction can turn into frustration, passivity, or even powerlessness in the household decision-making process.

From a social perspective, limited education is associated with limited access to information, literacy, and understanding of relational rights, so individuals tend to internalize that their position in conflict is always one of "obedience." In family communication patterns, the avoiding and accommodating styles become unhealthy self-control mechanisms when used continuously, as they not only mask the root of the conflict but also hinder the development of balanced, dialogical, and deliberative communication.

Thus, the dominance of avoidance and accommodation styles in people with low levels of education can be seen as a manifestation of limited "conflict wakefulness capabilities" (conflict awareness) and constructive communication skills, which ideally should be developed through formal education balanced with Islamic communication habits, based on justice, empathy, and openness, so that conflict is no longer avoided or simply accommodated, but rather faced as material for healthy deliberation.

3. Anomalies in Equivalent Education (Secondary)

Interestingly, a competitive style was found in R3 (vocational high schools). Equality in secondary education sometimes leads to ego confrontation, where each child feels they have equally strong arguments. This suggests that equal education can actually foster competition within the family if it is not accompanied by emotional development.

"Anomaly in Equivalent Education (High School)" can be explained as a situation where couples have relatively similar levels of formal education (for example, both have completed

high school, such as vocational high school (SMK-SMK) or high school-high school (SLTA-SLTA), yet exhibit conflict patterns that tend to be competitive and dominant, rather than the collaborative or harmonious nature expected from equal knowledge. Generally speaking, educational equality should create more balanced, dialogical, and empathetic communication. However, in some middle-level couples, what occurs instead is a war of egos, competition, and recurring conflict, thus calling this phenomenon an "anomaly."

- a. **The Emergence of Ego Confrontation in Equivalent Secondary Education.** In couples with equal secondary education, both parties have relatively equal argumentative capacity, but this is not necessarily balanced by emotional maturity and an understanding of the values of an egalitarian and mutually respectful relationship. In this situation, each party feels they have an equally strong "right to argue," so they tend to be reluctant to give in, avoid, or accommodate, but instead try to "win" the discussion. As a result, household conflict is handled with a competitive style, where both parties attempt to defend their positions without being sufficiently open to other people's views. other parties.
- b. **Limited conflict resolution skills at the secondary level.** Secondary school education, especially in many local contexts, tends to focus more on mastering academic material than on developing interpersonal and conflict resolution skills. Therefore, even if a husband and wife both graduated from vocational high school or high school, they are not necessarily trained to manage differences of opinion, manage emotions, or internalize the principles of fairness, openness, and compromise in their relationships. In situations like this, educational equality actually fuels conflict, as both parties possess the ability to argue but lack the adequate normative and communicative framework to direct conflict toward deliberation or collaboration.
- c. **The Role of Traditional Power Structures and Gender.** Another anomaly is that educational equality at the secondary level does not always shift traditional power structures within the household, especially if local culture still strongly prioritizes the husband's authority and the wife's obedience. In the context of Islamic Family Law, which is often understood as textually patriarchal, the husband remains positioned as the *qawwam* (the legal representative). Therefore, despite educational equality, the husband tends to claim the "right" to determine the final outcome, while the wife feels she must argue more forcefully to be heard. This has the potential to trigger conflict. Sharp arguments, mutual blame, and a refusal to accommodate each other's opinions, even though both have comparable levels of knowledge.
- d. **Implications for Household Communication Patterns.** From a family communication perspective, this anomaly indicates that equal education at the secondary level does not guarantee balanced, constructive, and deliberative communication. Instead, communication often takes the form of tense negotiations, egocentric struggles, with neither party truly seeking to mediate or seek a win-win solution. In Thomas Kilmann's framework, this phenomenon is seen in the dominance of a competitive style, where one or both parties strive to win, even though the harmony of the relationship is at stake.

Thus, the anomaly in equivalent education (secondary school) can be understood as a misalignment between the level of formal knowledge that aligns with the quality of communication and conflict management methods: couples may both have secondary education, but they are unable to transform conflict into discussion, thus becoming trapped in a pattern of confrontation and ego-competition, which has the potential to damage emotional closeness and household stability.

Review of Islamic Family Law Findings

From an Islamic Family Law perspective, conflict management is not merely a psychological issue, but relates to the implementation of the rights and obligations of husband and wife as stipulated in the Quran and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) (Fahmi, 2025).

1. Transformation of the Concept of *Qiwamah* (Leadership).

Domestic conflict management has undergone significant modifications as a result of the shift from the traditional patriarchal interpretation of *Qiwamah* (male/husband leadership) to a modern interpretation. According to conventional conceptions, *Qiwamah* is often misinterpreted as absolute authority justifying a domineering or competitive approach where choices are final and unilateral. However, according to contemporary interpretations, *Qiwamah* refers to the obligation to care for, nurture, and supervise, essentially placing the spouse in the role of intermediary in establishing a safe environment for communication (Asrori, 2024).

The changing interpretation of the concept of *qiwamah* has transformed the role of the head of the family in conflict resolution from a unilateral "judge" to a facilitative "mediator." Within this framework, the approach to conflict management shifts from avoidance (avoiding conflict due to fear or inability to argue) and accommodation (giving in due to pressure or feelings of inferiority) to a collaborative style, where husband and wife strive to find solutions together through balanced dialogue. When *qiwamah* is practiced with the values of justice, compassion, and deliberation (*mawaddah wa rahmah*), the head of the family no longer imposes his will but instead uses his authority to maintain healthy, open, and inclusive discussions, ensuring that the opinions of the wife and other family members are heard fairly in the decision-making process.

In practice, this conceptual shift replaces an informative, one-way communication pattern, where the husband only conveys decisions, with a participatory communication pattern, where all family members are involved in the problem-solving process (Budhirianto, 2015). In this perspective, conflict is no longer viewed as a form of defiance (*nusyuz*) against the husband's leadership, but rather as a natural dynamic requiring solutions based on consensus and justice. Thus, transformative *qiwamah* serves as a foundation for constructive conflict resolution, where leadership is used to celebrate diverse perspectives, facilitate deliberation, and build household stability based on consensus, not simply uncritical obedience.

Islamic law establishes the husband as the *qawwam* (leader) of the family, as explained in several studies of Islamic Family Law (Ferliadi, 2020; Khoer et al., 2022). However, research shows that the practice of *qiwamah* is strongly influenced by educational level: At lower educational levels (R4, R6, R9), *qiwamah* tends to be understood in an autocratic textual manner, where the husband's leadership is identified with absolute authority to make all decisions. In this context, the wife prefers to be submissive and avoids discussion, believing that the "obligation to obey her husband" prohibits her from arguing or refusing. This pattern carries the potential risk of harboring grievances or losses secretly, as conflicts are not openly expressed to meet the demands of formal adherence to Islamic law.

Conversely, at higher levels of education (R2, R5), *qiwamah* is manifested as participatory leadership. In this context, education strengthens the husband's ability to understand the message of Surah An-Nisa: 19, namely to treat his wife well (*mu'asyarah bil ma'ruf*) and respect her as a partner in the household. Husbands become more open to their wives' views, without feeling that listening to her input diminishes their authority. Their conflict management style is collaborative, where decisions are reached through joint discussion, thus becoming a concrete manifestation of the principles of *ma'ruf*, deliberation, and justice in the practice of *qiwamah*.

The transformation of the concept of *qiwamah* (family leadership) can be understood as a significant shift in meaning from an authoritarian-patriarchal paradigm to a paradigm of responsible, dialogical, and participatory leadership. In traditional understanding, *qiwamah* is often identified with the husband's dominance over his wife, as if the husband has the right to make all decisions without requiring the wife's consent or input, resulting in a hierarchical and monologic relationship pattern. In this view, *qiwamah* is understood as a unilateral right, not simply an obligation, easily manifested in the form of control, supervision, and even psychological pressure on the wife.

In contrast, in a more contextual contemporary understanding, *qiwamah* has undergone a transformation in meaning into leadership based on responsibility, care, and service, as emphasized in several recent studies of Islamic Family Law and interpretation. The word *qiwamah* derives from the root *qiyam*, which means, among other things, "to stand, guard, and maintain," so the position of

qawwam is more accurately understood as the party responsible for maintaining, protecting, and guiding the household, rather than as a ruler who can monopolize all decisions. In this context, a husband's leadership is not measured by the extent to which he defeats his wife in an argument, but rather by his openness to deliberation, consultation, and his wife's involvement in the decision-making process.

The transformation of qiwamah is also reflected in the shift from informative (one-way) communication patterns to participatory communication patterns, where the wife and other family members are considered legitimate partners in managing the household. Within this framework, qiwamah is no longer feared to diminish the husband's power if he listens to his wife's opinions; rather, it is a manifestation of mature leadership, as emphasized in Surah An-Nisa': 34, which places qiwamah within the context of financial, moral, and social responsibility, not just formal authority. Ultimately, the transformation of the concept of qiwamah leads to the understanding that leadership in the family is not an arena for power struggles, but rather a space for relationship management based on justice, compassion (*mawaddah wa rahmah*), and open communication, so that conflict can be managed constructively and harmoniously, as is relevant in the context of studies on the relationship between education and household conflict management.

2. The Islah Mechanism and Thomas Kilmann's Theory

In addressing domestic conflict, the Islah mechanism and Thomas-Kilmann's theory overlap significantly in their goal of restoring harmony (*shalah*) from a damaged state (*fasad*). In reality, these mechanisms are ways to utilize the Collaboration and Compromise method at a deeper spiritual and ethical level. The word "islah" literally means "repair" or "reconciliation." Islah offers a foundation of values so that the process achieves not only technical agreement but also inner peace (*sakinah*), while Thomas-Kilmann offers a strategic framework based on assertiveness and cooperation.

According to the Thomas-Kilmann framework, the mechanism of *islah* suggests that married couples abandon avoidance strategies, which often allow problems to fester without resolution. Islamic teachings strongly discourage ignoring problems or permanently severing ties, as Muslims are advised not to cut off communication for more than three days without a *shari'a* (Islamic law) justification. To achieve a win-win solution, *islah* emphasizes the importance of active, open, and ongoing communication. When husbands and wives participate in *islah*, they essentially work together to maintain family unity by combining their individual interests into broader shared interests, so that the relationship is seen not as a battleground but as a space for cooperation.

Furthermore, *islah* also encourages a compromise approach based on mutual consent (*antaradin*) when a perfect solution cannot be reached, allowing each party to feel relieved even if they have to give in on certain issues (SIAK, n.d.). In this context, compromise is not only a pragmatic technique but also has moral value, as each party deliberately makes sacrifices to maintain the integrity of the household.

The accommodative style is both a key difference and a complement between the Thomas-Kilmann approach and the Islamic perspective. Within the Thomas-Kilmann framework, the accommodative style is often associated with a lack of assertiveness, as one party consistently gives in to maintain harmony, without advancing their own interests. However, within the *islah* mechanism, the act of giving in (*tashamuh*) is seen as a noble moral act, serving to break the chain of conflict and prevent escalation of disputes. Thus, the accommodative style, which in the Thomas-Kilmann context tends to be passive, is transformed by *islah* into a conscious, meaningful, and even worshipful form of accommodation, as long as it does not sacrifice structural justice. The combination of these two ideas the moral and spiritual basis of *islah* and the procedural framework of the Thomas-Kilmann concept provides married couples with moral "fuel" (*islah*) and a clear "roadmap" (Thomas-Kilmann) for resolving disputes peacefully, empathetically, and sustainably.

In the context of Islamic Family Law, *ishlah* (peacemaking) is highly valued, as emphasized in Surah An-Nisa: 128, which calls for peacemaking between husband and wife to prevent marital discord. *First*, Compromise style (R1, R7): In Islamic legal terminology, this compromise style is called *shulh*, which is a peacemaking effort based on the principle of give and take. Respondents with

secondary education tend to prefer this approach because they understand that maintaining the integrity of the household is far more important than "winning" individual conflicts, and are therefore willing to sacrifice some interests for the sake of family harmony.

Second, avoidance style (R8): From the perspective of Islamic Family Law, silence without a clear resolution can potentially lead to a form of *ila'* (indifferent meaning), or at least a neglect of prohibited psychological and social obligations, such as an indifference to one's partner's emotional state. While on the surface, this attitude is sometimes seen as a form of patience, from the perspective of *ishlah* and conflict management, prolonged avoidance can actually damage the relationship, because conflicts are not openly confronted and resolved, but rather suppressed or ignored.

The mechanism of *isl h* in Islam and the Thomas-Kilmann (TKI) theory in conflict management psychology have a complementary relationship, especially when combined in the context of domestic conflict resolution. In general, both aim to create harmony (*sakinah, shal h, and shalihah al-rajul wa al-rajul*), but with different approaches: *isl h* is based on religious values, while TKI is based on a strategic and psychological framework with dimensions of assertiveness and cooperation.

a. *Isl h* Mechanism: Spiritual and Moral Dimension

Isl h (reparation/peace) in Islam refers to efforts to mitigate conflict and repair relationships so that they return from a damaged state (*fasad*) to a state of balance and harmony (*sh lih*). In the family context, *isl h* is not merely a technical matter of problem solving, but a process characterized by the intention of worship, patience, *tashammuh* (noble accommodation), and openness to deliberation. In QS. For example, in An-Nisa': 128, Allah emphasizes the importance of pursuing reconciliation between husband and wife, making *isl h* a normative instruction, not merely an ethical suggestion. Therefore, *isl h* provides moral "fuel" for couples: 1) It encourages couples not to ignore conflicts or end relationships without resolution, thus preventing a prolonged avoidance style. 2) It emphasizes the virtue of giving in (*tashammuh*) and forgiveness as forms of worship, so that accommodation, which is potentially considered weak by Indonesian migrant workers, can be considered noble within an Islamic framework.

b. Thomas-Kilmann's Theory: Strategic and Psychological Dimensions

Thomas-Kilmann's theory identifies five conflict management styles: competitive, collaborative, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating, structured around two dimensions: assertiveness and cooperation. The collaborative and compromising styles align most closely with the goals of *isl h*, as they emphasize mutually beneficial resolutions and a desire to find common ground. Avoidance and accommodating styles in TKI tend to be seen as "safe" strategies but have the potential to hinder long-term resolution, unless they are combined with the goals of worship and justice, as in *isl h*.

c. Synergy between *isl h* and Thomas-Kilmann

In the context of your research, *isl h* and TKI can be viewed as two sides of a single process: 1) TKI as a "roadmap": providing a clear analytical framework for couples to choose the conflict style most appropriate to the situation, for example, shifting from avoidance to compromise or collaboration, to resolve the conflict effectively. 2) *Isl h* as moral "fuel": encouraging couples to resolve conflicts not only technically but also spiritually and ethically, so that giving in or compromising is not merely a weakness, but an act of worship, as long as it remains within the boundaries of justice (*'adl*) and goodness (*ma'ruf*).

Thus, the mechanism of *isl h* and the Thomas-Kilmann theory function synergistically: *isl h* strengthens the value and ethical dimensions in resolving household conflicts, while Thomas-Kilmann provides a systematic model for recognizing, classifying, and directing conflict styles towards a more constructive, collaborative, and deliberation-based direction.

3. Efforts to Prevent Nusyuz Through Educational Literacy

The conflict management paradigm is shifting from power dominance to equality of rights and obligations through efforts to prevent Nusyuz (disobedience or abandonment of commitments) through educational literacy. Here, education is viewed as a process of increasing one's emotional,

legal, and theological literacy, not merely as a means to obtain an official title. Couples with high levels of educational literacy are better able to recognize differences of opinion before they escalate into nusyuz behavior, whether from the husband or wife (nusyuz al-zauj).

The Collaboration and Compromise conflict management style in the Thomas-Kilmann matrix is technically strengthened by educational literacy (Ramadhani et al., 2025). Dissatisfaction does not have to lead to resistance or abandonment because people with high levels of literacy can often interpret their partner's nonverbal cues. Education emphasizes the importance of communication; educated couples will choose open communication over the silent treatment, which is a destructive variation of the Avoidance approach. They recognize that nusyuz often marks the end of communication failures, and literacy offers a language tool to resolve these failures without jeopardizing each other's self-esteem.

In addition, educational literacy is a tool for reinterpreting religious texts that are often misused to justify mental oppression. The idea of obedience and leadership is viewed contextually as a form of partnership rather than slavery when a person has a broad literacy understanding. This fosters a home environment where everyone feels valued both emotionally and intellectually. The desire to engage in nusyuz (religious disobedience) decreases significantly as this sense of mutual respect increases because differences of opinion are resolved peacefully rather than through threats or failure to fulfill commitments.

Nusyuz is an act of rebellion or disobedience carried out by one spouse in a marriage that violates the rights and responsibilities of the other spouse. Although a husband can sometimes commit nusyuz, it usually refers to a wife neglecting her responsibilities to her husband (for example, leaving the house without permission or refusing affectionate advances). Nusyuz (disobedience) often arises due to a failure of communication. (Azizah, 2024; Qudsajul et al., 2025; Wijaya & Nafi'ah, 2024).

In married couples with equivalent but low education levels (R3 - Vocational High School/Vocational High School), a competitive lifestyle is very problematic and can lead to accusations of nusyuz from the husband towards the wife simply because the wife is verbally critical. On the other hand, higher education allows the wife in an R2 couple (Bachelor's-High School) to voice objections without seeming unwilling to listen because she has superior rhetorical and logical abilities to conduct discussions (Collaborative Style).

Efforts to prevent nusyuz through educational literacy can be understood as a preventive strategy that combines increased knowledge, skills, and normative awareness within married couples. In the context of Islamic Family Law, nusyuz refers to an attitude of defiance, neglect, or rejection by one party of their rights and obligations within marriage, whether by the husband or wife, which has the potential to disrupt the harmony and stability of the household. Educational literacy, particularly religious education, communication skills, and an understanding of rights and obligations, plays a crucial role in preventing and addressing nusyuz early on.

a. Improving understanding of rights and obligations

Educational literacy helps couples properly understand the rights and obligations of husband and wife in Islam, thereby reducing the possibility of misunderstandings that can lead to nusyuz. Many marital conflicts arise from ignorance, for example, when one party feels they are sacrificing too much or feels their obligations are burdened too heavily, leading to reluctance, the formation of emotional barriers, or even neglect of responsibilities. With adequate education, both partners will be better able to distinguish between adherence to Islamic law and authoritarian domination, so that nusyuz is no longer seen as a form of resistance, but as a problem that needs to be addressed through deliberation, advice, and efforts to improve.

b. The Role of Religious and Premarital Education

Religious education, particularly Islamic education, is crucial as a preventative measure against nusyuz, as it instills the values of *sakinah* (love), *mawaddah* (love), *rahmah* (mercy), *ta'awun* (compassion), and justice in marital relationships. Premarital education, for example, enables prospective couples to understand their emotional, spiritual, and economic responsibilities

before marriage, so they enter the household not with illusory expectations, but with full awareness. In this context, educational literacy serves as "prevention at the front door," enabling conflicts that could potentially give rise to *nusyuz* to be mitigated early on through educational means, rather than through coercive enforcement.

c. Encouraging healthy communication and conflict management

Nusyuz often arises as a result of communication breakdowns, when disagreements escalate into cold wars, silent anger, or neglect of the other party's psychological needs. Educational literacy encompassing communication skills, conflict management, and emotional literacy encourages couples to address differences through discussion, dialogue, and deliberation, rather than isolation or defiance. Thus, education serves not only to increase knowledge but also as a tool to prevent the escalation of tensions that can turn into *nusyuz*, both between husband and wife.

d. Changing stigma and raising legal awareness

Without adequate literacy, the term *nusyuz* can be misinterpreted or even used to legitimize pressure, violence, or psychological control, especially against women. Critical and contextual education helps couples understand that *nusyuz* is not simply a "sign of disobedience" that must be coerced, but a symptom of a relationship that needs to be repaired through an educational, dialogical, and compassionate approach, as emphasized in commentaries that emphasize the educational and moral improvement dimensions of the Qur'an. An-Nisa: 34, not just punishment. Thus, educational literacy plays an important role in preventing *nusyuz* not only from a practical perspective, but also from the viewpoint and normative beliefs that apply in the family.

Overall, efforts to prevent *nusyuz* through educational literacy can be seen as a form of long-term investment in the sustainability and blessing of the household, because education not only improves the quality of knowledge, but also strengthens moral foundations, communication, and legal understanding, so that conflicts that have the potential to give rise to *nusyuz* can be faced maturely, constructively, and in line with Islamic values.

4. The Principle of Deliberation as the Peak of Conflict Management

Deliberation can be seen as the pinnacle of collaboration in the context of conflict management because its goal is to unite differing perspectives to establish context, rather than simply seeking a middle ground. Deliberation seeks to reach solutions that are considered mutually beneficial and qualitatively beneficial for all parties, unlike compromise, which often requires each party to give and take (Fitri & Huda, 2025). According to this theory, conflict should be viewed as an equal dialogue seeking the truth or the best solution, not as a struggle for dominance.

In-depth discussion, which is the highest form of conflict resolution, highly values openness and tolerance for differing goals without the majority exerting pressure or controlling the minority. Empathy and openness are crucial in this situation, where everyone is encouraged to understand the opposing viewpoint until a rational and moral compromise is reached. Because everyone feels heard and involved in the decision-making process, the end result is not only a written agreement but also a strong moral commitment. Therefore, besides solving current problems, discussions also improve interpersonal relationships and prevent similar conflicts from occurring in the future (Hajar et al., 2024).

The fourth principle of Pancasila is embodied in the process of problem-solving through deliberation to reach the best agreement for the common good, based on moral and family values. This is more than just a vote; it is a discussion to reach a fair conclusion, acceptable to all parties, and non-discriminatory. Deliberation is a fundamental component of Islamic family law (Ali & Saputri, 2025; Bakar, 2025; Noviyansah, 2025; Sugandi et al., 2024). The findings of this study reveal that education level is closely related to the quality of deliberation.

Respondents who have completed elementary or junior high school (R6, R9) sometimes skip the deliberation stage and go straight to the stage of "accepting fate." Meanwhile,

respondents with higher education view conflict as an object that must be discussed together (Deliberation), which is a manifestation of the An-Tiradin principle (mutual consent).

The principle of deliberation is considered the pinnacle of conflict management because it places dialogue, justice, and collective agreement at the center of the dispute resolution process, rather than unilateral power, subjugation, or mere minimalist compromise. In the Islamic context, deliberation (shura) is seen as a primary value in decision-making, including in domestic conflicts, as emphasized in Surah Ash-Shura: 38, which praises those who manage their affairs through deliberation among themselves.

a. Deliberation as a form of equal dialogue

Unlike competing, avoiding, or accommodating styles that tend to be asymmetrical, deliberation demands active participation and equality between the parties involved in the conflict. In the domestic context, this means that husband and wife both have the right to express their perspectives, needs, and limitations, so that conflict is no longer understood as a struggle for dominance, but as a space for dialogue to seek truth and the common good. In this model, deliberation is at a higher level than mere compromise, as it not only demands "reducing" demands, but also encourages the elaboration of ideas to create new, better solutions than each party's initial positions.

b. Producing consensus-based decisions

Deliberation is oriented towards informal consensus or *ijma'*, where decisions are reached through agreement from all conflicting parties, rather than the result of majority vote, power demands, or unilateral will. In the context of conflict resolution, this means that the resulting solutions tend to be more acceptable because they emerge from a participatory process, thus reducing the potential for recurrent conflict. This acceptability of solutions is what makes deliberation the "peak," as it not only resolves problems but also strengthens relationships and trust between conflicting parties.

c. Deliberation as the actualization of justice and compassion

Within the framework of Islamic Family Law, deliberation represents the pinnacle of conflict management because it combines legal, ethical, and emotional dimensions: 1) Justice (*adl*), because all parties are heard and considered equally. 2) Compassion (*mawaddah wa rahmah*), because the process demands empathy and a desire to nurture the relationship. Thus, deliberation not only resolves conflict technically, but also strengthens the spiritual and moral foundations of the household, thus being considered the highest form of conflict management in Islamic-based conflict management thought: not merely mitigating but transforming conflict into a means of strengthening togetherness and family integrity.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that educational attainment significantly influences the conflict resolution patterns adopted by married couples. A positive correlation was identified between higher levels of formal education and the use of a collaborative conflict management style, as highly educated spouses tend to exhibit stronger emotional control, more rational communication, and a greater willingness to seek mutually beneficial solutions through dialogue. In contrast, couples with primary or lower secondary educational backgrounds were more likely to employ avoiding or accommodating styles, often due to limited conflict management skills and difficulties in expressing their viewpoints constructively. From the perspective of Islamic family law, education plays an important role in strengthening the implementation of *mu' syarah bil ma'r f* and reconciliation, as educated couples are generally more capable of resolving disputes through consultation and mutual understanding rather than relying on unilateral authority. Furthermore, the study revealed that couples with similar secondary-level educational backgrounds frequently displayed a competitive conflict style, characterized by a desire to maintain equal bargaining power without sufficient negotiation skills or spiritual maturity to achieve constructive outcomes. Overall, the findings confirm that education contributes not only to intellectual development but also to the cultivation of communication, emotional intelligence, and Islamic family values that support effective and harmonious conflict resolution within marriage.

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