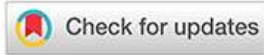


## MANAGEMENT CONFLICT STYLE TOWARDS PRISONER CONFLICTS AT BEKASI CLASS IIA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION



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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study explores the causes of inmate conflicts and the role of leadership in conflict management at Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through interviews and document analysis. The findings suggest that overcrowding, lack of resources, and inadequate management practices are key contributors to conflicts. Effective leadership and conflict management strategies, including collaboration and compromise, were essential in maintaining order.*

**Keywords:** *Conflict Management; Prisoner; Role of Leadership*



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## INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, and it becomes especially pronounced in environments where individuals are subject to prolonged confinement, such as correctional. Prisons, by their very nature, impose strict rules and limitations on personal freedoms, creating a unique social ecosystem that often leads to interpersonal tensions and disputes. These conflicts can arise from various factors, including overcrowding, competition for limited resources, differing cultural backgrounds, and the psychological stress associated with incarceration. Understanding the dynamics of these conflicts and how they are managed is essential for maintaining order and promoting rehabilitation within correctional institutions.

Inmate conflict is not a new phenomenon, but it has gained increased attention in recent years due to rising inmate populations and issues related to prison management. The overcapacity in many correctional facilities, including Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution, exacerbates these tensions. Overcrowding leads to increased competition for basic needs such as space, food, and access to prison services. Additionally, the diverse backgrounds of inmates, coupled with varying levels of criminal behavior and psychological states, contribute to the complexity of prison conflicts.

The role of leadership in managing these conflicts is crucial. Effective prison management requires not only maintaining order through discipline but also employing conflict resolution strategies that foster an environment of cooperation and rehabilitation. In this context, the leadership styles adopted by prison authorities play a pivotal role in either escalating or de-escalating conflicts. Previous research has shown that collaborative and compromising approaches to conflict management tend to be more effective in Correctional Institution settings than authoritarian or competitive strategies. By involving inmates in decision-making processes, addressing grievances, and promoting constructive dialogue, prison leadership can create a more stable and controlled environment.

Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution, like many other correctional facilities in Indonesia, faces challenges related to overcrowding and resource limitations. These conditions often result in a high frequency of inmate conflicts, which can escalate into violent confrontations if not properly managed. This Correctional Institution serves as a critical site for examining how different conflict management styles—such as collaboration, avoidance, and competition—affect the outcomes of inmate disputes. Additionally, it provides a context to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership interventions in resolving conflicts and preventing future occurrences.

The present study seeks to explore the factors contributing to inmate conflicts at Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution and to assess the role of leadership in managing these conflicts. By identifying the underlying causes of disputes and analyzing the conflict management approaches employed by prison authorities, this research aims to contribute to a broader understanding of conflict dynamics within correctional facilities. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of leadership in shaping the social environment of prisons, suggesting that effective conflict resolution strategies can lead to improved inmate rehabilitation and a safer prison community.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The management of conflicts in correctional institutions has long been an area of study due to the complex environment inherent in these institutions. Inmates are confined in close quarters with limited resources, leading to heightened tensions. The prison environment is a microcosm of society where conflicts can escalate due to overcrowding,

competition for resources, and the psychological stress of imprisonment. Conflict theories, such as those proposed by Thomas and Kilmann, emphasize that conflict arises from opposing goals or desires between individuals or groups. They outline several conflict management styles, competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating, that can be applied depending on the nature of the conflict.

One study by Wooldredge (2020) highlighted that prison culture and management play crucial roles in shaping inmate behavior and conflict outcomes. The research pointed out that overcrowding and lack of effective leadership are major contributors to prison violence. Wooldredge's framework suggests that prison management should focus on humane treatment and consistent rule enforcement to mitigate conflicts.

Another study by John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020) explored how conflict management could increase organizational effectiveness. The study found that conflicts, if managed effectively, could lead to improved communication and cooperation among inmates and prison staff. The authors argue that strategies such as negotiation, compromise, and mediation are essential in reducing tensions and preventing violent outbreaks within the prison system.

In Indonesian prisons, conflict management is further complicated by systemic issues such as overcrowding and resource shortages. The leadership's role in addressing these challenges is critical. A study by Riyanto (2020) found that effective conflict management strategies in Indonesian correctional facilities include regular surveillance, rehabilitation programs, and consistent communication between staff and inmates. These strategies help in maintaining order and reducing tensions.

The research framework for this study is based on understanding the dynamics of conflict among inmates and the role of leadership in resolving these conflicts. The study is grounded in the conflict management theory proposed by Thomas and Kilmann, which identifies five distinct conflict management styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating.

This framework examines:

1. Causes of Inmate Conflicts: The primary factors leading to conflicts among inmates, such as overcrowding, competition for resources, and inconsistent rule enforcement.
2. Conflict Phases: Conflicts in prison can be broken down into different phases, from the latent phase (when tensions begin to rise) to the resolution phase (when the conflict is managed or suppressed).
3. Role of Leadership: The study focuses on how prison leadership manages conflicts by applying different styles of conflict resolution. It examines how leadership can either exacerbate or alleviate tensions depending on the strategies employed.

The interaction between these elements forms the basis for analyzing how conflicts are managed in Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution. The research aims to understand how leadership can foster an environment of cooperation and reduce the likelihood of conflict escalation through effective conflict management practices.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the dynamics of inmate conflicts and the role of leadership in conflict management at Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and behaviors of individuals within the

specific context of prison life. Qualitative research is particularly suited to social phenomena like conflict, where the complexity of human interactions and institutional systems can best be explored through detailed, descriptive data.

This research follows a descriptive qualitative design, which is ideal for understanding phenomena as they occur in real life, especially when the aim is to explore the "how" and "why" behind certain behaviors. By employing this design, the study focuses on the detailed description and analysis of conflict incidents and the strategies used by prison leadership to manage these conflicts. This design allows for the exploration of the underlying causes of inmate conflicts, the phases of conflict escalation, and the leadership responses that either resolve or exacerbate these issues.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings at Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution revealed several significant insights into the causes of conflicts among inmates and how these conflicts are managed. The primary factors contributing to conflicts were identified as overcrowding, resource limitations, and interpersonal tensions between inmates. The prison, with a population exceeding its intended capacity, creates a highly stressful environment where competition for basic necessities such as food, space, and access to services leads to frequent disputes.

Additionally, conflicts often arose from financial disputes among inmates, particularly related to debts incurred within the prison. Several inmates reported that unpaid debts frequently escalated into verbal and physical altercations, disrupting the overall order within the facility. This was confirmed by prison records, which highlighted that debt-related conflicts were one of the leading causes of inmate altercations.

Another critical finding was the role of inconsistent rule enforcement. Inmates frequently perceived that rules were applied unevenly, which fostered resentment and feelings of injustice. The lack of clear and consistent communication between prison staff and inmates regarding rules and their enforcement contributed to the escalation of tensions. This inconsistency also created opportunities for negotiation and manipulation, where inmates would negotiate with staff to avoid penalties, further undermining the integrity of the institution.

### Conflict Management Strategies

The research identified five primary conflict management strategies used by the leadership and staff at the prison:

1. **Competing** – This approach was typically used when quick decisions were required, particularly in situations where immediate action was necessary to maintain control, such as during violent altercations.
2. **Collaborating** – This was the preferred strategy in situations where long-term solutions were needed, such as addressing systemic issues like overcrowding. Collaboration between inmates and staff was found to be effective in reducing long-term tensions.
3. **Compromising** – In less critical situations, compromises were often used to mediate disputes between inmates, particularly when both parties were willing to make concessions.
4. **Avoiding** – Some conflicts, particularly minor ones, were managed through avoidance, where staff allowed tensions to dissipate naturally over time. However, this approach was less effective in preventing the recurrence of conflicts.

5. Accommodating – Staff often employed accommodation when dealing with inmates who were perceived as low-risk or when the staff prioritized maintaining peace over enforcing strict rules.

The findings of this research align with existing literature on conflict management in correctional facilities. The significant role of overcrowding and resource limitations in triggering conflicts is consistent with the work of Wooldredge (2020), who noted that such environmental stressors are common in Correctional Institution settings and often lead to violent outbreaks if not managed appropriately. Similarly, the importance of leadership in managing these conflicts cannot be overstated. Effective leadership not only prevents the escalation of conflicts but also fosters a more cooperative atmosphere where inmates feel heard and understood.

This study also highlights the complexity of applying different conflict management strategies within the context of a Correctional Institution. While collaboration and compromise were generally more effective in fostering long-term peace and rehabilitation, they require significant time and resources to implement, which are often lacking in overcrowded prisons. On the other hand, competitive and avoiding strategies were quicker to apply but often led to unresolved tensions that resurfaced later.

The role of negotiation between inmates and staff emerged as a critical theme in this research. While negotiation can sometimes be an effective tool in managing conflicts, it also introduces the risk of corruption and uneven rule enforcement, as certain inmates may use their resources to gain preferential treatment. This finding aligns with the work of Nurhalim (2022), who emphasized the importance of maintaining strict ethical standards among prison staff to prevent such occurrences.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings suggest that prisons need to adopt a more structured approach to conflict management, particularly in addressing the root causes of conflicts such as overcrowding and resource scarcity. Leadership should focus on implementing consistent rule enforcement while promoting collaborative and rehabilitative practices to reduce long-term tensions. Additionally, training for prison staff on ethical conflict management and communication is crucial to prevent manipulation and ensure fairness in conflict resolution.

The research underscores the need for systemic reforms in Indonesian correctional facilities, particularly concerning inmate management and staff training. By fostering a more transparent and fair system of rule enforcement and conflict resolution, prisons like Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution can not only reduce the frequency of conflicts but also create a more conducive environment for inmate rehabilitation.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the findings of the study conducted at Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding inmate conflicts and conflict management practices. The primary cause of conflicts at this Correctional Institution is overcrowding, which creates an environment of competition for limited resources such as food, space, and access to services. This competition exacerbates tensions among inmates, leading to frequent disputes. Additionally, inconsistent enforcement of rules and the presence of illegal activities, such as the use of unauthorized mobile phones and illicit financial transactions, further fuel these conflicts.

Another significant factor contributing to inmate conflicts is the heterogeneous nature of the prison population, with inmates coming from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, emotional stability, and cultural or religious differences. These differences often lead to misunderstandings and altercations, particularly when combined with the stressful environment of incarceration. The findings also highlighted that personal grievances, such as debt-related disputes, are a common trigger for conflicts among inmates.

The research has shown that prison leadership plays a critical role in managing conflicts. The study found that leadership at Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution employs a variety of conflict management strategies, ranging from collaboration and compromise to avoidance and accommodation, depending on the severity and nature of the conflict. However, the research also revealed that some strategies, particularly avoidance and accommodation, only provide temporary solutions and do not address the root causes of conflicts. Therefore, it is essential for prison leadership to develop more sustainable conflict management practices that focus on long-term solutions rather than short-term fixes.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following suggestions are proposed to improve conflict management at Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution: the most critical issue identified in this research is overcrowding, which intensifies inmate conflicts. Efforts should be made to reduce the inmate population to manageable levels. This could involve accelerating the processing of parole or early release for eligible inmates, as well as investing in the construction of new facilities to alleviate the pressure on existing ones.

Prison staff, especially those in leadership positions, should receive ongoing training in conflict management techniques that emphasize collaborative and preventative approaches. Such training should focus on equipping staff with the skills needed to mediate conflicts effectively and to identify early warning signs of potential disputes before they escalate.

One of the major contributors to inmate dissatisfaction and conflict is the inconsistent application of prison rules. It is recommended that prison leadership implements a more transparent and standardized system of rule enforcement. This includes clearly communicating the rules to all inmates and ensuring that all infractions are dealt with swiftly and fairly, without favoritism or bias.

The Correctional Institution should strengthen its rehabilitation programs, including educational, vocational, and spiritual activities. Structured programs that engage inmates in productive activities can help reduce idle time, which is often a catalyst for conflicts. Furthermore, these programs can promote a sense of purpose among inmates and prepare them for reintegration into society.

Prison leadership should establish formal channels for mediation and dialogue between inmates and staff. This could involve setting up conflict resolution teams that include trained mediators or external counselors who can help de-escalate conflicts before they turn violent. Inmates should be encouraged to voice their concerns in a controlled environment where their grievances can be heard and addressed constructively.

Given the diverse backgrounds of the inmate population, it is crucial to adopt a more systematic approach to inmate classification. Inmates should be segregated based on their risk levels, with high-risk inmates separated from those who are less likely to engage in violent behavior. This strategy can help prevent conflicts by minimizing interactions between inmates with conflicting temperaments or backgrounds.



Finally, a more holistic approach to conflict management should be adopted, one that not only focuses on addressing the immediate causes of conflicts but also seeks to create a more positive prison environment. This involves promoting respect, fairness, and understanding among inmates and staff, as well as ensuring that the Correctional Institution is a place of rehabilitation rather than merely punishment.

In conclusion, by implementing these suggestions, Bekasi Class IIA Correctional Institution can enhance its conflict management practices, leading to a safer and more orderly environment that supports inmate rehabilitation and contributes to the broader goals of the correctional system.

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