

From Religious Knowledge to Religious Judgment: A Conceptual Framework for Dialogic Learning Grounded in Religious Moderation in Madrasahs

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: religious knowledge; religious judgment; dialogic learning; religious moderation; Islamic education. Article history: Received 2026-10-13 Revised 2026-10-14 Accepted 2026-10-15	<i>The acquisition of religious knowledge does not necessarily translate into students' ability to make reflective and responsible judgments on religious matters. This gap between religious knowledge and judgment presents a pedagogical challenge for Islamic education, particularly in promoting religious moderation in madrasahs. This study aims to develop a conceptual framework for dialogic learning that connects religious knowledge as an epistemological foundation with religious judgment as a competence in religious deliberation. Employing a qualitative, library-based approach, the study integrates an integrative literature review with critical-conceptual synthesis of scholarship on religious development, dialogic pedagogy, and religious moderation in Islamic education. The synthesis produces an integrative framework linking religious knowledge to four analytical dimensions of religious judgment normative, contextual, argumentative, and ethical-social through four dialogic mechanisms: knowledge articulation, argument evaluation, perspective-taking, and reflection. These relationships are conceptual and interrelated, with teacher guidance and the madrasah learning environment serving as enabling conditions. Religious moderation is positioned as a normative orientation guiding the exercise of religious judgment rather than an automatic outcome of knowledge acquisition or participation in dialogue. The study's principal contribution is a theoretical framework that clarifies how dialogic learning may connect religious knowledge with reflective religious judgment. The framework provides a conceptual foundation for developing instructional designs and assessing religious judgment in madrasahs, although its construct validity and practical applicability require further empirical investigation.</i>

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Corresponding Author:**Mohammad Solihin**Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; mohammadsolihinbinmarnudi@gmail.com**INTRODUCTION**

Islamic education in pluralistic societies is responsible not only for equipping students with religious knowledge but also for developing their ability to understand and respond to religious issues reflectively and responsibly. In the Indonesian context, religious moderation serves as an educational orientation that seeks to reconcile steadfast religious commitment with respect for social diversity. This orientation requires the translation of religious values into pedagogical practices rather than merely the transmission of normative concepts. Through a systematic review of religious moderation in Islamic education, Prasetyo, Fauziah, and Syafii (2025) examine the interconnections among policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional ecosystems in strengthening inclusive education. Meanwhile, Zulfa, Defianty, and Mulyati (2025) investigate the implementation of moderation values through instructional practices and the support of Islamic school environments. Both studies demonstrate that education for religious moderation needs to be addressed at the level of teaching and learning processes and institutional environments, rather than being confined to the formulation of educational objectives or curricular content.

One conceptual issue arising from this orientation concerns the relationship between the acquisition of religious knowledge and students' ability to deliberate on issues involving differences of opinion. Knowledge of religious teachings, scriptural evidence, and the values of moderation constitutes an important foundation of Islamic education. However, possessing such knowledge is not equivalent to being able to evaluate the strength of arguments, understand contexts, and formulate defensible positions. Santoso et al. (2024) distinguish between understanding and attitudes in their measurement of religious moderation among religious counselors and teachers. Although their study does not examine the reasoning processes of madrasah students, the distinction between these constructs highlights that knowledge and attitudes should not be treated as a single, undifferentiated ability. What requires further explanation is the process of judgment through which students draw upon religious knowledge when encountering socio-religious situations that call for evaluation, rather than merely reproducing previously learned answers.

To examine this issue, the present study distinguishes *religious knowledge* as the foundation of religious understanding from *religious judgment* as a concept associated with processes of religious deliberation. The term *religious judgment* has been discussed in research on religious development. Oser (1991) uses the concept to explain how individuals reconstruct their experiences through interpretations of their relationship with transcendent reality. Within the didactics of religious education, Gabelt (2023) develops a model of *religious judgement competence* that highlights the mental processes involved when students deliberate on religious conflicts, including the roles of knowledge and attitudes as factors influencing judgment. These two perspectives differ in emphasis and therefore cannot be directly equated with the pedagogical needs of Islamic education in madrasahs. Building on this distinction, the present study adopts *religious judgment* as a working definition referring to the ability to deliberate on religious issues by evaluating their normative foundations, contexts, arguments, and ethical-social implications. This definition constitutes an analytical formulation to be developed

through literature synthesis, rather than a claim that its four dimensions have already been established as a validated competence structure.

Dialogic learning is relevant to this inquiry as a pedagogical approach that enables religious knowledge to be employed in processes of deliberation. Through open-ended questions, the exchange of reasons, the examination of arguments, and reflection, students are given opportunities to explain not only what they know but also the grounds on which they defend or reconsider a particular position. In Islamic education, such dialogue needs to be accompanied by the accurate use of religious sources, respect for scholarly traditions, and teacher guidance. Abdul-Jabbar and Makki (2024) propose a deliberative pedagogy grounded in *tadabbur*, connecting contemplation and deliberation with Muslim education. Radino and Mubarak (2025) discuss *musyawarah* practices in traditional Islamic education as a space for intellectual participation and the development of students' critical awareness. Although grounded in different foundations and contexts, both studies provide a basis for examining the functions of argumentation and reflection in religious learning without equating dialogue with unrestricted freedom of expression detached from the disciplinary foundations of Islamic scholarship.

At the level of madrasah practice, Alam et al. (2025) examine the use of dialogic pedagogy and inquiry-based learning in Islamic Religious Education at Madrasah Aliyah. Their case study reports students' analytical engagement, increased participation, and opportunities to deepen understanding and spiritual reflection within the context investigated. Meanwhile, Mubin et al. (2026) show that religious moderation practices at a Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated Madrasah Aliyah are associated with Aswaja An-Nahdliyah instruction, collective ritual practices, and student organizations. These two studies illustrate different pedagogical and institutional pathways within Islamic education: the former highlights classroom dialogue, whereas the latter demonstrates the involvement of lived experiences and school culture in shaping religious practices. Nevertheless, findings concerning participation, reflection, or moderation practices cannot be used directly to explain how religious judgment is constructed as a competence distinguishable from knowledge and attitudes. These differences in focus point to the need to bring analyses of teaching and learning processes into dialogue with research on religious judgment competence.

Overall, the literature reviewed reveals several interconnected lines of inquiry with distinct emphases. Prasetyo et al. (2025), Zulfa et al. (2025), and Mubin et al. (2026) primarily provide insights into the orientation and implementation of religious moderation; Alam et al. (2025), Radino and Mubarak (2025), and Abdul-Jabbar and Makki (2024) demonstrate the relevance of dialogic and reflective processes in Islamic education; while Oser (1991) and Gabelt (2023) provide foundations for understanding religious judgment as a distinct field of inquiry. Based on this comparison, the scope for conceptual development in the present article lies in explaining the relationship among *religious knowledge*, the mechanisms of dialogic learning, and *religious judgment* within the context of religious moderation education in madrasahs. This does not imply that these concepts have never been investigated; rather, their relationships and conceptual boundaries require a more integrated formulation that takes into account the epistemological characteristics of Islamic education. Accordingly, the intended contribution is not the creation of a new term but a theoretical synthesis that clarifies how religious knowledge can be situated within processes of judgment through dialogic learning.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the conceptual relationship between *religious knowledge* and *religious judgment*, identify the pedagogical mechanisms of dialogic learning, and

construct a conceptual framework that positions religious moderation as a normative orientation in madrasah education. The inquiry seeks to address how religious knowledge serves as a foundation for reflective judgment, how dialogue can be understood as a pedagogical process that supports the use of knowledge, and how the relationship between the two can be conceptualized without neglecting the authority of religious sources and ethical responsibility in Islamic education. Through a literature-based study employing critical-conceptual analysis, this research offers a synthesis of the components, mechanisms, and principles of dialogic learning as a foundation for the development of pedagogical designs and subsequent empirical research. The resulting framework is a theoretical proposal, not evidence that dialogic learning has been demonstrated to improve students' *religious judgment* or moderate attitudes.

METHODS

This study employs a library research method with a qualitative approach, drawing on an integrative literature review and critical-conceptual analysis. This approach was selected to clarify, compare, and synthesize the concepts of *religious knowledge*, *religious judgment*, and dialogic learning within the context of religious moderation-oriented Islamic education in madrasahs. An integrative review allows different perspectives and types of literature to be combined to develop a theoretical understanding of a particular issue Snyder (2019). Meanwhile, Jaakkola (2020) identifies *theory synthesis* as one approach to developing conceptual articles by integrating knowledge from different streams of literature. Accordingly, this study focuses on constructing a conceptual framework rather than testing causal relationships or instructional effectiveness through field data collection.

The sources reviewed include national and international journal articles, academic books, and primary theoretical works relevant to the research focus. The literature search was conducted using Google Scholar, Crossref, and publishers' websites, employing combinations of the keywords *religious knowledge*, *religious judgment*, *religious reasoning*, *moral judgment*, *dialogic pedagogy*, *dialogic learning*, *religious moderation*, *Islamic religious education*, and *madrasah education*, along with their Indonesian equivalents. Publications from 2020 to 2026 were prioritized to capture recent developments in the field, while earlier works were included when they made foundational contributions to the theoretical or methodological framework. Source selection considered relevance to the research questions, publication credibility, traceability of bibliographic information, and contributions to explaining the relationships among concepts. This principle is consistent with Snyder (2019), who emphasizes the importance of aligning literature search and selection strategies with the objectives and characteristics of the review being undertaken.

The literature was organized through source identification, relevance assessment, and documentation of key information from each publication, including research objectives, theoretical foundations, principal concepts or findings, relevant arguments, and limitations. This information was organized into a literature analysis matrix to facilitate comparisons across sources. These procedures adapt the integrative review framework proposed by Whittemore and Knafl (2005), which encompasses problem identification, literature search, data evaluation, data analysis, and presentation of findings. In this study, source evaluation focused on conceptual accuracy, contextual relevance, and argumentative strength, while maintaining distinctions among empirical findings, theoretical propositions, and the researcher's interpretations. This organization was intended to facilitate synthesis

across different perspectives without overlooking differences in the nature and evidentiary status of individual sources.

The literature analysis involved three interrelated processes: conceptual clarification, critical comparison, and theoretical synthesis. Conceptual clarification involved examining the definitions, characteristics, and conceptual boundaries of *religious knowledge*, *religious judgment*, dialogic learning, and religious moderation. Critical comparison was then undertaken to identify similarities, differences, and potential overlaps among *religious judgment*, *religious reasoning*, and *moral judgment*, while also examining the relevance of dialogic principles to Islamic education. Subsequently, theoretical synthesis was employed to formulate the relationships among religious knowledge as an epistemological foundation, dialogic learning as a pedagogical process, and *religious judgment* as a competence in religious deliberation, with religious moderation serving as a normative orientation. This procedure draws on Jabareen (2009) approach to constructing conceptual frameworks through the linking and integration of relevant concepts, as well as the *theory synthesis* approach discussed by Jaakkola (2020).

The synthesis was subsequently used to construct a conceptual framework encompassing the main components, mechanisms of dialogic learning, analytical dimensions of *religious judgment*, pedagogical principles, and conditions supporting its implementation in madrasahs. The relationships among these components were formulated on the basis of argumentative coherence and consistency with the literature, rather than being assumed to represent a developmental sequence or empirically established causal relationships. Analytical rigor was pursued through consistent source selection criteria, verification of the alignment between claims and references, comparison of differing perspectives, and clear distinctions between ideas derived from the literature and the researcher's conceptual interpretations. This emphasis on procedural transparency and clarity in constructing arguments is consistent with Snyder (2019) and Jaakkola (2020). Within these limitations, the findings are positioned as a proposed theoretical framework requiring further conceptual refinement and empirical testing before its effectiveness in developing *religious judgment* or moderate attitudes among madrasah students can be assessed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religious Knowledge in Islamic Education: Epistemological Foundations and Boundaries

Religious knowledge constitutes the epistemological foundation of Islamic education, as it provides the normative sources, concepts, and scholarly traditions that students need to understand religious teachings responsibly. In the madrasah context, the acquisition of such knowledge extends beyond the ability to memorize scriptural evidence or explain concepts to include an understanding of their meanings and relevance to everyday life. Conceptually, however, the acquisition of knowledge must be distinguished from the ability to apply it when confronting issues that require judgment. Alam et al. (2025) demonstrate that Islamic Religious Education employing dialogic and inquiry-based approaches provides students with opportunities to connect Islamic principles with contemporary social issues while developing conceptual understanding and reflection. These findings support the view that religious knowledge functions not only as subject matter to be mastered but also as a source of argumentation for understanding and deliberating on religious issues.

The distinction between acquiring and applying knowledge is not intended to set memorization, normative understanding, and critical reasoning against one another. These three elements can serve complementary functions when organized through appropriate pedagogical processes. Mutholib and Gürel (2025) discuss Islamic Religious Education teachers' practices in developing students' critical

thinking skills, while Radino and Mubarak (2025) demonstrate the relevance of discussion practices in traditional Islamic education to students' intellectual participation and the development of critical awareness. Both studies provide a basis for understanding the importance of integrating knowledge acquisition with the articulation of reasons, examination of arguments, and responses to differing perspectives. Thus, the epistemological boundary referred to in this study does not indicate an inherent weakness in religious knowledge but rather the limitations of relying on mastery of subject matter as the sole basis for explaining students' ability to exercise religious judgment.

Within religious moderation-oriented Islamic education, this distinction is particularly important because understanding the values of justice, tolerance, and respect for differences does not necessarily demonstrate the ability to deliberate on their application in complex socio-religious situations. In their study of religious counselors and teachers, Santoso et al. (2024) distinguish between understanding and attitudes toward religious moderation as separate dimensions of assessment. Although their study does not directly measure madrasah students' religious judgment competence, this distinction highlights the need for caution when equating knowledge, processes of judgment, and attitudes. Based on this synthesis, the present study positions *religious knowledge* as a necessary foundation for religious judgment, but one that is insufficient on its own to explain how students evaluate normative foundations, understand contexts, compare arguments, and consider the ethical-social implications of a particular perspective. These abilities are subsequently examined through the concept of *religious judgment* as a distinct competence in religious deliberation that nevertheless remains closely related to the acquisition of religious knowledge.

Religious Judgment as a Competence in Religious Deliberation

The concept of *religious judgment* has developed within studies of religious development and the didactics of religious education, making it necessary to clarify its theoretical foundations and conceptual boundaries. Oser (1991) examines the development of religious judgment through the ways individuals interpret their relationship with transcendent reality in their lived experiences. This perspective situates *religious judgment* within structures of religious meaning-making rather than merely within the acquisition of religious information. In the field of religious education, Gabelt (2023) develops a model of *religious judgement competence* to explain the mental processes involved when students deliberate on religious conflicts, taking into account the roles of knowledge and attitudes as factors associated with these processes. The differing emphases of these two approaches indicate that the development of religious meaning-making and the competence to exercise judgment in learning contexts need to be distinguished, although both provide a foundation for understanding *religious judgment* as an ability that extends beyond the reproduction of religious knowledge.

Conceptually, *religious judgment* must also be distinguished from *religious reasoning*, *moral judgment*, and critical thinking. *Religious reasoning* primarily refers to the process of constructing and examining reasons based on religious sources and frameworks of knowledge, whereas *moral judgment* concerns the evaluation of right and wrong or good and bad in human actions. Mohd Yusoff, Hamzah, Fajri, Za, and Yusuf (2022), in their study of spiritual and social norms in moral judgment, demonstrate the relevance of belief systems and social environments to understanding moral evaluations. Demirel Ucan and Henderson (2026) discuss argumentation in religious education, emphasizing the need to consider the epistemological characteristics of religious knowledge, which cannot simply be equated with evidentiary practices in science education. Drawing on this comparison, the present study

positions *religious judgment* as a competence that draws upon religious reasoning and critical evaluation while also considering normative and ethical-social dimensions. This distinction is analytical, as these concepts occupy overlapping domains rather than constituting entirely separate categories.

Based on this synthesis, *religious judgment* is operationally and conceptually defined in this study as students' ability to deliberate on religious issues reflectively and responsibly by drawing on relevant normative foundations, understanding the context, examining arguments, and evaluating the ethical and social implications of a particular perspective or decision. This definition is a working formulation developed for the purpose of constructing a pedagogical framework, rather than a standardized definition adopted in its entirety from a single theory. Within Islamic education, this competence is not intended to relativize all religious perspectives or replace the authority of religious sources with individual opinions. Instead, responsible judgment presupposes an interconnection among the acquisition of knowledge, the appropriate use of scriptural evidence, openness to the examination of reasons, and awareness of the limitations of one's own understanding. Thus, *religious judgment* is understood as the ability to apply religious knowledge in situations requiring evaluation, rather than merely the freedom to express opinions.

To clarify this conceptual construction, the present study proposes four analytical dimensions of *religious judgment*: normative, contextual, argumentative, and ethical-social. The normative dimension concerns the ability to identify, understand, and appropriately apply relevant religious foundations; the contextual dimension encompasses the ability to recognize the characteristics of an issue, social conditions, and the limits within which a particular perspective may be applied; the argumentative dimension refers to the ability to construct, compare, and evaluate reasons based on defensible grounds; and the ethical-social dimension concerns the ability to consider the consequences of a particular position for oneself, others, and collective life. This categorization represents the researcher's synthesis, informed by Gabelt (2023) discussion of judgment processes, knowledge, and attitudes, as well as the characteristics of religious argumentation examined by Demirel Ucan and Henderson (2026). These four dimensions are not intended to represent developmental stages that necessarily unfold linearly or a psychometrically validated competence structure. Rather, they serve as analytical categories that may provide a basis for formulating learning objectives, activities, and indicators for further examination.

Within religious moderation-oriented Islamic education, the relevance of *religious judgment* lies in its potential as a framework for explaining how religious knowledge is employed when students encounter differing perspectives and socio-religious issues. However, the ability to exercise judgment is not synonymous with moderate attitudes. *Religious judgment* is positioned as an evaluative competence, whereas religious moderation functions as a normative orientation that guides ethical responsibility in responding to differences. An individual may construct systematic arguments without necessarily demonstrating fairness or respect for others; therefore, the relationship between judgment competence and moderate attitudes cannot be assumed to be an empirically established causal relationship. Based on this synthesis, *religious judgment* is positioned as a competence that conceptually bridges the acquisition of knowledge and the use of reasoning in addressing religious issues. Its development needs to be further examined through pedagogical mechanisms that provide opportunities for examining arguments, exchanging perspectives, and engaging in reflection, as discussed in the following subsection on dialogic learning.

Dialogic Learning as a Pedagogical Process in Islamic Education

Dialogic learning is a pedagogical approach that draws on linguistic interaction, the exchange of ideas, and the examination of arguments to develop students' understanding. Alexander (2020) conceptualizes dialogue as a purposeful learning process designed to stimulate thinking, deepen understanding, and develop reasoning abilities through meaningful interaction. From this perspective, dialogue extends beyond question-and-answer exchanges or the sharing of opinions to provide students with opportunities to explain their reasoning, respond to different views, examine assumptions, and reconsider their understanding. In Islamic education, this approach is relevant when the acquisition of religious knowledge is directed toward the ability to understand and deliberate on issues reflectively. Abdul-Jabbar and Makki (2024) develop the notion of deliberative pedagogy through the concept of *tadabbur*, emphasizing contemplation and deliberation in Muslim education, while Radino and Mubarak (2025) examine *musyawarah* practices in traditional Islamic educational settings as spaces for intellectual participation and the development of students' critical awareness. Although grounded in different foundations and characterized by distinct features, these three perspectives converge in emphasizing the importance of argumentative and reflective interaction in learning processes. Nevertheless, *tadabbur*, *musyawarah*, and dialogic learning are not treated as identical concepts but rather as practices and approaches that can be compared in terms of their pedagogical functions.

Based on this synthesis of the literature, the present study identifies four pedagogical mechanisms that may support the development of religious judgment: knowledge articulation, argument examination, perspective-taking, and reflection. Knowledge articulation provides students with opportunities to express their understanding of religious sources and concepts; argument examination enables them to evaluate the appropriateness of scriptural evidence, interpretations, and supporting reasons; perspective-taking encourages an understanding of differing viewpoints without requiring all perspectives to be accepted as equally valid; and reflection helps students reconsider their conclusions and their ethical and social implications. This categorization was developed by examining the functions of dialogue in fostering understanding and argumentation, as discussed by (Alexander, 2020), alongside the relationship between deliberation and reflection in Muslim education explored by (Abdul-Jabbar & Makki, 2024). These four mechanisms constitute interrelated analytical categories rather than a linear instructional sequence or universally applicable stages that have been empirically validated.

Contextual support for the relevance of the dialogic approach can be found in the study by (Alam et al., 2025) on Islamic Religious Education at Madrasah Aliyah. The study describes the use of dialogic and inquiry-based learning approaches to connect Islamic principles with contemporary social issues, alongside reported student participation, analytical engagement, deeper understanding, and opportunities for reflection. It also identifies challenges related to institutional support and teachers' professional development. These findings indicate that meaningful dialogue requires more than simply providing a forum for discussion; its quality is associated with activity design, teachers' ability to facilitate the exchange of arguments, and supportive learning conditions. Nevertheless, findings from this particular research context cannot be used directly to conclude that dialogic learning has been demonstrated to improve *religious judgment* or foster moderate attitudes among madrasah students.

Within the framework of religious moderation-oriented Islamic education, dialogic learning is therefore positioned as a pedagogical process through which religious knowledge can be articulated, examined, and employed in more reflective deliberation. Teachers play an important role in guiding questions, ensuring the appropriate use of religious sources, facilitating the exchange of differing arguments, and cultivating proper etiquette in dialogue. Such guidance is necessary to ensure that openness to different perspectives remains consistent with epistemological and ethical responsibility in Islamic education. Based on this synthesis, the relationship between dialogic learning and *religious judgment* is understood as a conceptual proposition: dialogic activities provide pedagogical opportunities for applying knowledge in processes of deliberation, but they do not establish a causal improvement in competence or changes in attitudes. This proposition provides the foundation for analyzing the relationship among *religious knowledge*, dialogic mechanisms, and *religious judgment* in the following subsection.

From Religious Knowledge to Religious Judgment: An Analysis of the Conceptual Relationship

The relationship between *religious knowledge* and *religious judgment* in Islamic education is not understood as a developmental sequence that unfolds automatically, but rather as an interconnection between the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to apply it in religious deliberation. *Religious knowledge* provides normative, conceptual, and argumentative foundations, whereas *religious judgment* concerns the process of evaluating the relevance of such knowledge when addressing issues involving differing perspectives or contextual complexities. Through his model of *religious judgement competence*, (Gabelt, 2023) distinguishes the process of judging religious conflicts from the factors associated with it, including knowledge and attitudes. This distinction provides a basis for proposing that the availability of knowledge is not equivalent to the quality of its application in evaluative processes. Within the framework of this study, the relationship between the two is epistemological and functional: knowledge provides the foundation for deliberation, while *religious judgment* reflects how that foundation can be employed reflectively and responsibly. This relationship neither treats them as entirely separate competencies nor assumes that acquiring knowledge directly produces mature judgment.

Dialogic learning is positioned as a pedagogical process that can conceptually connect these two dimensions through knowledge articulation, argument examination, perspective-taking, and reflection. (Alexander, 2020) explains the role of purposeful dialogue in developing thinking and understanding, while (Abdul-Jabbar & Makki, 2024) demonstrate the relevance of deliberation and *tadabbur* to reflective processes in Muslim education. Based on a synthesis of these perspectives, the four dialogic mechanisms can be understood as having overlapping relationships with the dimensions of *religious judgment*. Knowledge articulation creates opportunities to express and clarify the normative foundations of a particular perspective; argument examination encourages the evaluation of the strength of reasons and the appropriate use of sources; perspective-taking helps students consider diverse contexts and viewpoints; and reflection enables them to reconsider conclusions in light of their ethical-social implications. These relationships do not involve a one-to-one correspondence between mechanisms and dimensions, since argument examination, for example, also requires normative and contextual understanding. Thus, dialogic learning is not treated as an intermediary that automatically transforms knowledge into judgment, but as a pedagogical space in which various evaluative processes can be practiced and developed.

The possibility of such relationships depends on the pedagogical and epistemological conditions accompanying the implementation of dialogue. (Radino & Mubarak, 2025) demonstrate the relevance of *musyawarah* practices to intellectual participation and critical awareness in traditional Islamic education, while (Alam et al., 2025) highlight the opportunities afforded by dialogic learning in Madrasah Aliyah alongside limitations related to teacher preparedness and institutional support. Both studies reinforce the importance of distinguishing the presence of discussion activities from the quality of the deliberative processes occurring within them. In Islamic education, dialogue directed toward developing *religious judgment* requires the appropriate use of religious sources, sufficient mastery of subject matter, teachers' ability to facilitate the examination of reasons, and proper etiquette when engaging with differences. These conditions must also be situated within the orientation of religious moderation without assuming that judgment competence is synonymous with moderate attitudes. (Santoso et al., 2024) distinguish between understanding and attitudes in measuring religious moderation, while (Zulfa et al., 2025) demonstrate the involvement of instructional practices and institutional environments in implementing moderation values. Drawing on these studies, the present research positions religious moderation as a normative orientation that provides ethical direction for the exercise of judgment competence, rather than as an empirically established direct consequence of knowledge acquisition or participation in dialogue.

The synthesis of these conceptual relationships yields three theoretical propositions. First, *religious knowledge* constitutes the epistemological foundation of *religious judgment*, but knowledge acquisition cannot serve as the sole indicator of the quality of religious judgment. Second, dialogic learning may provide a pedagogical space for applying knowledge through argumentative, contextual, and reflective processes, with teacher guidance and the appropriate use of religious sources serving as important supporting conditions. Third, *religious judgment* can be positioned as a competence relevant to religious moderation-oriented Islamic education, while the development of moderate attitudes continues to involve broader normative, pedagogical, and environmental factors. The formulation of these propositions follows the orientation of *theory synthesis* discussed by (Jaakkola, 2020), which integrates theoretical perspectives to produce a more coherent conceptual explanation. These three propositions represent the researcher's interpretation and synthesis rather than empirically tested causal conclusions. Accordingly, the contribution of this subsection lies in explaining the functional relationships among the knowledge foundation, dialogic mechanisms, and religious judgment competence, which subsequently serve as the basis for constructing a conceptual framework for learning in madrasahs.

Construction of a Conceptual Framework for Religious Moderation-Oriented Dialogic Learning

Building on the preceding theoretical synthesis, this study constructs a conceptual framework that connects *religious knowledge* as an epistemological foundation, dialogic learning as a pedagogical process, and *religious judgment* as a competence in religious deliberation. This construction draws on the distinction between knowledge acquisition and the ability to apply knowledge in evaluative processes, as reflected in the model of *religious judgement competence* developed by (Gabelt, 2023). The framework also integrates (Alexander, 2020) perspective on the role of dialogue in developing reasoning and (Abdul-Jabbar & Makki, 2024) conception of deliberative pedagogy grounded in *tadabbur* in Muslim education. Following the orientation of *theory synthesis* outlined by (Jaakkola, 2020), these perspectives are integrated to formulate relationships among concepts that serve distinct yet

interconnected functions in learning. Accordingly, the resulting framework represents an analytical construction developed in this study rather than the wholesale adoption of any single existing theoretical model.

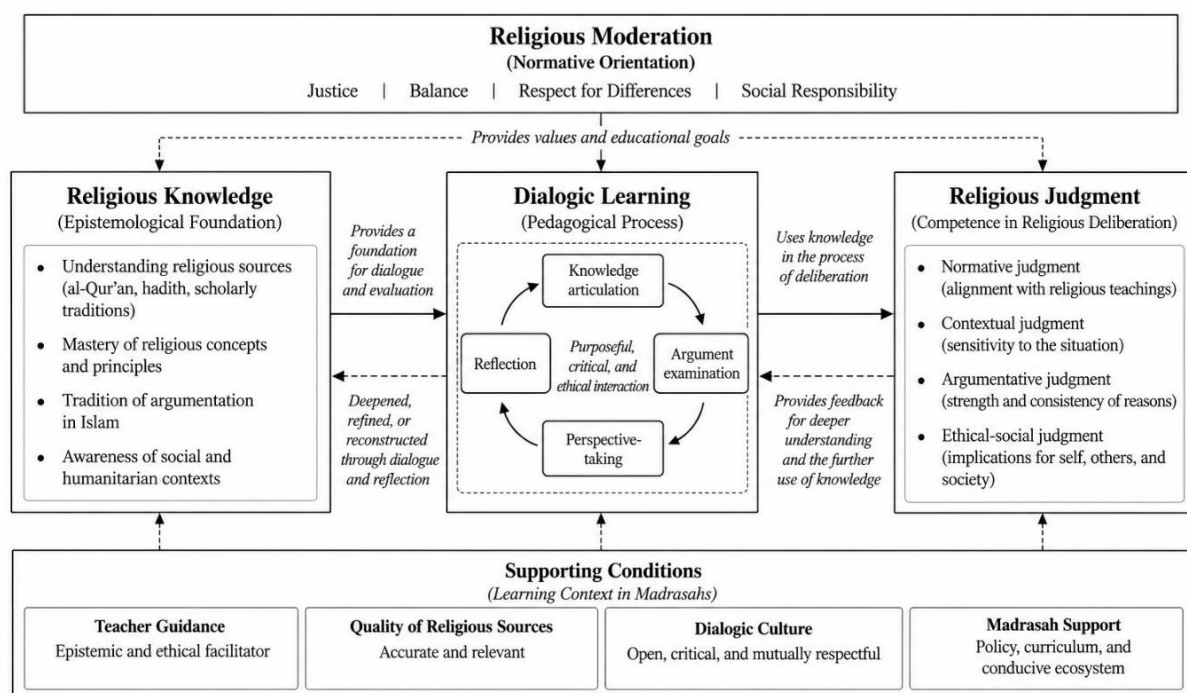
The framework consists of three core components connected through dialogic pedagogical mechanisms. First, *religious knowledge* provides normative and conceptual foundations encompassing an understanding of religious sources, traditions of argumentation, and the relevance of religious knowledge. Second, dialogic learning provides opportunities for knowledge articulation, argument examination, perspective-taking, and reflection. Third, *religious judgment* is positioned as a competence in religious deliberation, formulated in this study through four analytical dimensions: normative, contextual, argumentative, and ethical-social. The relationship among these components is not conceived as a linear progression that automatically transforms knowledge into competence, but rather as a functional relationship that enables knowledge to be applied, examined, and reconsidered through learning interactions. Within this process, argument examination may simultaneously involve the appropriate use of normative foundations and contextual understanding, while perspective-taking and reflection may relate to both argumentative evaluation and ethical-social deliberation. Thus, dialogic mechanisms and the dimensions of *religious judgment* are understood to have overlapping relationships rather than one-to-one correspondences.

The functioning of these relationships requires supportive pedagogical and epistemological conditions. (Radino & Mubarak, 2025) demonstrate the relevance of *musyawarah* practices in traditional Islamic education as spaces for students' intellectual participation and the development of critical awareness, while (Alam et al., 2025) identify both opportunities and challenges in implementing dialogic learning at Madrasah Aliyah, particularly regarding teacher preparedness and institutional support. Drawing on these studies, the framework positions teachers as epistemic and ethical guides who direct the quality of questioning, examine the appropriate use of religious sources, facilitate the exchange of differing arguments, and uphold proper etiquette in dialogue. The madrasah environment serves as a supporting condition through its learning culture, organization of interactions, and institutional support, enabling dialogic activities to proceed in a purposeful manner. Teachers and the institutional environment are not treated as components of *religious judgment* competence but as conditions that may conceptually support or constrain the quality of pedagogical processes.

Religious moderation is positioned as a normative orientation that permeates the entire framework rather than as an automatic outcome of dialogic learning or the final stage of competence development. (Prasetyo et al., 2025) examine the interconnections among policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and educational ecosystems in strengthening religious moderation, while (Zulfa et al., 2025) demonstrate the relevance of instructional practices and school environmental support in implementing moderation values. Both studies provide a basis for understanding that education for religious moderation involves dimensions extending beyond knowledge acquisition or dialogic skills. Within the framework of this study, religious moderation serves to guide normative and ethical responsibility when students deliberate on differing perspectives and socio-religious issues. Accordingly, the quality of *religious judgment* is associated not only with the ability to construct arguments but also with the appropriate use of religious foundations, sensitivity to context, and awareness of ethical-social implications. Nevertheless, this competence remains distinct from moderate attitudes, which constitute a separate construct requiring their own conceptual explanation and measurement.

This construction yields three interrelated conceptual contributions. First, the framework clarifies the position of *religious knowledge* as an epistemological foundation that is distinct from, yet functionally related to, *religious judgment* competence. Second, it identifies dialogic mechanisms as pedagogical opportunities for applying and examining knowledge, with the quality of teacher guidance and the madrasah environment serving as supporting conditions. Third, it positions religious moderation as a normative orientation that guides the exercise of judgment competence without equating it with moderate attitudes. This integration is summarized in Figure 1, which illustrates the relationships among the three core components, the normative orientation, and the supporting conditions. The relationships depicted are conceptual and do not represent empirically validated causal pathways. Therefore, the framework is proposed as a foundation for instructional design, the formulation of competence indicators, and empirical testing in future research.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Religious Moderation-Oriented Dialogic Learning in Madrasahs



The relationships among components are reflective and mutually influential, not empirically validated causal relationships.

Pedagogical Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Agenda

The conceptual framework developed in this study provides a foundation for designing Islamic Religious Education in madrasahs that integrates the acquisition of religious knowledge with the development of reflective judgment competence. These implications do not diminish the position of normative content but broaden the orientation of learning so that students have opportunities to apply knowledge in analyzing issues, examining arguments, and considering the consequences of particular perspectives. (Alexander, 2020) emphasizes the role of purposeful dialogic interaction in developing thinking, while (Abdul-Jabbar & Makki, 2024) demonstrate the relevance of deliberative pedagogy

grounded in *tadabbur* in Muslim education. Based on this synthesis, learning activities can be designed through the analysis of socio-religious cases, discussions grounded in religious sources, comparisons of arguments, and reflection on the ethical implications of decisions. Their implementation requires the selection of issues appropriate to the nature of the subject matter, students' readiness, and learning objectives. These activities represent pedagogical implications derived from the conceptual framework rather than strategies whose effectiveness has been demonstrated in this study.

The implementation of this framework positions teachers as epistemic and ethical guides who ensure that openness in dialogue is accompanied by the appropriate use of religious sources, the quality of argumentation, and proper etiquette in engaging with differences. (Radino & Mubarak, 2025) demonstrate the relevance of *musyawarah* practices to students' intellectual participation, while (Alam et al., 2025) highlight the importance of teachers' pedagogical preparedness and institutional support in implementing dialogic learning in madrasahs. Drawing on these studies, the quality of learning cannot be adequately assessed solely through the frequency of discussions or students' active expression of opinions; attention must also be given to their ability to apply normative foundations, understand contexts, evaluate reasons, and consider ethical-social implications. To translate these relationships into instructional design, this study proposes five pedagogical principles: strengthening the knowledge foundation, argumentative dialogue, contextual sensitivity, ethical reflection, and teacher guidance. These five principles, together with examples of their application and the dimensions of *religious judgment* they primarily support, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pedagogical Principles of Dialogic Learning and Their Implications for the Development of Religious Judgment

Pedagogical Principles	Proposed Forms of Application	Dimensions Supported
Knowledge foundation	Examining scriptural evidence, concepts, interpretations, and the contexts of religious sources	Normative
Argumentative dialogue	Presenting, comparing, and evaluating reasons based on relevant sources	Argumentative
Contextual sensitivity	Analyzing cases by considering situations, the background of issues, and differing perspectives	Contextual
Ethical reflection	Evaluating the potential consequences of a particular perspective or decision for oneself and others	Ethical-social
Teacher guidance	Guiding the use of sources, examination of reasons, and proper etiquette in interactions throughout the learning process	All dimensions

Source: The researcher's conceptual synthesis. The mapping indicates the dimensions primarily supported by each principle, rather than exclusive relationships or the results of empirical validation.

In addition to providing guidance for instructional design, this framework offers an initial foundation for developing assessments of *religious judgment*. Assessment may focus on case-analysis tasks or argumentative responses that allow students to demonstrate the appropriate use of religious foundations, contextual understanding, the ability to evaluate reasons, and awareness of ethical-social implications. However, the four dimensions formulated in this study remain analytical categories and

cannot yet be used as a standardized assessment instrument. The model of *religious judgement competence* developed by (Gabelt, 2023) demonstrates the relevance of examining religious deliberative processes as a distinct domain of competence. Therefore, assessment development in the madrasah context requires further refinement of the construct definition, formulation of observable indicators, development of rubrics, and testing of validity and reliability. The contribution of this study is limited to providing a conceptual foundation for such assessment development.

The limitations of this study primarily arise from its reliance on a literature review and critical-conceptual synthesis without empirical data collection in madrasahs. The relationships among *religious knowledge*, dialogic learning mechanisms, and *religious judgment* are formulated through the integration of literature and therefore do not establish the strength of these relationships, their feasibility, or their effectiveness in actual learning settings. Furthermore, differences in social contexts, traditions of religious education, and conceptualizations of *religious judgment* in the international literature limit the extent to which the framework can be directly applied to Islamic education in Indonesia. (Jaakkola, 2020) identifies the development of coherent theoretical explanations as a primary contribution of conceptual articles; accordingly, the framework proposed in this study should be treated as a proposition open to testing and revision. These limitations also require caution when interpreting the relationship between religious judgment competence and moderate attitudes, as they represent distinct constructs whose interrelationship has not been examined in this study.

Based on these limitations, future research may be directed toward three complementary agendas. First, qualitative research in madrasahs is needed to examine how students apply religious knowledge, articulate arguments, and consider differing perspectives during learning interactions. Second, instrument development research may be conducted to clarify construct boundaries and test the validity and reliability of the proposed *religious judgment* indicators. Third, design-based research or instructional intervention studies are needed to examine the feasibility of dialogic mechanisms and evaluate their potential contribution to the quality of religious judgment. These three agendas should consider the nature of the subject matter, teacher preparedness, dialogic culture, and institutional support as contextual factors. Thus, future research should not only serve to test the proposed framework but also identify its limitations, consider alternative explanations, and refine its theoretical construction based on empirical evidence.

CONCLUSIONS

This study emphasizes that the acquisition of religious knowledge does not automatically lead to the development of mature religious judgment. In Islamic education, *religious knowledge* constitutes an essential epistemological foundation; however, its effective application when addressing differing perspectives and complex socio-religious issues requires pedagogical processes that enable students to develop reflective and responsible reasoning. Through a literature review and critical-conceptual synthesis, this study formulates a dialogic learning framework that connects *religious knowledge*, dialogic pedagogical mechanisms, and *religious judgment* within the context of madrasah education. The framework identifies four pedagogical mechanisms, namely knowledge articulation, argument examination, perspective-taking, and reflection, and proposes four analytical dimensions of *religious judgment*: normative, contextual, argumentative, and ethical-social. The relationships between these mechanisms and dimensions are understood as functional and overlapping rather than as linear stages or empirically established causal relationships.

The main contribution of this study lies in the construction of an integrative conceptual framework that clarifies the position of religious knowledge as the foundation for deliberation, dialogic learning as a pedagogical space for applying and examining knowledge, and *religious judgment* as a competence in religious deliberation. Within this framework, religious moderation is positioned as a normative orientation that provides ethical direction for the exercise of judgment competence, without equating it with moderate attitudes or assuming that it is an automatic outcome of dialogic learning. The framework also emphasizes the importance of teacher guidance and support from the madrasah environment as conditions that enable dialogue to take place while ensuring the appropriate use of religious sources, the quality of argumentation, contextual understanding, and proper etiquette when engaging with differences. From a pedagogical perspective, the proposed framework can serve as a foundation for designing learning activities involving the analysis of socio-religious issues, argumentative dialogue, and ethical reflection, while also providing initial guidance for developing assessments of religious judgment competence.

Nevertheless, the proposed conceptual framework and competence dimensions remain theoretical constructions that have not yet been empirically validated. This study has not examined the effectiveness of dialogic learning, the feasibility of implementing its mechanisms in actual classroom settings, or the relationship between *religious judgment* and students' moderate attitudes. Therefore, further research is needed to refine the definition and indicators of this competence, develop valid and reliable assessment instruments, and investigate the application of the framework through qualitative research, design-based research, or instructional intervention studies in madrasahs. Thus, this study provides a theoretical foundation for developing religious moderation-oriented Islamic education that emphasizes not only the acquisition of religious knowledge but also the quality of its application in reflective, argumentative, contextual, and ethically and socially responsible deliberation.

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