






Causal Factors and Conflict Management Among University Students: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Conflict is an inherent part of student life, impacting individuals either positively or negatively. This study aims to describe the causal factors and conflict management strategies among university students. The research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, utilizing NVivo software for data analysis. The data were sourced from journal articles and proceedings published within the last 10 years. The results identify 10 causal factors (comprising 30 sub-factors) and 5 conflict management strategies (comprising 12 sub-strategies). The causal factors include: (1) cultural pluralism; (2) desire and passion; (3) economic pluralism; (4) ethnic pluralism; (5) hatred and jealousy; (6) limited resources; (7) political pluralism; (8) racial plurality; (9) religious pluralism; and (10) social pluralism. The identified management strategies are: (1) capitulation; (2) collaboration; (3) domination; (4) negotiation; and (5) procrastination. The primary findings reveal that "desire and passion" is the most dominant cause of conflict, while "collaboration" is the most frequently used management strategy. This study provides a comprehensive framework for universities to understand conflict dynamics and implement effective resolution strategies within academic environments.

1. Introduction

The world situation up to the moment is still turbulent. There are various conflicts that occur in various parts of the world as occur consequence existence of competition sources Power nature, misunderstanding, discrimination ethnicity, change power work, and reason others. Conflict and war have happened everywhere in the world. Human life is full of conflict between individuals, between groups, between ethnicities, to between countries that can impact in life children (Denov & Fennig, 2024; Tuhuteru, 2022). This also happened in the Gumuz community in Ethiopia which experienced conflict consequences existence of competition source Power nature, marriage exchange, conflict based on clans/tribes, and theft (Abdo, 2024). The occurrence of conflict between ethnic groups in Juba County, Sudan (Kwori, 2022). Conflict can also occur in the environment academic, one of which is in Nigeria which is caused by the high changeover power Work so that productivity and quality of education in Africa are decreasing (Sajuyigbe, Eniola, Ayeni, & Ineba, 2024).

As is known, the conflict can be sourced from diverse cause, among others: (1) hypothesis frustration-aggression; (2) perspective psychoanalysis; (3) relative loss; (4) theory need basis; and (5) perception formation identity (Maftuh, 2024b). Hatred and, desire source limited power can also become a causal factor in conflict (Crawford & Bodine, 1996; Simmel, 1964). Pluralism ethnicity, race, religion, clan, beliefs, culture, economy, society, and politics can also be said as factors that become reason for conflict (Damanik & Ndona, 2022). This is also reinforced by diverse events that occur in a society that are caused by the inability of somebody to manage the conflict that occurred. Based on the results study previously, obtained information that more many people do kill themselves, good globally and in Indonesia due to the inability to manage the problems they face (Muslim, Rahmawati, & Billah, 2024).

The conflict that occurs needs to be managed so that the negative impact of the conflict can be minimized. There are some strategies for managing shared conflict into 2 elements that are attention for self alone and attention for others (Igbino, Salau, Atolagbe, & Joel, 2023). Management style resolution conflict can be categorized into 5 styles basis, namely: (1) Dominance, where One party in a way significantly stronger and does not need the other party. (2) Capitulation, when one of the party give in. (3) Negotiation, when the second split party each other depends, has strength For each other thwart, and has different purposes. (4) Delay, the parties try to avoid the situation said, with the hope situation the will pass so only. (5) Collaboration, when parties Work

the same, concentrate on choices and outcomes that meet each person's needs and aspirations (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012).

Ideally, education is able to supply good knowledge, skills, and attitudes so that participants can compete globally and undergo life with good in the future. Educational institutions should be able to create an interesting and dynamic learning environment so that they can encourage social skills so that they can equip students to face the demands of society effectively in the future (Nurunisa & Shodiq, 2024). School should become a safe and peaceful place so that participants can draw knowledge and maximize potential selves. While that, conflict can cause the disturbance achievement of objective curriculum and objective national. Another statement also mentioned that a peaceful and pleasant environment can become a very conducive place for facilitating participants to educate Study with better. On the contrary, conflict and violence in life school and the community can have a negative impact on the learning process participants are educated (Tuhuteru, 2022). An inclusive multicultural approach to religious education for schools in conflict-prone zones can create a more harmonious atmosphere (Remiswal et al., 2022).

However, the reality happened not forever in accordance with the conditions that should. Many negative events occur consequence of the amount of conflicts that occur at school. There are a number of cases that occur at school that causes conflict and adverse impacts. Based on the results of the previous study, approximately around 81.9% of students experienced suicidal thoughts. These thoughts were associated with various factors, including health problems, friendships, family issues, economic difficulties, academic pressure, romantic relationships, bullying, and other stressful social events or problems (Muslim et al., 2024).

Based on the above exposure, a research gap can be identified. In contrast to previous conflict management studies that primarily focus on organizational communication, this research offers a comprehensive taxonomy of 30 sub-factors of conflict causes, revealing that internal drives (desire and passion) play a more dominant role than external factors. Furthermore, this study introduces a new sense of urgency by linking failures in student conflict management to extreme mental health risks, including suicidal ideation.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative study with studies literature review type. Research literature or study literature review (SLR) is research that examines or reviews in a way critical knowledge, ideas, or findings contained in body literature oriented academic (academic-oriented literature), as well as formulate contribution theoretical and methodological for topic certain (Cooper, 1985). This study specifically follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency and consistency.

Using this method, the researcher conducts a review and identifies journals in a way structured so that each of his activities follows the steps that have been set. In order to finish studying this, articles were collected from Google Scholar and Scopus (Abraham, 2021; Ardiansyahroni, Tjalla, & Mahdiyah, 2023). The keywords used namely "conflict causing factors" student university and management conflict student university. Articles collected only published articles in the range of one decade or 10 years.

Based on screening results on 2-9 December 2024 on Google Scholar obtained using the keyword conflict causing factors student university without sign pick, get results as many as 17,500. Next with the use of the keyword "conflict causing factors student university", obtained 0 results publication. Using the keyword "Conflict-causing factors" in Students' university, 55 results were obtained. Publication. If using the keyword "Conflict-causing factors" Students' university in the title publication, then the results he got as many as 3 publications. On the use of the keyword management conflict student university in Google Scholar, 17,500 results were obtained. With a range from 2016-2025. Next using the keyword "conflict management" Student universities are available in as many as 5370 results publications. If unchecking the citation, then results in publication as many as 5340 results publications. Search document is done with the use of the keyword Management conflict "student university" which has 2 results publication. Next researcher chose articles published in Journals and Proceedings and related closely to the keywords used.

Search documents on the Scopus website begin with the use of the keywords conflict AND causing AND factors AND students AND university in all year with results of 11 publications. Next with the given range 2016-2025, 10 results were obtained for publication. If using the keyword "Conflict causing factors Students university", then the result is 0 publications. The same result was also obtained if searched using the keywords "Conflict causing factors" AND Students AND university. The search furthermore uses the keywords management AND conflict AND student AND university which shows results as many as 807 results in all year. If used range 2016-2025, obtained results as many as 453 publications. Furthermore, using the keywords "management conflict" AND Students AND university in the range 2016-2025, 3 results were obtained for publication. In the next step, the articles that have been collected will grouped and analyzed in a way deeper. Search strings and database results.

Table 1. Search strings and Database Results

Database	Exact Search String	Filters/Limits	Result
Google Scholar	conflict causing factors student university	Year: 2016–2025, Review Articles	17,500
Google Scholar	"conflict causing factors student university"	Year: 2016–2025	0
Google Scholar	"Conflict causing factors" AND Students AND university	Year: 2016–2025	55
Google Scholar	"Conflict-causing factors" Students' university	Year: 2016–2025, Review Article	1
Google Scholar	management conflict student university	Year: 2016–2025	17,800
Google Scholar	"conflict management" "Student universities"	Year: 2016–2025	4
Google Scholar	Management conflict "student university"	Year: 2016–2025	9,380
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("conflict causing factors" AND "student" AND "university")	None	11
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("conflict causing factors" AND "student" AND "university")	Year: 2016-2025	10
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Conflict causing factors Students university")	None	0
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Conflict causing factors" AND Students AND university)	None	0
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("management conflict" AND "student" AND "university")	Year: 2016-2025; Document Type: Journal/Proceeding	453
Google Scholar	allintitle: "Conflict-causing factors" university students	Year: 2016-2025	3

As shown in Table 1, the search was conducted iteratively. While broad keywords yielded thousands of results (e.g., 17,800 in Google Scholar), specific phrase searching and Boolean operators in Scopus were employed to refine the results. The final selection of 20 articles (14 for causal factors and 6 for management) was derived from the refined searches that directly aligned with the research objectives. All duplicates and irrelevant records were removed following the PRISMA protocol. This is the PRISMA diagram the research.

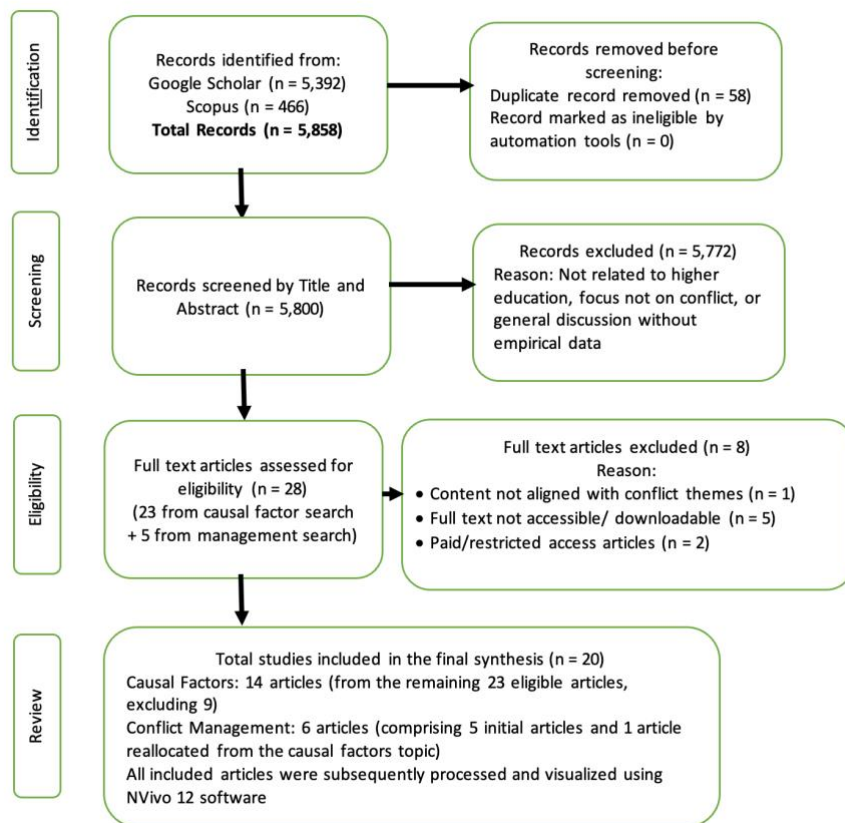


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

Data analysis was performed with analysis documents that have been chosen based on the criteria: (1) articles published in indexed journals/proceedings; (2) complete file data can be downloaded; (3) publication in 10-year span final or in the range 2016-2025 time. Based on the results analysis, there are 13 articles from Google Scholar and 10 articles from Scopus related to causal factors of continued conflict analyzed. While there are 2 articles from Google Scholar and 3 articles from Scopus related to management conflict among continuing students for analysis. In more steps carry on with the topic of causal factors conflict among students at college high, out of 23 articles, there are 9 articles that are lacking in accordance with topics (1 of them speaks about management conflict), and none can be downloaded, and articles paid, so that There are 14 articles to be published analyzed more continue. On the topic of management conflict, there are 5 articles and 1 additional article obtained from the topic of causal factors conflict. Thus, the number the article that will be analyzed carries on as many as 6 articles.

Subsequently, the included articles were further evaluated using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). The results of this appraisal are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Quality Assessment MMAT

No	Author (Year)	Category MMAT	S1	S2	- 1.5 (Qualitative)	3.1 - 3.5 (Non-Random)	4.1 - 4.5 (Descriptive)
1	Afnasieva et al. (2024)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
2	Aktas et al. (2021)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
3	Dodaj et al. (2020)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
4	Garshasby et al. (2024)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, C, C, Y
5	Aggrawal et al. (2024)	1	Y	Y	Y, Y, Y, Y, Y	-	-
6	Glebov et al. (2023)	1	Y	Y	Y, Y, Y, Y, Y	-	-
7	Hassan et al. (2023)	1	Y	Y	Y, Y, Y, Y, Y	-	-
8	Houjeir et al. (2023)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
9	Hove & Dube (2022)	1	Y	Y	Y, C, Y, Y, Y	-	-
10	Acheson (2016)	1	Y	Y	Y, Y, Y, Y, Y	-	-
11	Iannitelli et al. (2018)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
12	Quadri (2020)	1	Y	Y	Y, C, Y, Y, Y	-	-
13	Inyang et al. (2016)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
14	Lepekhin et al. (2023)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
15	Dolynnyi (2021)	3	Y	Y	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y	-
16	Murtazoevna (2022)	1	Y	Y	Y, C, Y, Y, Y	-	-
17	Nwokocha (2020)	1	Y	Y	Y, C, Y, Y, Y	-	-
18	Sulyagina et al. (2020)	1	Y	Y	Y, Y, Y, Y, Y	-	-
19	Wojtacka et al. (2020)	4	Y	Y	-	-	Y, Y, Y, C, Y
20	Zikargae (2022)	1	Y	Y	Y, Y, Y, Y, Y	-	-

Information:

- 1= Qualitative category
- 3 = Non-Randomized Quantitative category
- 4 = Descriptive Qualitative category
- S1 = Is the research question clear?
- S2 = Does the data answer the question?
- Y = Yes
- N = No
- C = Can't Tell

After an article analysis more on about the title, completeness of articles, methods, and results research, the results obtained were processed through using the application Nvivo 12. The indicators used for further coding analysis using the Nvivo application were derived from 10 conflict management factors: (1) cultural pluralism; (2) desire and passion; (3) economic pluralism; (4) ethnic pluralism; (5) hatred and jealousy; (6) limited resources; (7) political pluralism; (8) racial plurality; (9) religious pluralism; and (10) social pluralism (Crawford & Bodine, 1996; Damanik & Ndonga, 2022; Simmel, 1964). The five indicators related to conflict management are (1) capitulation; (2) collaboration; (3) domination; (4) negotiation; and (5) procrastination, all taken from reliable sources (Eggert & Falzon, 2003). Next, the results of data processing will visualized and discussed more carry on.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results search and review that have been carried out, there are 14 articles that will be analyzed further on related topics of causal factors conflict among students. The overall article is the results of research that has been published in the journal or proceedings taken from Google Scholar and Scopus. Of the 14 articles, there are 13 articles published in journals, and 1 article published in proceedings. The research methods used namely: survey (6), qualitative (2), literature review (2), quantitative (2), observational (1), and descriptive (1). The articles analyzed further are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reviewed Articles on Causal Factors of Conflict Among Students

No	Title	Type	Year
1	Conflicts in The Educational Environment (Sulyagina, Ostrovskii, & Vetrova, 2020)	Proceeding – Economic and Social Development 60th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – XX International Social Congress (ISC 2020)	2020
2	Psychocorrectional Methods of Forming Relationships with Conflict Adolescents in The Work of School Psychologists (Murtazoevna, 2022)	Research Jet Journal of Analysis and Inventions	2022
3	Causes of stress and conflict in the veterinary professional workplace—a perspective from Poland (Wojtacka, Grudzień, Wysok, & Szarek, 2020)	Irish Veterinary Journal	2020
4	Psychosomatic Factors in The Aspect of The Conflict-Generated Behaviour Development (Vinnitsa & Dolynnyi, 2021)	Psychological Journal	2021
5	Intra-intergroup conflicts in Africa: A critical reflection on indigenous and external causal factors (Quadri & Oladejo, 2020)	Akdeniz Havzası ve Afrika Medeniyetleri Dergisi Journal	2020
6	Gender Specificities of Interpersonal Interactions in Organization (Afanasieva, Bogdan, & Ushakova, 2024)	Theory and Practice of Social Systems Management Journal	2024
7	Describing the Relationship Between Role Conflict and Student Satisfaction with Educational Services: A Case Study of Business Faculty in a Higher Education Institution in UAE (Houjeir, Abousamra, Veljanoska, & Patena, 2023)	Journal of Educational and Social Research	2023
8	Postgraduate Dropout Issues at a Public University in Malaysia (Hassan et al., 2023)	Asian Journal of University Education	2023
9	Dispositional Predictors of Students' Conflict Resilience (Lepekhin, Kruglov, Kruglova, Tikhomirova, & Iashina, 2023)	Social Psychology and Society Journal	2023
10	Armed attacks in educational institutions: social, psychological and informational problems of education security in Russia and abroad (Glebov, Shevtsov, & Efremova, 2023)	Medico-Biological and Socio-Psychological Problems of Safety in Emergency Situations	2023
11	Risk communication, ethics and academic integrity in the process of minimizing the impacts of the covid-19 crisis in Ethiopian higher education (Zikargae, 2022)	Cogent Education Journal	2022
12	Investigating Turkish university students' attitudes towards refugees in a time of Civil War in neighboring Syria (Aktas, Tepe, & Persson, 2021)	Current Psychology Journal	2021
13	Impulsivity and Empathy in Dating Violence among a Sample of College Females (Dodaj, Sesar, & Šimić, 2020)	Behavioral Sciences Journal	2020
14	Internet use among Italian students: Usefulness of internet addiction test (Iannitelli et al., 2018)	Journal of Psychopathology	2018

The results of the article review show that there are 10 causal factors of conflict, consisting of 30 sub-factors. The causal factors of conflict are: (1) cultural pluralism; (2) desire and passion; (3) economic pluralism; (4) ethnic pluralism; (5) hatred and jealousy; (6) limited resources; (7) political pluralism; (8) racial plurality; (9) religious and belief pluralism; and (10) social pluralism. Further details are presented in the Figure 1.

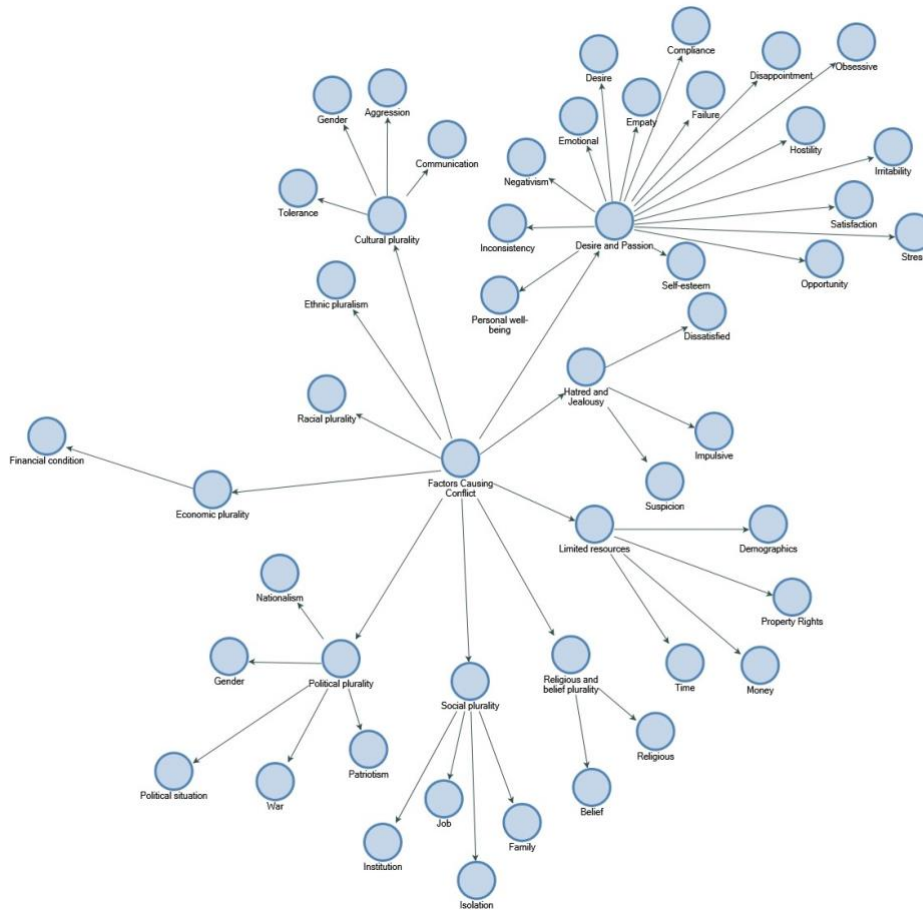


Figure 1. Visualization of Factors and Sub-factors Reason Conflict

Regarding the conflict management topic, 6 articles were analyzed further. These articles originate from 3 journal and 3 conference proceedings. The research methods used in these articles include literature review (3), survey (2), and qualitative method (1). The data from the analyzed articles are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Reviewed Articles on Conflict Management

No	Title	Type	Year
1	Strategies for Conflict Management in the University among Staff and Students (Nwokocha, 2020)	International Journal of Scientific Research in Education	2020
2	Compromise and Collaborative Conflict Management Styles as Correlates of Marital Stability (A Case Study of Married Students University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria) - (Inyang, Mbak, & Akpakip, 2016)	International Journal of Educational Benchmark (IJEB)	2016
3	From War Studies to Peace Building and Social Transformation at the University of Zimbabwe in the Post-COVID-19 Era: New Directions (Hove & Dube, 2022)	Journal of Culture and Values in Education	2022
4	Exploring Teamwork Experiences in Collaborative Undergraduate Research (REU) Programs through Tuckman's Group Development Theory (Aggrawal, S., Bosman, L., & Magana, 2024)	ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition, Conference Proceedings – Portland - 23 June 2024	2024
5	Exploring Students' Perception Toward Design-Build as an Educational Delivery Method (Garshasby, Rokooei, Goodarzi, & Garshasbi, 2024)	ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition, Conference Proceedings – Portland - 23 June 2024	2024
6	Integrating career development into computer science undergraduate curriculum (Acheson & Rybarczyk, 2016)	ICCSE 2016 - 11th International Conference on Computer Science and Education Pages 177 - 1813 October 2016	2016

The results of the review show that there are five types of conflict management, consisting of 12 sub-types of conflict management among university students. Conflict management strategies applied among students include: (1) capitulation; (2) collaboration; (3) domination; (4) negotiation; and (5) procrastination. Further details are presented in Figure 2.

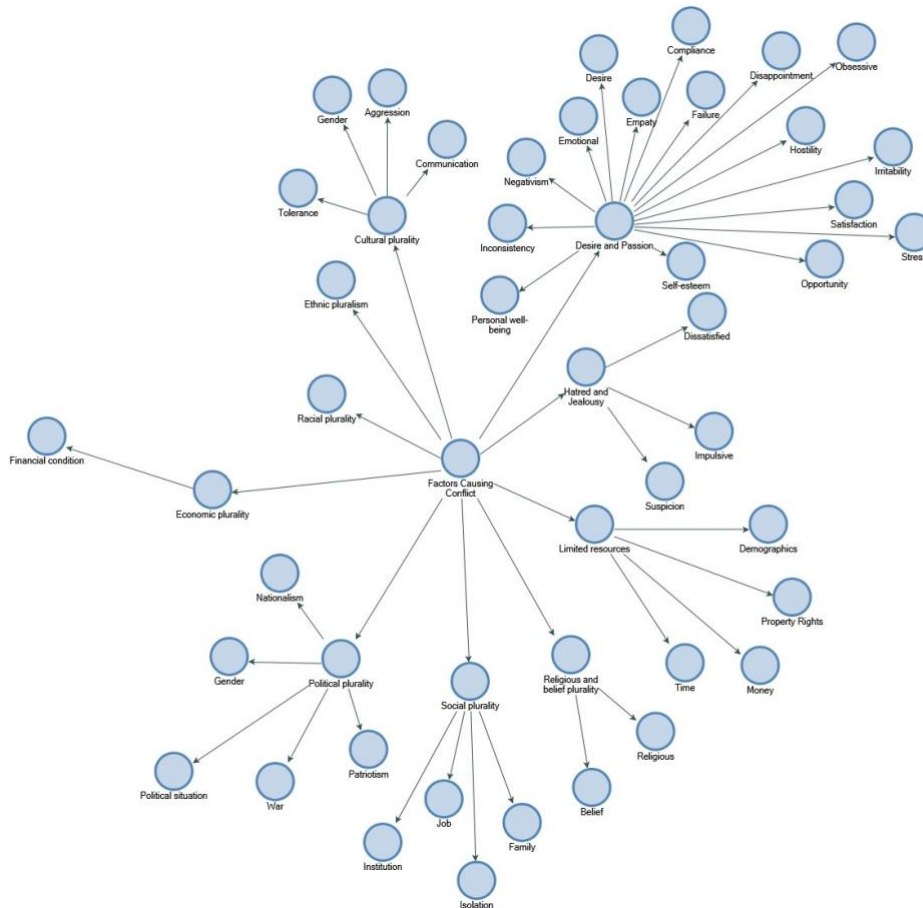


Figure 2. Visualization of Management Conflict

After the articles were analyzed using NVivo, the most dominant factors influencing the occurrence of conflict, as well as the least influential factors, could be identified. In addition, the analysis also revealed the most frequently used conflict management strategies to address conflicts among students in universities. Figure 3 presents the visualization of these findings.

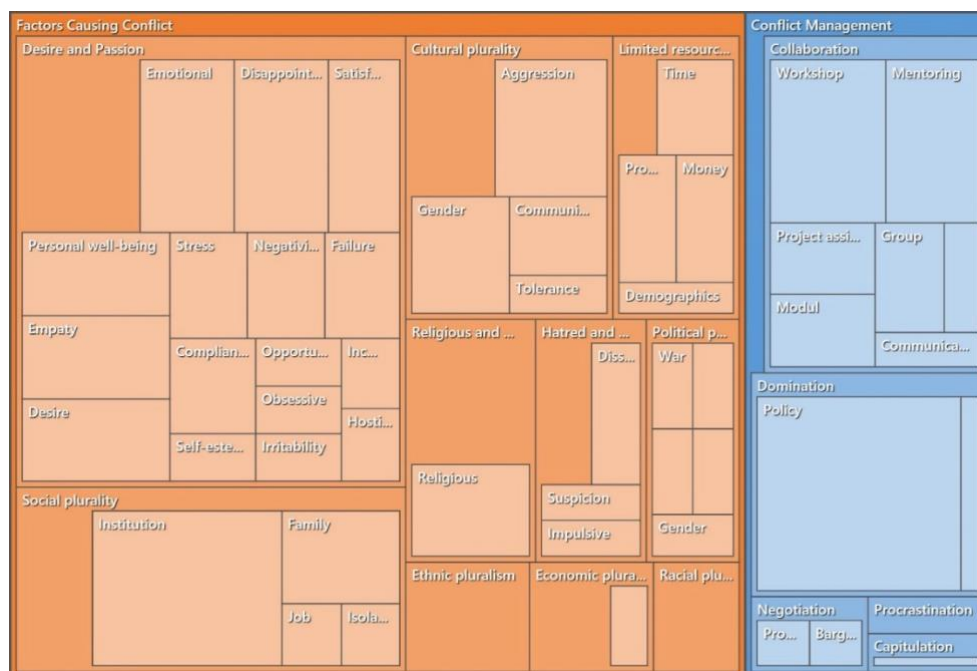


Figure 3. Conflict Factors and Management from Most Dominant to Least Dominant

Conflict is an inevitable part of human life. While it is natural, destructive attitudes and poor conflict management often lead to highly detrimental consequences (Maftuh, 2010, 2024a). Over the past decade, the factors causing conflict have been extensively studied, reflecting a growing awareness that the world is currently facing progressive and interconnected global crises (Acevedo-Duque et al., 2023). Within the higher education context, this study identified 10 main conflict-causing factors. Among these, "Desire and Passion" emerged as the most dominant trigger for conflict among students, encompassing 16 sub-factors. Specifically, disappointment and emotionality were found to be the most significant sub-factors damaging the climate of student relationships. This aligns with previous research indicating that disappointment due to unfulfilled desires creates discomfort and an unfavorable relationship climate, while uncontrolled emotions frequently lead to interpersonal disputes (Afanasieva et al., 2024; Dodaj et al., 2020; Lepekhn et al., 2023; Sulyagina et al., 2020; Vinnitsa & Dolynnyi, 2021).

The dominance of emotional factors as the largest causal factor was found based on the results of an analysis of previously found journal articles. The dominance of these emotional factors is strongly correlated with the psychosocial developmental phase of university students, who are navigating the transition to adulthood (emerging adulthood). In this phase, students strive to fulfill four basic psychological needs identified by William Glasser: belonging (loving, sharing, cooperating), power (achieving, academic/social recognition), freedom (making choices), and pleasure (laughing, playing). Conflict frequently arises when two people have different ideas regarding how to fulfill these needs (Briones, Gallego, & Palomera, 2022; Crawford & Bodine, 1996). Consequently, hatred and envy characterized by dissatisfaction, impulsivity, and suspicion flourish when personal expectations and ambitions are thwarted by limited resources such as time, money, or property (Dodaj et al., 2020; Lepekhn et al., 2023; Simmel, 1964). Therefore, unlike conflicts in the wider community that are often triggered by structural issues, conflicts at the student level are much more egocentric, driven by internal emotional fluctuations and the drive to fulfill basic psychological needs.

In contrast, structural and demographic factors such as economic, ethnic, and racial differences were found to be the least significant causes of conflict among students. Historically and globally, pluralism whether ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, economic, or political has frequently triggered destructive conflicts and even wars, from the birth of new states in the Soviet Union to radicalism in Indonesia (Damanik & Ndonga, 2022). Furthermore, managing ethnic and religious diversity remains a critical challenge in conflict-prone zones (Remiswal et al., 2022). However, in the university setting, religious and belief plurality ranks only fifth out of the ten contributing factors, and other demographic differences are even less influential. This indicates that higher education environments tend to provide a healthier and more rational political, economic, and social ecosystem (Hove & Dube, 2022). Student interactions, which are focused on knowledge-based academic activities, appear to suppress primordial sentiments. Consequently, hatred and suspicion on campus are more often sourced from interpersonal dissatisfaction rather than group or identity-based sentiments.

Regarding conflict resolution, the findings indicate that Collaboration is the most dominant and effective conflict management style used by university students, while Capitulation (giving in) and Procrastination (postponing) are the least frequently utilized. The prominence of the collaborative style is strongly influenced by the higher education ecosystem itself. Universities are academic spaces that actively train students to think critically, argue, and solve problems through intellectual discussion and negotiation. This aligns with previous studies suggesting that collaborative conflict management effectively leads to mutually beneficial "win-win" solutions (Eggert & Falzon, 2003; Igbinoba et al., 2023). Because students are essentially mature individuals with developed characters and sufficient knowledge, they tend to be assertive and possess the courage to act rationally. Therefore, they rarely choose to avoid conflict through procrastination or simply surrender to the situation through capitulation. Instead, they seek constructive solutions, well aware of the valuable role of mentors or group discussions when facing deadlocks (Aggrawal et al., 2024).

Since conflict is a natural part of social interaction and can even drive positive change or progress for individuals and institutions when managed properly (Maftuh, 2024a), educational institutions should not strive to eliminate it entirely. Instead, universities must equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to resolve various problems in a changing world. Universities should take a proactive, dominating role by integrating conflict management strategies into formal curricula, course policies, and learning modules (Hove & Dube, 2022; Acheson & Rybarczyk, 2016; Garshasby et al., 2024). Recognizing that university students are particularly vulnerable to conflicts rooted in ego, emotions, and unfulfilled expectations (desire and passion), future higher education programs should place a greater emphasis on developing emotional intelligence alongside collaborative skills.

3.1. Implications

Theoretically, this study expands the literature on conflict dynamics in education by developing a comprehensive taxonomy of student conflict. By identifying 10 causal factors (30 sub-factors) and 5 management strategies (12 sub-strategies), this study provides a new, more specific conceptual framework for the higher education ecosystem. The finding that internal factors such as "Desire and Passion" are far more dominant than structural-demographic factors (such as ethnicity, race, or economics) shift the old paradigm that

often associates campus conflict with primordial issues. This scientifically proves that conflict at the student level is strongly influenced by the egocentric psychological developmental phase of emerging adulthood, where emotional clashes and interpersonal disappointments are the primary triggers.

Practically, the results of this study bring new urgency to higher education administrators to no longer be passive or merely reactive in handling student conflict. Given that failure to manage conflict has been shown to be directly linked to extreme mental health risks such as suicidal ideation, universities must take a proactive role. Practical implications of this research include, (a) Curriculum Reform: Universities need to integrate conflict management, negotiation techniques, and assertive communication materials into formal curricula, course policies, and learning modules. (b) Developing Emotional Intelligence: Because the primary trigger of conflict stems from internal emotional fluctuations, universities should design non-academic programs that focus on strengthening students' emotional intelligence. (c) Strengthening Collaborative Ecosystems: Given that "Collaboration" is the most effective and preferred strategy among students, student organizations and campus counseling centers should provide face-to-face spaces, mentoring programs, or structured group discussion forums to facilitate win-win problem-solving. Through these implementations, universities can transform potentially destructive conflict into constructive social learning opportunities, while ensuring a safe, peaceful, and conducive campus environment for student academic achievement.

3.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

This study possesses several notable strengths. First, it provides a comprehensive mapping of the root causes of conflict specifically within the higher education environment, identifying 10 main factors and 30 sub-factors a level of detail rarely synthesized in previous literature. Second, the use of NVivo 12 software allowed for an objective, visual, and thematic coding process of articles across global databases. Finally, the synthesis goes beyond merely diagnosing the causes; it also evaluates practical conflict management styles relevant to university settings.

However, this study also has limitations that must be acknowledged. As a systematic review relying primarily on articles from Scopus and Google Scholar over a 10-year span, it may have excluded relevant grey literature or studies indexed in other specific educational databases (such as ERIC). Furthermore, the findings are based on secondary data syntheses rather than primary empirical testing. Future research should consider empirically validating the 10 identified conflict factors and testing the universality of the collaborative management style through direct surveys or interviews across culturally diverse university contexts.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to map the causal factors and conflict management strategies among university students using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The analysis of scientific literature over the past ten years identified 10 causal factors (30 sub-factors) and 5 conflict management strategies (12 sub-strategies). The main findings indicate that "Desire and Passion", particularly the emotional and disappointment aspects are the most dominant triggers of conflict. This conflict is egocentric and closely related to the psychological developmental phase of students towards adulthood. In contrast, differences in demographic backgrounds such as economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds have very little influence. On the other hand, "Collaboration" was found to be the conflict resolution strategy most frequently used by students to reach joint solutions. Practically, this study provides an important contribution to higher education in the form of a comprehensive taxonomy of student conflict. Given that failure to manage conflict directly impacts students' mental health risks, universities can no longer remain passive. The significance of this study encourages universities to take a proactive role, such as integrating conflict management materials into the curriculum, developing supporting policies, and designing programs that focus on improving students' emotional intelligence and collaborative skills to create a safe and conducive campus environment. This research can serve as a reference for future researchers, particularly those studying conflict in education. Further research on conflict can also be conducted across countries to strengthen the quality of education.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/ or publication of this article.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

AI were used only to improve readability and language under strict human oversight; no content, ideas, analyses, or conclusions were generated by AI.

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