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# Student Voice, Procedural Justice, and Moral Reflection in *Tabayyun–Islah* Mediation: A Single-Case Study in an Indonesian Pesantren

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**Abstract**

This study examines how students experience voice, procedural justice, and moral reflection during conflict mediation interpreted through *tabayyun–islah*. It explores whether opportunities to speak are accompanied by understanding of and influence over mediation outcomes. A qualitative single-case study examined one interpersonal dispute involving unauthorized notebook use and an accusation made before clarification. The analysis drew on the reported chronology of a two-day mediation process and interviews with two students and a dormitory administrator. Reflexive thematic analysis examined converging and contrasting accounts, using student voice, procedural justice, and moral reflection as sensitizing concepts. The reported process comprised complaint reception, information clarification, joint dialogue, agreement formulation, and follow-up guidance. Both students reported opportunities to explain their accounts. However, their experiences differed: one reconsidered an initial accusation, while the other retained questions about the written resolution. Hearing multiple accounts indicated efforts to broaden information gathering but did not establish mediator impartiality or balanced influence. Evidence concerning consistent treatment, respectful communication, and decision-making transparency remained incomplete. Moral reflection was most explicit in the reconsideration of premature judgment; sustained behavioral change and restored trust were not established. The study's originality lies in distinguishing being heard, understanding a decision, and influencing its formulation within religiously interpreted mediation. It also separates reported moral guidance from demonstrated reflection and longer-term development. These distinctions offer a framework for evaluating mediation beyond procedural completion. The study contributes to Islamic education by connecting students' experiences with information verification, accountability, and educational authority. It recommends clear explanations, opportunities to question proposed agreements, and continued guidance. Its findings remain case-specific and support further comparative and longitudinal investigation of participation, fairness, and relationship restoration.

**Keywords:** student voice; procedural justice; moral reflection; *tabayyun–islah*; conflict mediation.

## Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) integrate religious knowledge and moral education through instruction, habituation, role modeling, discipline, and everyday interactions within residential communities. Moral education therefore extends beyond classroom teaching to encompass students' relationships with caregivers, Islamic teachers (*ustaz*), dormitory administrators, and peers. Rizal and Zulkifli (2025) emphasize the contributions of religious practices, social interaction, educator role modeling, and discipline to moral education, while Falah et al. (2026) identify connections among behavioral habituation, reflection, affective-spiritual experiences, and educator role modeling. These educational arrangements provide a context for cultivating moral values, but their existence does not establish how students interpret or apply those values when disagreements arise. Interpersonal conflict offers a particularly revealing context because it requires students to negotiate competing accounts, acknowledge the consequences of their actions, and respond to the rights and concerns of others.

Communal life in pesantren brings together students with different backgrounds, expectations, and habits. Close interaction can strengthen solidarity while also creating tensions over communication, shared activities, and personal belongings. Farhan and Hadisaputra (2021), in a review of 27 documents, identified conflicts associated with internal institutional issues and differences in perspectives across Islamic educational institutions. Although their analysis primarily concerns organizational conflict, it establishes the broader relevance of conflict management to Islamic educational settings. At the interpersonal level, the educational significance of conflict resolution depends on how information is clarified, how responsibility is determined, and how students are treated throughout the process. Ending a dispute may restore immediate order without necessarily ensuring that those involved understand or regard the resolution as fair.

Within Islamic education, *tabayyun* and *islah* provide ethical resources for examining these processes. *Tabayyun*, reflected in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:6), emphasizes verifying information before forming judgments or taking action. *Islah*, expressed in verses 9–10 of the same surah, directs attention to reconciliation and the restoration of relationships in accordance with justice. In educational terms, these principles can inform careful listening, responsible communication, acknowledgment of wrongdoing, and efforts to repair interpersonal harm. Iqbal and Kanus (2026) discuss the relevance of *tabayyun* to information verification and digital etiquette (*adab*). Although their study addresses digital communication, its emphasis on withholding judgment until information has been examined also offers a conceptual basis for studying face-to-face disputes. The present study uses *tabayyun–islah* as an ethical and interpretive lens for examining mediation, while treating the quality of participation, fairness, and reconciliation as empirical questions.

Previous research has established the relevance of Islamic values to conflict management in pesantren. Rakhman and Fauzan (2025) identify *tabayyun*, deliberation (*musyawarah*), and enjoining good and forbidding

wrongdoing (*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*) as approaches to maintaining social relationships and institutional stability. Similarly, Anwar et al. (2025), through a case study at Kalimasada Islamic Boarding School in Jombang, connect conflict resolution with justice, peace, dialogue, and the participation of senior students as mediators. These studies help explain the values and institutional arrangements that inform conflict management. However, their emphasis on strategies and resolution mechanisms leaves room for closer examination of how students directly involved in a dispute experience those arrangements. In particular, identifying dialogue as a mediation strategy does not explain whether students receive responses to their concerns, understand the reasons for an agreement, or have opportunities to influence its formulation.

Student voice provides a framework for investigating this distinction. It concerns students' opportunities to communicate their experiences and concerns, the responses they receive, and the consideration given to their views. Lundy (2007) distinguishes four elements of meaningful participation: space, voice, audience, and influence. This framework draws attention to the difference between enabling expression and ensuring that expressed views receive appropriate consideration. Applied to mediation, it suggests that asking students to recount an incident is only one part of participation. The analysis must also consider who listens, how concerns are addressed, and whether students can question or contribute to the proposed resolution. Influence does not require students to determine every outcome, but it does require examining how their perspectives enter the decision-making process.

Research on restorative practices further demonstrates the importance of students' experiences. Skrzypek et al. (2020) show that restorative dialogue can help students express thoughts and feelings, consider others' perspectives, and approach problems through communication. Their findings also indicate variation in how students experience and evaluate these practices. Within pesantren, such variation warrants attention because mediation takes place within relationships shaped by educational authority, expectations of respect, and institutional discipline. These relationships may support constructive guidance, but they may also affect students' willingness to disagree or request clarification. Consequently, participation should be examined through students' accounts of the process rather than inferred solely from their attendance at a mediation meeting or acceptance of its outcome.

Procedural justice offers a related but distinct perspective. Whereas student voice directs attention to expression, responsiveness, and influence, procedural justice concerns the fairness of the broader process through which a resolution is reached. Relevant dimensions include opportunities to present an account, mediator impartiality, consistency of treatment, respect for participants' dignity, and explanations of the reasons underlying decisions. Brasof and Peterson (2018), in a qualitative study conducted in three schools, demonstrate how student participation in disciplinary processes can support perceptions of procedural justice and the legitimacy of educational authority. In pesantren mediation, however, agreement cannot be treated as sufficient

evidence of perceived fairness. Students may accept a resolution because they understand and endorse its reasoning, but acceptance may also reflect deference to authority or concern about disciplinary consequences. Examining these possibilities requires distinguishing procedural actions, students' interpretations, and the researcher's assessment of the available evidence.

A restorative perspective complements these concepts by emphasizing dialogue, accountability, attention to harm, and efforts to repair relationships. Cantera-Rios et al. (2024), in a systematic review of 30 articles, identify potential benefits for discipline, communication, respect, and trust while acknowledging limitations in the evidence concerning implementation and outcomes. Lodi et al. (2022), reviewing 34 studies, likewise identify potential relational and educational benefits alongside the need for stronger evidence concerning the effects of restorative approaches. Lustick et al. (2024) further emphasize that equitable restorative justice depends on collaborative practice rather than the formal adoption of a program alone. Together, these studies support examining mediation as an interactional process whose quality depends on participation, relationships, and the exercise of authority. They do not establish that any particular mediation agreement necessarily produces fairness or lasting reconciliation.

The educational interpretation of mediation also requires a careful distinction between moral reflection and moral development over time. Moral reflection refers here to students' reconsideration of judgments, recognition of others' rights, and interpretation of their own responsibilities. These experiences may occur when clarification challenges an initial accusation or when dialogue draws attention to the consequences of using another person's belongings without permission. Nevertheless, a reported change in understanding does not by itself demonstrate value internalization, sustained behavioral change, or restored trust. Focusing on moral reflection allows the study to investigate the immediate meanings students attach to mediation while keeping its claims proportionate to the evidence.

The research gap therefore lies at the intersection of these perspectives. Studies of Islamic conflict management explain the relevance of religious values and institutional strategies, while research on student participation and restorative practices provides tools for examining voice, fairness, and relationships. What remains insufficiently explained in the literature discussed above is how these dimensions intersect within a specific pesantren mediation process, particularly when opportunities to speak coexist with uncertainty about the resulting decision. Addressing this issue can clarify how *tabayyun–islah* is experienced in practice and how educational authority shapes the relationship between participation and moral reflection.

This study examines a single interpersonal conflict mediation case in an Indonesian pesantren involving the unauthorized use of a notebook and an accusation made before the circumstances had been clarified. The case is analytically informative because it brings information verification, competing responsibilities, and students' experiences of decision-making into the same bounded process. Its value lies in enabling close examination of these relationships rather than representing all mediation practices within the

institution. The study addresses three questions: (1) How was the mediation process organized and interpreted through the principles of *tabayyun–islah*? (2) How did the students experience opportunities to express their views, receive responses, and understand or influence the resolution, and what do these experiences reveal about procedural justice? (3) What forms of moral reflection were evident in their accounts, and what limits apply to interpreting those accounts as evidence of moral learning? By addressing these questions, the study seeks to clarify the distinction between being heard, understanding a decision, and participating meaningfully in its formulation, while examining the immediate moral reflection associated with conflict mediation.

## Method

This study employed a qualitative single-case study design to examine student voice, procedural justice, and moral reflection in *tabayyun–islah* mediation at an Indonesian pesantren in Pekanbaru, Riau. Following Yin (2018), the case was bounded by one interpersonal dispute, its mediation on September 15–16, 2026, and participants' subsequent accounts. The unit of analysis was the mediation process, including information clarification, dialogue, agreement formulation, and reported educational guidance. The case enabled close examination of participation within institutional authority relationships without representing mediation practices across the institution.

The reported interview dataset comprised two students directly involved in the dispute, coded S01 and S02, and a dormitory administrator, coded P01. Participants were selected purposively because of their direct involvement and relevant knowledge (Campbell et al., 2020). S03, a student witness, and G01, the dormitory supervisor, appeared in the case chronology but were distinguished from the three interviewees. Consistent with the concept of information power, the narrow research aim and participants' direct involvement supported a focused analysis, while the limited dataset constrained broader interpretation (Malterud et al., 2016).

Interviews with S01 and P01 were conducted on September 17, 2026, and with S02 on September 18, 2026. Open-ended questions addressed the incident chronology, opportunities to explain events and raise concerns, mediator treatment, understanding of the agreement, and reflections on responsibility. The chronology was examined alongside these accounts. Information concerning mediation procedures and supervisory guidance was treated as reported experience unless independently supported by an identifiable observation record or document. Accordingly, the analysis distinguished participants' accounts from directly observed events and did not assume documentary corroboration.

Analysis followed the six iterative phases of reflexive thematic analysis: familiarization, coding, preliminary theme development, theme review, theme definition, and narrative construction (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Student voice, procedural justice, and moral reflection served as sensitizing concepts rather than fixed categories. Attention centered on differences between opportunities to speak, understanding the decision, and influence over its formulation. For example, S02's unresolved question about the written agreement informed the

distinction between being heard and understanding the resolution. Contrasting accounts were retained, and moral reflection was distinguished from sustained behavioral change.

Analytical quality was assessed through coherence between evidence and interpretation, attention to alternative explanations, and reflexive consideration of how assumptions about religious authority could shape the reading of students' accounts. Levitt et al. (2018) informed attention to contextual and methodological reporting, while Braun and Clarke (2025) provided guidance on methodological congruence and reflexive openness. Conclusions remained specific to the case and proportionate to the available evidence.

The ethical framework emphasized voluntary participation, confidentiality, student dignity, and protection from disciplinary repercussions. Participant codes were used in reporting. Following Schmid et al. (2024), discussion of sensitive experiences required balancing rapport with safeguards against pressure and unwanted disclosure. Institutional permission was distinguished from individual consent; research involving minors additionally required parental or guardian consent and student assent. Reconciliation was not treated as an obligation overriding participants' safety or right to express disagreement.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

### Conflict Resolution Mechanisms Among Students Through *Tabayyun–Islah* Practices

The case concerned a dispute over the unauthorized use of a notebook in the residential setting of an Indonesian pesantren. According to the reported chronology, S01 could not find the notebook in its usual location and suspected that S02 had deliberately taken it. S01 communicated this suspicion to other dormitory residents, contributing to verbal tension between the two students. Subsequent clarification indicated that S02 had used the notebook for a group study activity without first obtaining permission. The mediation therefore addressed two distinct actions: using another student's belongings without permission and communicating an accusation before verifying the circumstances.

The mediation took place on September 15–16, 2026. On the first day, P01, a dormitory administrator, received the complaint and separately obtained accounts from S01, S02, and S03, a student familiar with the incident. The chronology attributed information about the notebook's use during group study to S03. This information helped clarify the circumstances of its use, although it did not independently establish S02's intentions. G01, the dormitory supervisor, subsequently facilitated a joint meeting to examine the accounts and address the actions contributing to the dispute. On the second day, the process continued with the formulation of an agreement and clarification of the students' respective responsibilities.

For analytical purposes, the reported sequence was organized into five stages: complaint reception, information clarification, joint dialogue,

agreement formulation, and follow-up guidance. These stages describe this particular incident rather than an established procedure demonstrated across multiple cases.

The reported agreement covered returning the notebook, offering apologies, clarifying the accusation, and prioritizing direct communication in similar situations. Although the account characterized the proposed apologies as voluntary, the evidence presented did not establish how voluntariness was assessed or whether all agreed actions were subsequently completed. The chronology also described guidance from G01 concerning honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsible communication, and respect for others' rights. This indicated an educational component within the reported mediation process, while the implementation and outcomes of subsequent guidance remained insufficiently documented.

**Student Voice in the Mediation Process: Opportunities to Share Experiences and Raise Objections**

Both students reported having opportunities to explain their accounts. Their interviews nevertheless revealed different experiences of clarification and the resulting agreement. S01 emphasized gaining information that changed the initial understanding of the incident, whereas S02 described being heard while retaining questions about the written decision.

S01 explained: "*Initially, I thought my notebook had been taken deliberately. After we were called in and asked to explain what had happened one by one, I learned that the notebook had been used for group study. I felt that I was given an opportunity to explain my side of the story, but I had already made an accusation before that.*" (S01, interview, September 17, 2026).

This account linked the opportunity to speak with exposure to information that S01 had not previously considered. S01 also acknowledged that the accusation preceded clarification. The statement therefore supported a finding of revised understanding and recognition of an earlier judgment, rather than demonstrating a broader change in behavior.

S02 reported: "*I was allowed to explain why I had borrowed the notebook. The dormitory supervisor also listened to me, but when the decision was written down, I still wanted to ask why all the mistakes made by my friend and me had to be recorded in that way.*" (S02, interview, September 18, 2026).

S02 acknowledged both an opportunity to explain and the supervisor's willingness to listen. However, the account also identified an unresolved question about how the students' mistakes were recorded. The quotation did not establish whether S02 subsequently asked the question, received an explanation, or requested changes to the agreement. It therefore indicated uncertainty about the written resolution without conclusively demonstrating exclusion from decision-making or perceived unfairness.

P01 described the purpose of hearing both parties: "*We try to listen to both students before determining a resolution so that no decision is made solely on the basis of the initial report.*" (P01, interview, September 17, 2026).

The three accounts converged on the availability of opportunities to explain the incident. However, they did not establish how each student's views affected the agreement. The principal contrast concerned what followed these

opportunities: S01 described a clearer understanding of the event, while S02 retained a question about the written outcome. Being heard, understanding the resolution, and influencing its formulation were therefore distinguishable aspects of participation in this case.

**Findings on Procedural Justice in the Mediation Process**

The analysis examined five dimensions of procedural justice: opportunities to provide statements, mediator impartiality, consistency of treatment, respect for students' dignity, and decision-making transparency. The evidence supported different levels of interpretation across these dimensions.

The clearest interview evidence concerned opportunities to speak. Both students confirmed that they could explain their accounts, and P01 described an intention to hear both parties before reaching a resolution. These statements supported the availability of participation but did not establish equal speaking time, comparable responses to each account, or equivalent influence over the outcome.

The reported collection of accounts from S01, S02, and S03 indicated an effort to avoid relying exclusively on the original complaint. However, this information-gathering practice did not establish the impartiality of G01, who facilitated the joint dialogue, or reveal all considerations used to assign responsibility. The distinction between P01's clarification role and G01's mediation role was therefore important when interpreting the evidence.

Within the incident, both students were invited to explain their actions, and the reported agreement addressed responsibilities on both sides. This provided some information about their treatment within the same process. It did not establish whether the responses were proportionate to their respective actions or whether similar procedures were applied in other cases.

The chronology described separate initial clarification and restricted disclosure during mediation. These arrangements suggested attention to confidentiality, although they were not independently established by the interview extracts presented. Moreover, confidentiality alone could not demonstrate respect across all aspects of communication and treatment.

Decision-making transparency was less clearly established. S02's question concerned the recording of both students' mistakes, but the evidence did not show what explanation accompanied the written agreement or whether further clarification was sought. Table 1 summarizes the evidence and its interpretive limits.

**Table 1.** Analytical Matrix of Evidence from the *Tabayyun–Islah*-Based Mediation Case

| Dimensions of Procedural Justice | Available Evidence | Interpretation and Limitations |
|---|---|---|
| Balanced opportunities to provide statements | S01 and S02 reported opportunities to explain their accounts in interviews on September 17 and 18, 2026, respectively. P01 also described hearing both students before determining a resolution. | Both students reported being heard. Equal speaking time, responsiveness, and influence over the agreement were not established. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mediator impartiality | The chronology described P01 obtaining accounts from S01, S02, and S03. P01's interview on September 17, 2026, emphasized avoiding reliance on the initial complaint alone. | The evidence indicated an effort to broaden the information considered. It did not establish G01's impartiality or explain all grounds for determining responsibility. |
| Consistency of treatment | Both students reported opportunities to explain their actions. The chronology described an agreement addressing unauthorized notebook use and an accusation made before clarification. | The evidence permitted limited examination of treatment within this incident. Proportionality and consistency across other cases could not be assessed. |
| Respect for students' dignity | The chronology described separate initial clarification and restricted disclosure during mediation. | These reported arrangements suggested attention to confidentiality. The interview extracts did not independently establish these practices or provide a comprehensive account of respectful treatment. |
| Transparency of decision-making | S02 questioned why both students' mistakes were recorded in the written decision (interview, September 18, 2026). | The account identified an unresolved question. It did not establish whether clarification was requested or provided, or whether the decision itself was unfair. |

*Source: Developed from the chronology of the conflict resolution process and interview accounts provided by S01, S02, and P01 (2026).*

The strongest convergence concerned opportunities to explain the incident. The evidence was less conclusive regarding how the accounts were evaluated and translated into the agreement. S02's experience highlighted the importance of distinguishing participation in information sharing from understanding the reasons for a resolution. Overall, the case did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that all five dimensions of procedural justice were fulfilled.

**Moral Reflection in Conflict Resolution**

The clearest evidence of moral reflection appeared in S01's reconsideration of the initial accusation. After learning that the notebook had been used for group study, S01 acknowledged having accused S02 before obtaining an explanation. This account connected new information with recognition of a premature judgment. It supported an interpretation of immediate reflection on the incident, while providing no direct evidence of how S01 subsequently approached similar situations.

For S02, the reported agreement addressed responsibility for using another student's belongings without permission. However, S02's interview extract focused on the written recording of mistakes rather than an explicit acknowledgment of wrongdoing or a revised understanding of *amanah*. The agreement therefore demonstrated that responsibility was addressed during mediation, but it did not establish how S02 personally interpreted or accepted that responsibility.

The chronology also described G01 connecting the dispute with honesty, trustworthiness, caution in communicating information, and respect for personal belongings. This represented reported moral guidance linked to a

concrete incident. Nevertheless, the delivery of guidance was analytically distinct from students' understanding or internalization of its content.

Similarly, the agreement's emphasis on apologies, clarification, and direct communication indicated an intended direction for repairing the relationship. The evidence did not establish whether apologies were freely offered, whether trust was restored, or whether the communication commitments were maintained. The findings therefore supported a bounded conclusion: mediation provided an occasion for moral reflection, most explicitly in S01's account, while sustained behavioral change and long-term relationship restoration remained unestablished.

## Discussion

### Tabayyun–Islah as an Ethical Framework for Mediation

This case illustrates how information clarification can change the interpretation of an interpersonal dispute. S01's initial suspicion became more differentiated after learning that the notebook had been used for group study. Clarification did not remove S02's responsibility for using another person's belongings without permission, but it helped distinguish an established action from an assumption about intention. Interpreted through *tabayyun*, this distinction connects information verification with responsibility for forming and communicating judgments.

Rakhman and Fauzan (2025) identify *tabayyun* and deliberation as resources for conflict management in pesantren, while Anwar et al. (2025) emphasize justice, dialogue, and peace in Islamic educational institutions. The present case extends these perspectives by examining students' experiences within a specific resolution process. Its contribution concerns how clarification was understood by those involved, rather than demonstrating the effectiveness of an institutional mediation model.

The reported agreement also reflected an orientation toward *islah* through accountability, apologies, and improved communication. However, the evidence primarily concerned the content of the resolution, not its subsequent implementation. Moreover, *tabayyun–islah* functions here as an interpretive framework; the available quotations do not establish whether participants explicitly used these terms. The Islamic educational significance of the case therefore lies in the correspondence between these ethical principles and the reported practices, without assuming that religiously informed mediation necessarily produces reconciliation.

### Student Voice and the Limits of Participation

The contrast between S01 and S02 shows why opportunities to speak should be distinguished from understanding and influencing a decision. Both students reported being heard, but their accounts emphasized different aspects of participation. S01 described gaining information that revised an earlier judgment, whereas S02 retained a question about the written recording of mistakes. The latter account identifies uncertainty, although it does not establish that the student was prevented from questioning or changing the agreement.

This distinction develops Skrzypek et al.'s (2020) finding that students' experiences of restorative practices vary. Lundy's (2007) framework further distinguishes space, voice, audience, and influence, providing a basis for examining what happens after students express their views. In this case, the evidence supported opportunities for expression and reported listening more clearly than influence over the final resolution.

Educational authority offers a relevant context for interpreting this difference. Dormitory supervisors may facilitate dialogue while also holding responsibility for discipline. These overlapping roles could affect students' willingness to question a decision, but the present evidence does not demonstrate that authority caused S02's uncertainty. Alternative explanations include unclear wording, concern about the documentation of mistakes, or disagreement with the substance of the resolution. The analytical implication is that meaningful participation requires attention to responses and explanations, rather than being inferred from attendance or opportunities to speak alone.

**Procedural Justice and Decision-Making Transparency**

The findings support a differentiated assessment of procedural justice. Hearing several accounts indicated an effort to avoid reliance on the initial complaint, but it did not establish mediator impartiality. Likewise, addressing both students' actions did not demonstrate that their responsibilities were assessed proportionately. The distinction between P01's information-gathering role and G01's facilitation role also limits conclusions about the fairness of mediation as a whole.

Brasof and Peterson (2018) connect student participation in disciplinary processes with procedural justice and legitimate authority. The present case highlights the importance of examining how participation translates into an intelligible decision. S02's question suggests that being listened to can coexist with uncertainty about the outcome, although uncertainty alone does not prove unfair treatment.

Lustick et al. (2024) similarly emphasize collaborative practice in equitable restorative justice. Applied to this case, that perspective directs attention to whether students could seek clarification and whether their concerns received a response. Practical improvements would include explaining why responsibilities are recorded, checking each student's understanding, and providing opportunities to request clarification before an agreement is finalized. These are implications arising from the case, not procedures whose effectiveness was tested.

Such recommendations also require sensitivity to the nature of the dispute. Burger (2022) distinguishes bullying from ordinary conflict because victimization and power imbalances require particular attention. Although the incident examined here does not establish bullying, reconciliation should not be treated as a universal response that overrides safety or pressures a harmed student to accept an agreement.

**Moral Reflection and the Boundaries of Educational Claims**

The strongest evidence of moral reflection concerned S01's acknowledgment that an accusation preceded clarification. This account

suggests reconsideration of a judgment in response to new information. By contrast, the evidence did not clearly establish how S02 interpreted responsibility for using the notebook without permission. The educational experiences of the two students therefore should not be treated as equivalent.

Reported guidance concerning honesty, *amanah*, and respect for others' rights connected moral principles with a concrete dispute. Nevertheless, providing guidance, reaching an agreement, and internalizing values are distinct processes. An apology included in a resolution cannot establish voluntary remorse, just as a commitment to communicate directly cannot demonstrate sustained behavioral change.

Gregory et al. (2022) examined disciplinary outcomes following a school restorative practices intervention, while Cantera-Rios et al. (2024) and Lodi et al. (2022) identified potential educational and relational benefits alongside limitations in the evidence. These studies support investigating restorative approaches but cannot substantiate moral development in this particular case. The present findings support a narrower interpretation: mediation provided an occasion for immediate reflection, most explicitly in S01's account.

Overall, the study contributes a case-based distinction among being heard, understanding a decision, and influencing its formulation. It also shows the importance of separating reported moral reflection from longer-term outcomes. Its single-incident focus, limited interview dataset, and lack of demonstrated follow-up outcomes constrain transferability. Further research should compare mediation experiences across cases and examine how students interpret agreements and relationships over time.

## Conclusion

This study found that opportunities to speak during *tabayyun–islah* mediation did not necessarily ensure that students understood or influenced the resulting agreement. Although both students reported being heard, one described reconsidering an initial accusation, while the other retained questions about the written resolution. This contrast challenges the assumption that dialogue and agreement alone demonstrate meaningful participation or procedural fairness. Information clarification supported immediate moral reflection, but the evidence did not establish mediator impartiality, sustained behavioral change, or restored trust.

The study contributes to Islamic education by connecting students' experiences with the ethical principles of *tabayyun* and *islah*. It supports previous research emphasizing dialogue and accountability while questioning the adequacy of procedural completion as an indicator of successful mediation. Its conceptual contribution lies in distinguishing three aspects of participation: being heard, understanding the reasons for a decision, and influencing its formulation. This distinction provides an analytical basis for examining how educational authority shapes participation and for separating moral guidance from students' demonstrated reflection and longer-term development.

The study was limited to one conflict incident and interviews with two students and one administrator, restricting the transferability of its findings. The limited corroborating evidence and absence of longitudinal follow-up also constrained conclusions about procedural consistency and relationship restoration. Future research should include more participants, multiple mediation cases, and follow-up interviews or observations to examine how agreements are understood and implemented over time. In practice, pesantren should provide clear explanations of proposed resolutions, opportunities to question or revise agreements, and continued guidance that respects students' dignity and voluntary participation.

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