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Measuring Pedagogical Religious Dissonance: Development and Psychometric Validation of a Scale among Indonesian Muslim Students

Achmad Alfaridzih[1]*, Moh. Ayyub Mustofa[2], Aini Mukrimah[3], Kusaeri[4], Suparto[5]

[1]Universitas Sunan Gresik, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
[2]Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Miftahul Ulum Bangkalan, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
[3]Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
[4,5]Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
*Email: a.alfaridzih@lecturer.usg.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aimed to conceptualize pedagogical religious dissonance within Islamic Religious Education (IRE), identify its latent dimensions, and develop a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the construct among Muslim university students.

Methodology – An instrument development design was employed. Initial items were generated from relevant theoretical frameworks and evaluated using Aiken's V by five multidisciplinary experts. Subsequently, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), reliability testing, and construct validity assessments were conducted using data collected from Muslim students in higher education institutions.

Findings – The validation process retained 29 items organized into four dimensions: Religious Cognitive Dissonance, Perceived Religious Hypocrisy, Hidden Curriculum, and Affective–Moral Impact. EFA supported the multidimensional structure, while CFA confirmed satisfactory model fit (CFI = 0.942, TLI = 0.938, RMSEA = 0.055, SRMR = 0.075). Reliability coefficients ranged from 0.863 to 0.955, AVE values exceeded 0.50, and HTMT values supported discriminant validity, indicating adequate psychometric properties.

Contribution – This study introduces pedagogical religious dissonance as a multidimensional construct and provides the Student Religious Dissonance toward Pedagogical Morality (SDRPM) Scale as a psychometrically sound instrument. The findings advance IRE evaluation by emphasizing pedagogical integrity and students' religious experiences alongside conventional learning outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in higher education functions beyond the transmission of doctrine; it serves as a space for students' ethical, reflective, and existential formation (Putkonen et al., 2025; Saada &

Magadlah, 2021). In the Indonesian context—characterized by pluralism, policy dynamics, and digital disruption—the quality of IRE is determined by the coherence between the values taught and the pedagogical experiences students encounter (Hefner, 2021; Kosim et al., 2023; Mardhiah et al., 2021; Wright, 2014). However, this coherence is increasingly challenged by unfair assessment, problematic pedagogical relationships, and threats to academic integrity associated with generative artificial intelligence (Ateeq et al., 2024; Bittle & El-Gayar, 2025; Kofinas et al., 2025; Vieriu & Petrea, 2025). These challenges indicate that value–practice inconsistencies in IRE are not merely individual problems but may reflect how religious values are enacted within educational processes.

This gap between normative ideals and actual practices generates cognitive–affective tension among students. Cognitive dissonance theory posits that inconsistencies between beliefs and reality produce psychological discomfort that motivates individuals to rationalize or reconcile (Buttlar & Pauer, 2026; Harmon-Jones, 2019; Kovács et al., 2025; Nanay, 2023). In religious education, such tension extends beyond individual cognition because it concerns the moral legitimacy of teachings and the credibility of pedagogical authority. The hidden curriculum perspective further suggests that value contradictions may arise through implicit practices, including institutional culture, power relations, and assessment mechanisms, which can shape learning experiences more strongly than formal curricula (Ansari et al., 2026; Behmanesh et al., 2025; Elliot et al., 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2025; Phillips et al., 2026). Thus, value–practice contradiction in IRE may simultaneously involve cognitive interpretation, perceived moral inconsistency, institutional practices, and affective responses.

The consequences of such misalignment are far from trivial. Empirical evidence shows that perceived religious hypocrisy is associated with erosion of trust and potential deconversion (Alguzo, 2026; Haimila, 2025; Kıyak, 2025; Zarzycka et al., 2024), while violations of values by authority figures may trigger moral distress and even moral injury, affecting mental health and academic performance (Akbarzadeh et al., 2025; Griffin et al., 2019a; Harris et al., 2026; Houle et al., 2024; Mbazo et al., 2025). Cross-disciplinary findings also indicate that prolonged value conflicts are linked to burnout, decreased intrinsic motivation, and psychological dysfunction (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Because religious values in IRE function as normative principles rather than merely academic content, persistent contradictions may generate cognitive discomfort, moral unease, diminished trust, and disengagement. Thus, value contradictions within IRE represent a systemic ethical–pedagogical problem rather than merely individual deviations.

Despite its significance, existing research remains fragmented. Studies on academic integrity tend to focus on policies, behaviors, and assessment design (Ateeq et al., 2024; Birks & Clare, 2023; Kofinas et al., 2025), while research on the hidden curriculum has developed largely within general education contexts without specific attention to religious settings (Behmanesh et al., 2025; Elliot et al., 2020). Studies of religious hypocrisy and moral injury likewise have not operationalized students' experiences within IRE. Furthermore, no psychometric construct specifically captures the tension between formal religious values and enacted pedagogical practices. More specifically, existing research does not provide an integrated measurement framework encompassing (1) cognitive tension, (2) perceived religious hypocrisy, (3) institutional and pedagogical contradictions, and (4) affective–moral consequences. This gap is therefore conceptual, contextual, and methodological, limiting systematic examination of value–practice dissonance in IRE.

Existing constructs explain only partial aspects of students' experiences. Cognitive dissonance addresses internal psychological conflict, hidden curriculum emphasizes institutional influences, religious hypocrisy concerns perceived moral inconsistency, and moral injury addresses affective consequences. None independently captures their integrated pedagogical manifestation within IRE. This creates a measurement gap: researchers and educational institutions can identify specific forms of contradiction but lack a validated instrument to assess the broader phenomenon systematically. A new instrument is therefore needed not to replace established constructs, but to integrate their pedagogically relevant dimensions within an IRE-specific measurement model. Addressing this gap, the study proposes pedagogical religious dissonance as a multidimensional latent construct capturing how students interpret, negotiate, and respond to perceived misalignments between normative Islamic teachings and enacted pedagogical practices.

This study contributes in three ways. First, conceptually, it integrates cognitive dissonance, hidden

curriculum, perceived religious hypocrisy, and moral injury into a coherent framework situated within Critical Islamic Religious Education (Behmanesh et al., 2025; Harmon-Jones, 2019; Houle et al., 2024; Saada & Magadlah, 2021; Zarzycka et al., 2024). Dissonance is conceptualized not merely as a deficit but as a critical pedagogical moment reflecting the ethical quality of religious education practices. Second, contextually, the study operationalizes the construct within higher-education IRE, particularly an AI-driven landscape that may amplify value–practice gaps (Bittle & El-Gayar, 2025; Kofinas et al., 2025). Third, methodologically, it develops a psychometric instrument following established scale-development procedures (Boateng et al., 2018; Kline, 2016; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Its novelty lies in transforming a theoretically recognized but fragmented phenomenon into an integrated, IRE-specific, empirically testable measurement construct.

Accordingly, this study aims to (1) conceptualize pedagogical religious dissonance as a multidimensional construct within IRE, (2) identify and validate its underlying dimensions, and (3) develop and evaluate the psychometric properties of the Student Religious Dissonance toward Pedagogical Morality (SDRPM) Scale among Muslim university students. The study advances IRE evaluation by providing an evidence-based tool for assessing value–practice coherence and informing interventions and policy aimed at strengthening pedagogical integrity and credibility. Its principal novelty is the integration of cognitive, interpersonal, institutional, and affective–moral dimensions into a single psychometrically validated framework, enabling systematic measurement of how students experience and interpret contradictions between religious values and pedagogical realities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed an instrument development design to develop and validate the Student Religious Dissonance toward Pedagogical Morality (SDRPM) Scale. The research was conducted through five sequential stages: (1) conceptualizing the construct of pedagogical religious dissonance and identifying its underlying dimensions; (2) developing indicators and generating instrument items; (3) establishing content validity through expert judgment; (4) exploring the latent factor structure using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA); and (5) confirming the measurement model and evaluating its psychometric properties through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), reliability testing, and construct validity assessment.

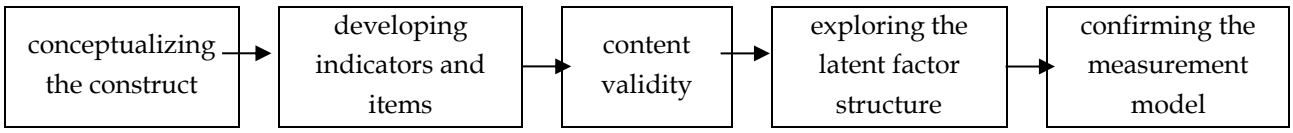

Figure 1. Operational Research Design

Population and sampling

The study involved 350 Muslim students enrolled in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) courses at Islamic higher education institutions in East Java, Indonesia. Participants were selected based on their active enrollment in IRE courses, exposure to IRE pedagogical practices, and experience with lecturers, assessment, and institutional learning environments, ensuring that they could meaningfully evaluate value–practice consistency. Cluster–purposive sampling was used to represent diverse institutions and student characteristics.

Instrument and Data Collection

The instrument was developed based on four theoretical dimensions underlying the construct of pedagogical religious dissonance: Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD), Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH), Hidden Curriculum (HC), and Affective–Moral Impact (AMI). Based on these dimensions, an initial pool of 36 items was generated and measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to agree (5) strongly.

Content validity was evaluated through expert judgment involving five multidisciplinary experts in Islamic Religious Education, educational evaluation, psychometrics, Islamic educational psychology, and

sociology of education. Expert ratings were analyzed using Aiken's V coefficient to assess the relevance and representativeness of each item in relation to the construct being measured. Items that did not meet the established criteria were revised or eliminated prior to empirical testing. Data were collected via an online survey. Participation was voluntary, and all responses were analyzed anonymously to ensure the confidentiality of participants' identities.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using JASP software. The instrument development process began with content validity assessment using Aiken's V coefficient. Subsequently, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using Principal Axis Factoring with oblimin rotation to identify the underlying latent structure of the instrument. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was evaluated using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Items were retained when they demonstrated adequate factor loadings and conceptual consistency with the emerging factor structure. Items with factor loadings below .40, substantial cross-loadings, or weak conceptual alignment were removed from subsequent analyses.

The resulting factor structure was then examined through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to confirm the measurement model. Model fit was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI).

The psychometric quality of the instrument was further evaluated through reliability and construct validity testing. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega. Convergent validity was examined through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Collectively, these procedures were employed to ensure that the SDRPM Scale demonstrates adequate validity and reliability as a measure of pedagogical religious dissonance among university students.

FINDINGS

Content Validity Results

The initial version of the Student Religious Dissonance toward Pedagogical Morality (SDRPM) Scale consisted of 36 items developed from four theoretical dimensions: Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD), Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH), Hidden Curriculum (HC), and Affective–Moral Impact (AMI). To ensure the relevance of each item to the intended construct, content validity was evaluated through expert judgment using Aiken's V coefficient. The validation process involved five multidisciplinary experts representing the fields of Islamic Religious Education, educational evaluation, psychometrics, Islamic educational psychology, and sociology of education. The inclusion of experts from diverse disciplines was intended to ensure adequate representation of the substantive, pedagogical, psychological, social, and psychometric aspects of the SDRPM construct.

Table 1. Summary of Content Validity Results for the SDRPM Scale

Category	Item Numbers	Decision
High (Aiken's V ≥ 0.85)	1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36	Retained
Moderate (Aiken's V ≈ 0.75)	3, 5, 6, 12, 15, 16, 18, 21, 27, 28, 29	Minor Revision
Low (Aiken's V < 0.70)	8, 11	Removed

The results indicated that most items demonstrated a high level of relevance to the construct being measured. As presented in Figure 2 and Table 1, 23 of the initial 36 items (63.89%) were classified as highly relevant (Aiken's V ≥ 0.85), and 11 items (30.56%) were classified as moderately relevant (Aiken's V ≈ > 0.75). Only 2 items (5.55%) fell into the low-relevance category (Aiken's V < 0.70).

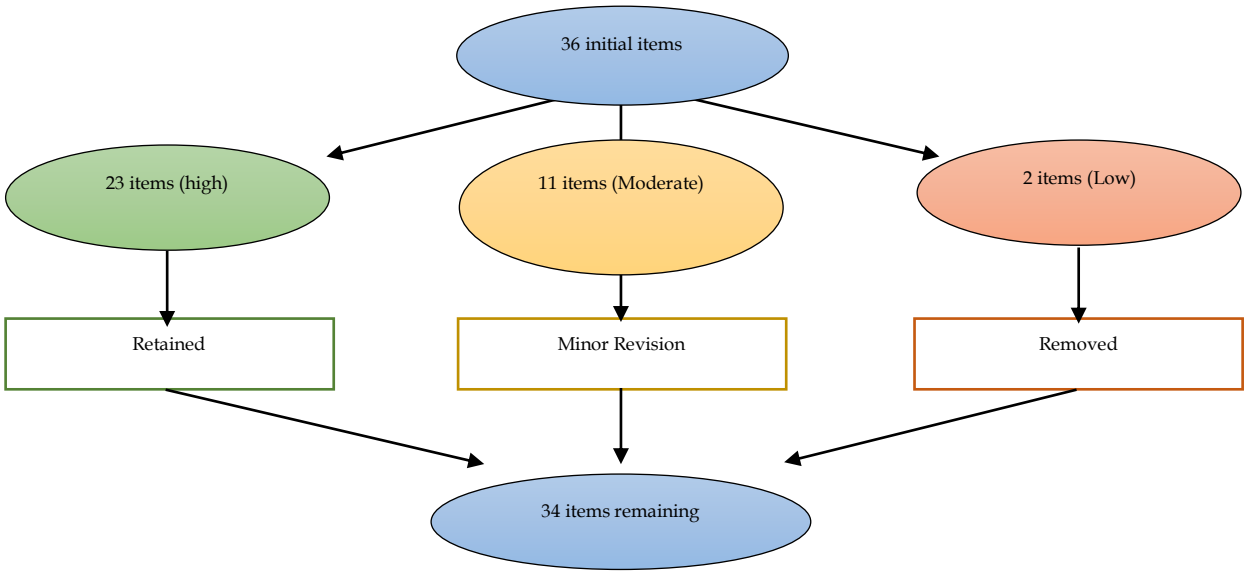

Figure 2. Visualization of Content Validity Results

A total of 23 items classified in the high-relevance category were judged to represent the construct of Pedagogical Religious Dissonance clearly, specifically, and appropriately within the context of Islamic Religious Education in higher education. The high level of agreement among experts indicates that these items demonstrated strong conceptual alignment with their underlying theoretical dimensions and were therefore retained without substantial revision.

Eleven items were classified as moderate and retained with minor revisions. In general, the validators agreed that these items remained relevant to the construct being measured but required wording refinements to improve clarity, reduce potential ambiguity, and strengthen the pedagogical context targeted by the instrument. Accordingly, the revisions were primarily technical in nature and did not alter the substantive meaning of the constructs represented by the items.

In contrast, two items obtained Aiken's V values below the acceptable threshold and were recommended for removal. The validators indicated that these items did not adequately represent the core dimensions of the SDRPM construct and might introduce construct contamination. Moreover, both items appeared to reflect personal responses and individual coping mechanisms rather than experiences of religious dissonance arising from pedagogical processes. Consequently, these items were removed before the instrument proceeded to empirical testing.

Overall, the content validity results indicate that the SDRPM construct possesses a strong conceptual foundation and achieved a high degree of expert agreement. Of the initial 36 items, 34 were deemed suitable for further examination via Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), while 2 were eliminated during the content validation stage due to insufficient representativeness of the constructs.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Following the content validation stage, the remaining 34 items underwent Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the latent structure underlying the Student Religious Dissonance toward Pedagogical Morality (SDRPM) construct. The analysis was conducted using Principal Axis Factoring with oblimin rotation, as the dimensions of pedagogical religious dissonance were theoretically expected to be correlated.

Table 2. KMO Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Results

Bartlett's Test			Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test	
X^2	df	p		MSA
7345.323	561.000	<0.001	Overall MSA	0.870

Prior to factor extraction, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The results indicated a KMO value of 0.870,

which falls within the "very good" range, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .001$). These findings suggest that the inter-item correlation matrix was adequate for factor analysis and met the underlying assumptions of EFA.

The factor extraction process yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, collectively accounting for a substantial proportion of the variance underlying the SDRPM construct. The resulting factor structure was consistent with the conceptual framework proposed during the instrument development stage, comprising four dimensions: Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD), Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH), Hidden Curriculum (HC), and Affective–Moral Impact (AMI).

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

	Unrotated solution		
	Eigenvalue	Proportion var.	Cumulative
Factor 1	7.349	0.216	0.216
Factor 2	4.285	0.126	0.342
Factor 3	3.682	0.108	0.450
Factor 4	2.889	0.085	0.535

As presented in Table 3. The variance distribution also indicates that the first factor accounted for the largest share of explained variance, while the remaining three factors contributed additional, meaningful variance. This pattern supports a multidimensional structure rather than a single-factor solution, as the variance was distributed across four factors, each with an eigenvalue exceeding 1. The four-factor solution was therefore retained for further examination through the scree plot and subsequent confirmatory factor analysis.

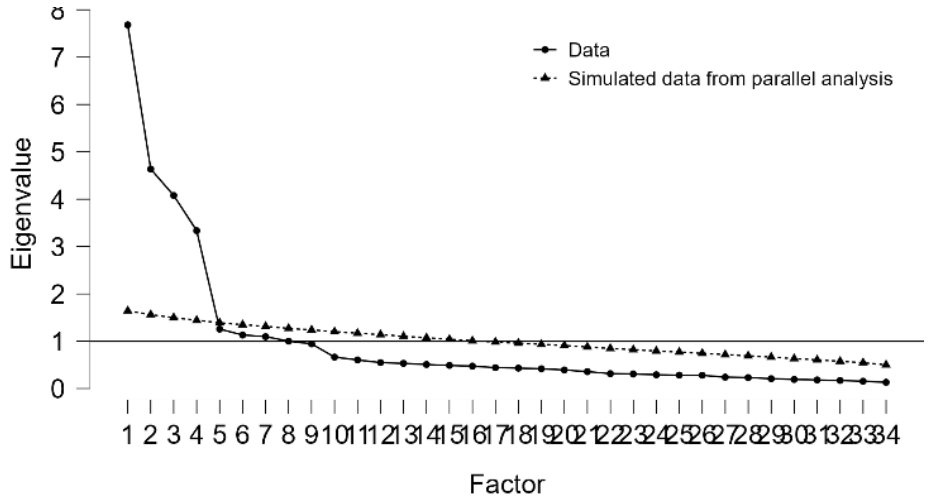

Figure 3. Scree Plot

As illustrated in Figure 3, the scree plot supported retaining four factors, as indicated by the clear inflection point after the fourth component. This finding further corroborated the multidimensional nature of the SDRPM construct and provided empirical support for the study's proposed theoretical structure.

During the EFA procedure, several items were removed (highlighted in red in Figure 4) because they failed to meet the established psychometric criteria, including low factor loadings, substantial cross-loadings, or insufficient contributions to the emerging factor structure. This refinement process was undertaken to achieve a more parsimonious measurement model and to ensure a clearer representation of the underlying construct.

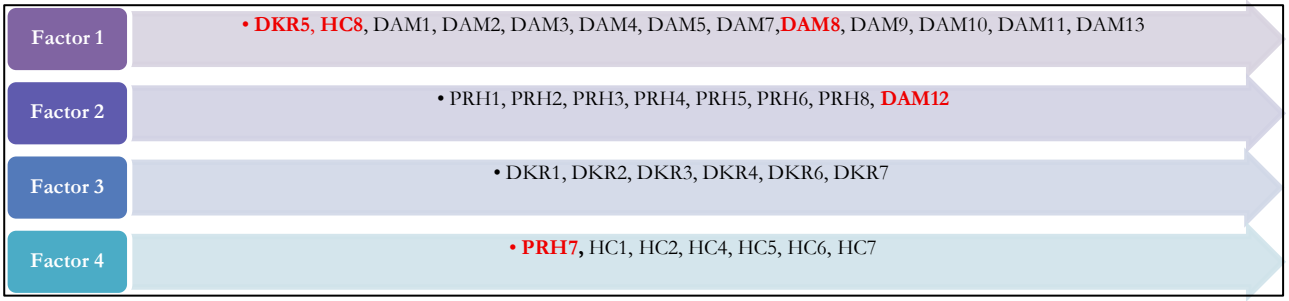

Figure 4. Factor Structure Visualization

Following the instrument refinement process, the final structure consisted of four factors with a relatively balanced distribution of items. The Affective–Moral Impact (AMI) factor showed the strongest representation, with the widest range of factor loadings, followed by Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH), Hidden Curriculum (HC), and Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD). All retained items exceeded the recommended minimum loading threshold, indicating adequate contributions to their respective factors.

Table 4. Final Factor Structure of the SDRPM Scale

Factor	Number of Items	Loading Range	Interpretation
Affective–Moral Impact (AMI)	10	0.691–0.875	Very Strong
Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH)	7	0.599–0.845	Strong
Hidden Curriculum (HC)	6	0.703–0.784	Strong
Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD)	6	0.691–0.788	Strong
Total	29	-	-

In addition, inter-factor correlations were relatively low, suggesting that each dimension captured a distinct aspect of pedagogical religious dissonance. This finding provides preliminary evidence of discriminant validity and indicates that the SDRPM construct is not unidimensional but rather comprises multiple interrelated dimensions encompassing cognitive, moral, pedagogical, and affective aspects.

Overall, the EFA results confirmed a four-factor structure that was consistent with the study's conceptual framework. Of the 34 items subjected to EFA, 29 met the established psychometric criteria and were retained for subsequent Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). In contrast, the remaining items were removed to enhance the clarity, interpretability, and stability of the factor structure.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Following the identification of the factor structure through EFA, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to empirically evaluate the measurement model of the Student Religious Dissonance toward Pedagogical Morality (SDRPM) Scale. The analysis tested a four-factor model comprising Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD), Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH), Hidden Curriculum (HC), and Affective–Moral Impact (AMI). The primary objective was to confirm the stability of the factor structure identified during the EFA stage and to assess the extent to which the proposed model fit the empirical data.

Table 5. Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the SDRPM Model

Fit Index	Value	Criterion	Interpretation
CFI	0.942	> 0.90	Good Fit
TLI	0.938	> 0.90	Good Fit
IFI	0.943	> 0.90	Good Fit
RMSEA	0.055	< 0.08	Acceptable Fit
SRMR	0.075	< 0.08	Acceptable Fit
GFI	0.982	> 0.90	Excellent Fit

The CFA results indicated that the proposed four-factor model demonstrated satisfactory fit to the data. As shown in Table 5, all goodness-of-fit indices met the recommended thresholds. The CFI (0.942), TLI (0.938), and IFI (0.943) values exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.90, indicating a high degree of fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data. Furthermore, the RMSEA (0.055) and SRMR (0.075) values fell within acceptable ranges, suggesting relatively low model approximation error. This evidence was further supported by a GFI of 0.982, indicating an excellent overall model fit.

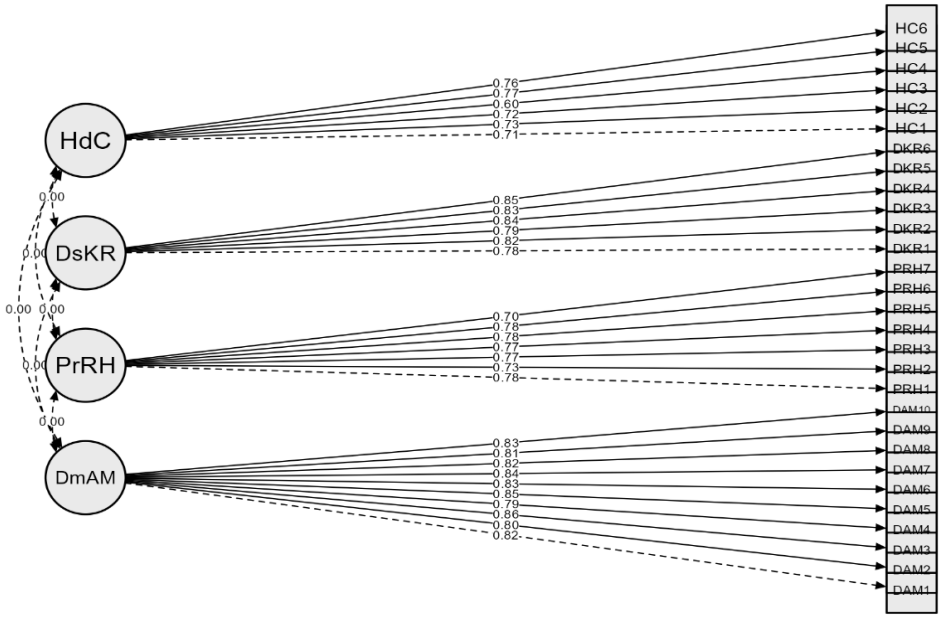

Figure 5. Final CFA Model of the SDRPM Scale

The final CFA model is presented in Figure 5. Overall, all indicators exhibited positive and significant relationships with their respective latent constructs. No indicators showed weak contributions; therefore, all items retained from the EFA stage were preserved in the final measurement model. These findings indicate that each indicator adequately and consistently represented the construct it was intended to measure.

Notably, the four-factor structure identified through EFA remained stable during CFA, with no substantive modifications to the construct composition. This consistency provides evidence that the empirical data support the theoretical framework proposed in this study. In other words, Religious Cognitive Dissonance, Perceived Religious Hypocrisy, Hidden Curriculum, and Affective–Moral Impact emerged as distinct yet complementary dimensions that collectively explain Pedagogical Religious Dissonance among university students.

Overall, the CFA findings provide strong evidence of construct validity for the SDRPM Scale. The satisfactory model fit and stability of the factor structure suggest that the instrument possesses a robust empirical foundation and is suitable for subsequent reliability and construct validity assessments.

Reliability and Construct Validity

Following confirmation of the SDRPM measurement model via CFA, the next step was to evaluate its reliability and construct validity. This evaluation included assessments of internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

The reliability analysis demonstrated that all constructs exhibited satisfactory internal consistency. As presented in Table 6, both Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold across all dimensions, indicating that the indicators within each construct consistently measured the same underlying concept.

Table 6. Reliability Statistics of the SDRPM Scale

Factor	McDonald's ω	Cronbach's α	AVE	Interpretation
AMI	0.955	0.955	0.681	Valid and Highly Reliable
PRH	0.906	0.905	0.581	Valid and Highly Reliable
RCD	0.925	0.924	0.673	Valid and Highly Reliable
HC	0.865	0.863	0.518	Valid and Reliable

Among the four dimensions, Affective–Moral Impact (AMI) demonstrated the highest reliability coefficients. This finding suggests that students' affective and moral experiences constitute the most internally consistent dimension of pedagogical religious dissonance. The remaining dimensions—Religious Cognitive Dissonance, Perceived Religious Hypocrisy, and Hidden Curriculum—also exhibited strong reliability and satisfied established psychometric standards.

Convergent validity was subsequently assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 6, all constructs achieved AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that the corresponding latent construct explained a substantial proportion of item variance. These results indicate that the indicators within each dimension were strongly related and collectively represented their intended constructs. Therefore, convergent validity was established for all dimensions of the SDRPM Scale.

In addition to convergent validity, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). As presented in Table 7, all HTMT values were substantially below the recommended threshold, indicating that each dimension represented a distinct construct and did not exhibit excessive conceptual overlap.

Table 7. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Matrix

	AMI	PRH	RCD	HC
AMI	1.000			
PRH	0.215	1.000		
RCD	0.063	0.055	1.000	
HC	0.041	0.074	0.132	1.000

Notably, the relatively low HTMT values suggest that the four dimensions do not form a single homogeneous construct but rather represent distinct aspects of students' experiences of pedagogical religious dissonance. This finding provides empirical support for the multidimensional model proposed in this study and further reinforces the results of both EFA and CFA, which consistently identified four related yet distinct factors.

Overall, the results of the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity analyses indicate that the SDRPM Scale possesses strong psychometric properties. These findings confirm that the instrument not only demonstrates a stable factor structure but also consistently, accurately, and distinctly measures the construct of Pedagogical Religious Dissonance across its four dimensions.

DISCUSSION

Religious Dissonance as a Product of Pedagogical Contradictions

The findings revealed that the SDRPM construct comprises four primary dimensions: Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD), Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH), Hidden Curriculum (HC), and Affective–Moral Impact (AMI). This multidimensional structure suggests that students' religious dissonance cannot be understood merely as an individual psychological conflict. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between religious beliefs, pedagogical experiences, institutional culture, and students' emotional responses. The relatively low HTMT values among the four dimensions indicate that each factor represents a distinct source of experience while remaining interconnected in shaping students' experiences of religious dissonance.

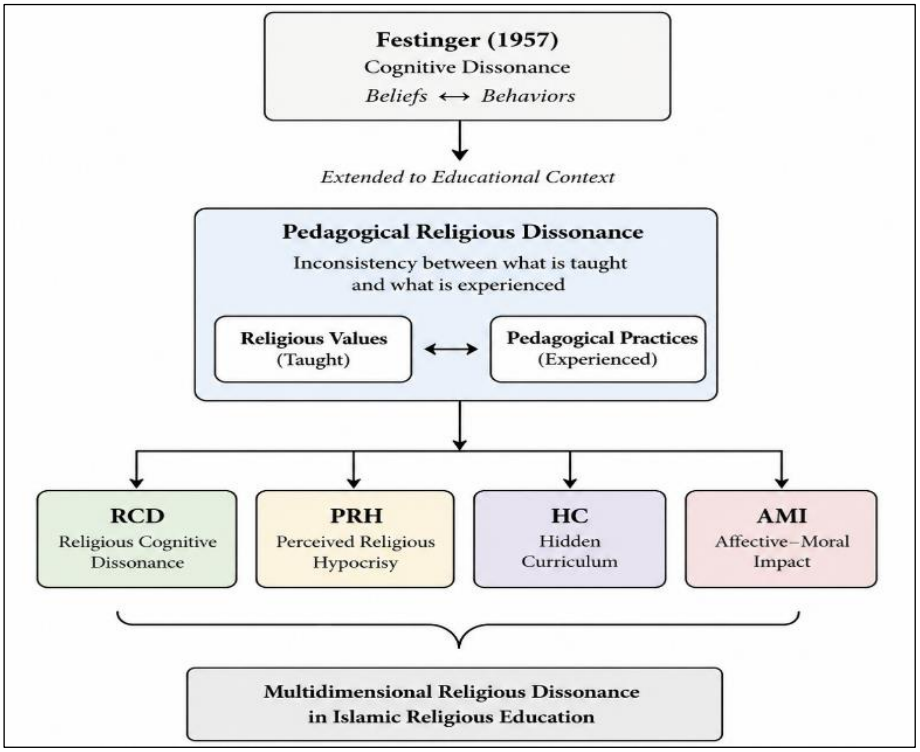

Figure 6. From Cognitive Dissonance to Pedagogical Religious Dissonance

These findings extend Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory (1957), which conceptualizes dissonance as arising from inconsistencies between an individual's beliefs and behaviors. In the present study, however, dissonance emerged when students encountered contradictions between the religious values formally taught and the pedagogical practices they actually experienced. The emergence of Hidden Curriculum and Perceived Religious Hypocrisy as independent dimensions suggests that the sources of dissonance are not solely intrapersonal but are also socially and institutionally produced. In this respect, the findings align more closely with critical-pedagogy perspectives, which view educational settings as arenas where values, power relations, and social contradictions are reproduced and contested (Freire et al., 2018; H. Giroux, 2020).

At the same time, these results challenge the value-transmission paradigm that has long dominated Islamic Religious Education. This paradigm tends to position students as passive recipients of religious values. In contrast, the present findings indicate that students function as reflective agents who actively evaluate the consistency between religious teachings and educational practices. The emergence of four distinct dimensions demonstrates that students can differentiate among cognitive conflict (RCD), perceived moral inconsistency among educational actors (PRH), institutional contradictions embedded in educational culture (HC), and the affective consequences of these experiences (AMI). Consequently, students' religious experiences appear to be shaped through complex processes of social interpretation rather than through the simple internalization of prescribed values.

The findings carry important implications for the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education. Educational effectiveness can no longer be assessed solely by cognitive achievement, religious attitudes, or the internalization of normative values. The results suggest that students may possess a strong understanding of religious teachings yet experience religious dissonance when confronted with inconsistencies between professed values and enacted practices. This finding highlights the need to shift the evaluation paradigm of Islamic Religious Education from a predominant focus on learning outcomes toward a broader assessment of pedagogical experience. In this perspective, the quality of religious education should be evaluated not only by what students know, but also by the degree of moral integrity, authenticity, and pedagogical consistency they experience throughout the educational process.

Hidden Curriculum as a Space for the Production of Value Contradictions

The EFA results showed that items representing the Hidden Curriculum (HC) dimension consistently clustered into a distinct factor and did not overlap with either Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH) or Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD). This structure was subsequently confirmed through CFA, which demonstrated adequate factor loadings and satisfactory discriminant validity for the HC construct. These findings suggest that students can distinguish between moral inconsistencies attributable to individual educators and those arising from institutional culture, policies, and practices. In other words, students' experiences of religious dissonance are shaped not only by interpersonal interactions with lecturers but also by how educational institutions embody and enact religious values in everyday academic life.

Within the educational literature, the role of the hidden curriculum remains a subject of considerable debate. Jackson (2019) and Miedema (2021) viewed the hidden curriculum as an inherent aspect of schooling that shapes students' attitudes and values through everyday experiences. This perspective was later reinforced by Thomas Lickona (2004) and Berkowitz (2021), who argued that character formation is influenced more strongly by institutional culture, role modeling, and social practices than by the verbal transmission of values. From this standpoint, the hidden curriculum serves as an effective mechanism for moral internalization. In contrast, H. Giroux (2020) and Apple (2004) challenged this optimistic view, arguing that the hidden curriculum is never ideologically neutral because it reproduces power relations embedded within educational institutions. According to this perspective, school and university cultures may become sites of contradiction when formally proclaimed values are inconsistent with everyday institutional practices.

The findings of this study suggest that these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive. The hidden curriculum can serve as a powerful vehicle for value internalization when institutional culture aligns with the values being taught. However, it can also become a source of religious dissonance when students perceive a gap between normative discourse and institutional reality. In this respect, the SDRPM framework extends existing discussions of the hidden curriculum beyond its conventional role as either a mechanism of socialization or a tool of ideological reproduction. Instead, it positions the hidden curriculum as a domain through which students evaluate the moral credibility of educational institutions. Students do not merely assess what is taught; they also assess whether institutions genuinely embody the values they claim to promote.

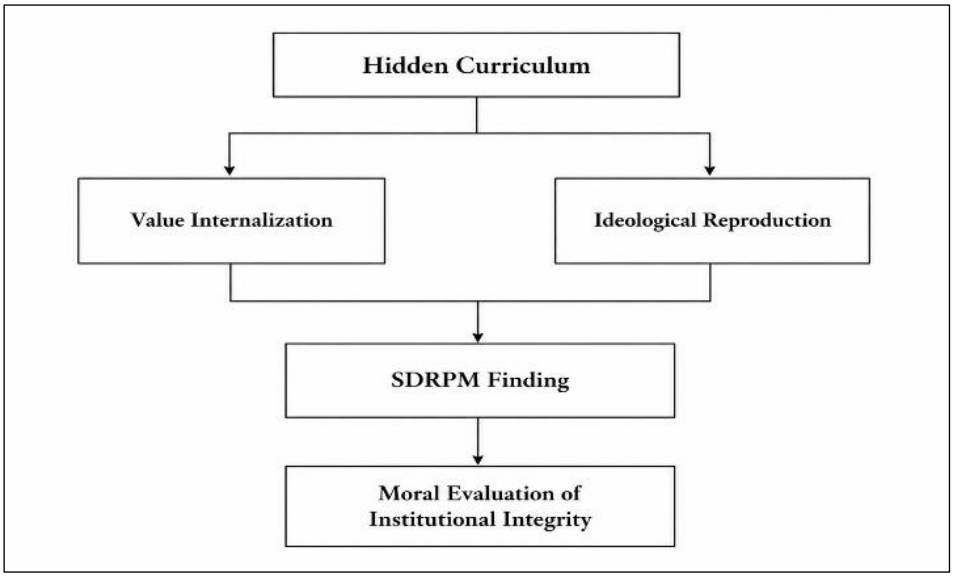

Figure 7. Competing Perspectives on Hidden Curriculum

This interpretation is consistent with Berger and Luckmann's (2011) theory of social construction, which posits that meaning emerges through lived social experiences. Within the context of Islamic Religious Education, students construct their religious understanding not only from formal instructional content but also from the academic realities they encounter daily. Consequently, when institutional practices contradict

the religious values being taught, students are likely to experience dissonance rooted in structural contradictions rather than solely in individual cognitive conflict. The findings further indicate that students do not simply attribute educational problems to individual actors; rather, they can distinguish between personal moral failures and systemic institutional failures in the representation of religious values.

These findings have important implications for the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education. Educational quality cannot be assessed solely through formal curricula, learning outcomes, or lecturers' competencies. The results indicate that students also evaluate what may be termed the *experienced curriculum*—the actual educational experiences they encounter throughout academic life. Accordingly, the effectiveness of religious education depends not only on what is taught (*the taught curriculum)* but also on the extent to which institutional culture consistently reflects and enacts the values being promoted. This finding underscores the need for Islamic Religious Education reform to place greater emphasis on academic culture as a space for the enactment of values rather than merely a venue for the transmission of religious knowledge.

Religious Hypocrisy and the Delegitimization of Pedagogical Moral Authority

The EFA and CFA results revealed that Perceived Religious Hypocrisy (PRH) emerged as a distinct construct, separate from both Hidden Curriculum (HC) and Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD). This finding suggests that students can distinguish institutional contradictions from the moral inconsistencies displayed by individual educators. Accordingly, the sources of religious dissonance extend beyond contradictory academic cultures to include discrepancies between the religious values being taught and the behaviors demonstrated by educational actors. The emergence of PRH as an independent dimension highlights the continuing centrality of educators as moral representatives within the context of religious education.

Within the character education literature, role modeling has long been regarded as a fundamental mechanism of value internalization. Bandura's (2020) Social learning theory argues that individuals learn through observing models perceived as credible and authoritative. Lickona (1992) emphasized that moral education is transmitted not only through explicit instruction but also through the example set by educators. From this perspective, religious educators function not merely as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral symbols through which students interpret the practical meaning of religious values.

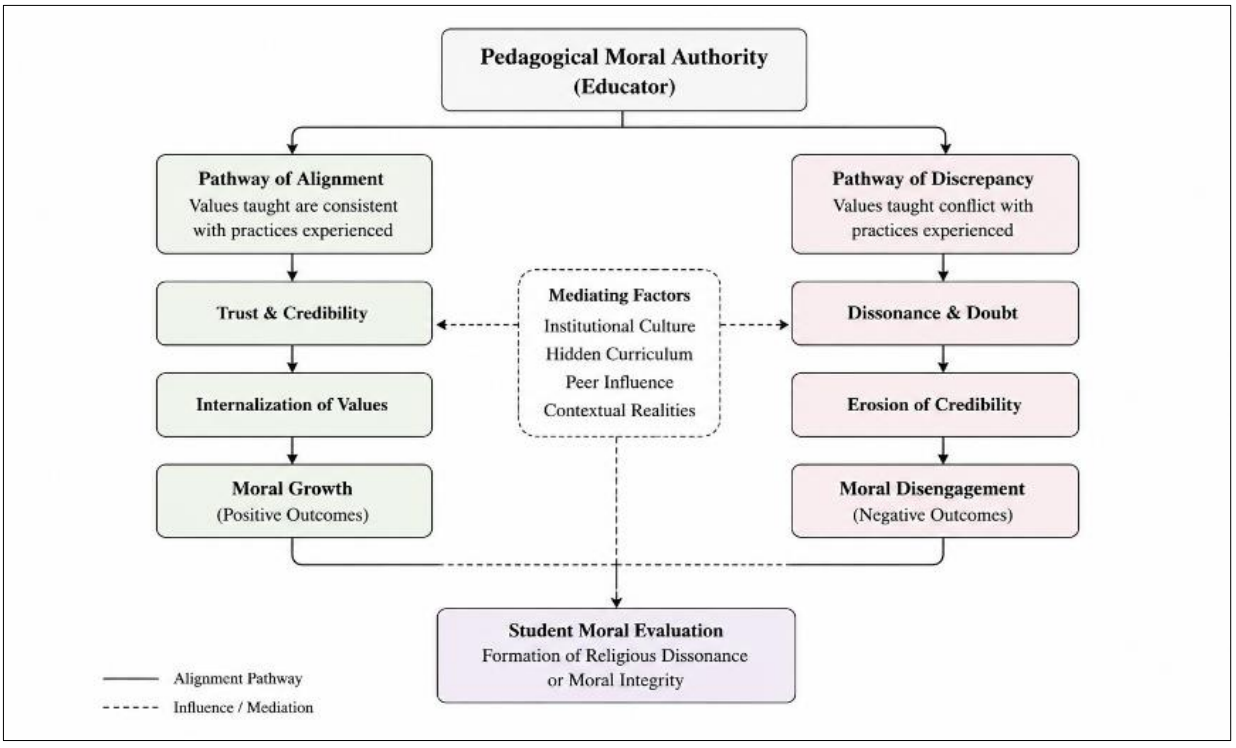

Figure 8. Pathways of Pedagogical Moral Authority

A contrasting perspective emerges from Batson et al.'s (1999) theory of moral hypocrisy, which suggests that individuals and institutions often seek to maintain a moral image while failing to act in accordance with the values they publicly endorse. In the context of religious education, such inconsistencies are particularly consequential because they are perceived not merely as personal shortcomings but as violations of the moral authority that underpins pedagogical legitimacy. When students encounter discrepancies between religious messages and educators' actions, what is undermined is not only trust in the individual educator but also confidence in the values being promoted.

The findings indicate that contemporary students no longer accept religious authority uncritically. Instead, they engage in reflective evaluations of educators' moral consistency and use these evaluations to assess the authenticity of the messages they receive. This observation aligns with constructivist perspectives that position learners as active meaning-makers rather than passive recipients of knowledge. The emergence of PRH as a distinct factor, therefore, suggests that students do not merely learn religious teachings; they also evaluate the extent to which those teachings are embodied in their teachers' actions.

Interestingly, the findings further demonstrate that students can distinguish between personal moral failures and structural contradictions. Whereas Hidden Curriculum reflects students' evaluations of institutional culture and practices, PRH reflects their evaluations of individual moral integrity. This distinction suggests that the delegitimization of religious education may occur through two interconnected pathways: institutional and personal. In many cases, these pathways may reinforce one another, producing deeper and more enduring experiences of religious dissonance.

The implications of these findings are substantial. The effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education cannot be determined solely by pedagogical competence or mastery of religious content. Rather, the moral credibility of educators constitutes an integral component of educational quality itself. Consequently, the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education should move beyond traditional measures of learning outcomes and incorporate assessments of pedagogical integrity, including moral consistency, exemplary conduct, and students' trust in educational actors. In this regard, religious hypocrisy should not be viewed merely as an individual ethical issue but as a factor that may significantly influence the moral legitimacy and educational credibility of religious instruction as a whole.

The Dominance of Affective–Moral Impact in the Experience of Religious Dissonance

One of the most notable findings of this study is the emergence of Affective–Moral Impact (AMI) as the psychometrically strongest dimension among the four components of the SDRPM construct. Its higher Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega, and AVE values indicate that emotional and moral experiences constitute the core of students' experiences of pedagogical religious dissonance. This finding is particularly significant because dissonance has traditionally been conceptualized as a cognitive phenomenon. If this assumption were fully applicable in the present context, Religious Cognitive Dissonance (RCD) would be expected to emerge as the dominant factor. Instead, the findings reveal that the strongest effects occur not at the cognitive level but at the affective and moral levels.

This result introduces an important dialogue with Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance Theory. According to this perspective, individuals experience psychological discomfort when inconsistencies arise among beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, leading them to seek cognitive consistency. Similar assumptions can be found in many educational evaluation frameworks, which implicitly regard knowledge acquisition as the primary driver of attitudinal and behavioral change. Consequently, the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education has often been assessed by students' conceptual understanding, content mastery, and cognitive internalization of values.

However, this perspective has been challenged by Haidt (2002, 2003). The theory of moral emotions argues that moral judgments often arise from intuitive emotional responses rather than deliberate reasoning. Individuals often experience a sense that something is wrong before they can articulate rational explanations for that judgment. The findings of the SDRPM model appear to align more closely with this perspective. When students encounter discrepancies between religious values and pedagogical practices, their strongest reactions are not intellectual confusion but rather disappointment, diminished trust, and moral unease. In this sense, cognitive conflict may serve as the starting point of dissonance, whereas affective–moral consequences represent its most salient outcome.

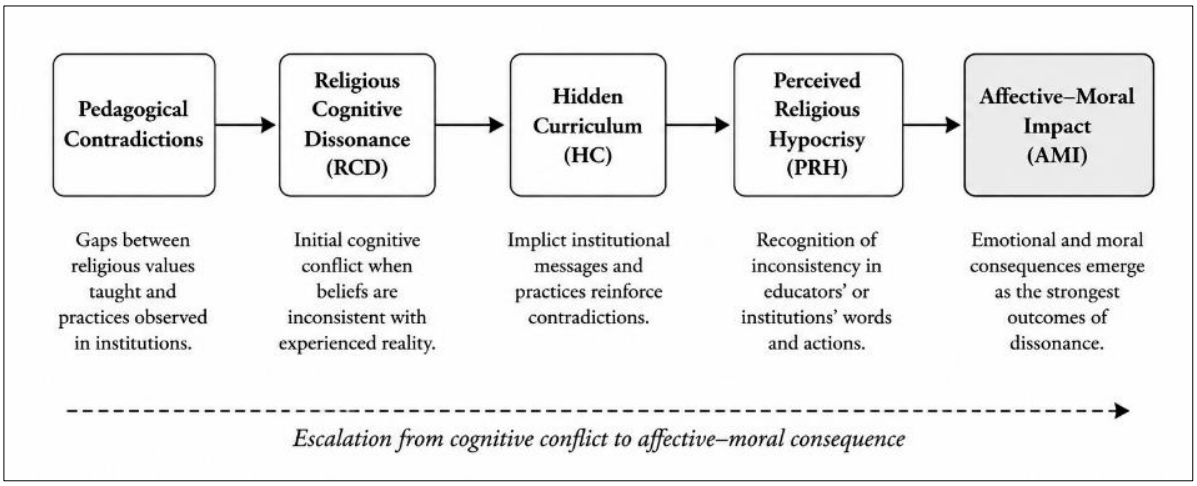

Figure 9. Escalation of Pedagogical Religious Dissonance

The findings can also be interpreted through another theoretical debate concerning the consequences of dissonance in learning processes. Fleming (2018) and Mezirow's (2003) theory of transformative learning suggest that tensions and contradictions can serve as catalysts for critical reflection and personal transformation. From this perspective, dissonance is viewed as a productive condition that encourages learners to reassess their assumptions and develop new understandings. In contrast, the moral injury literature (Griffin et al., 2019b; Litz et al., 2009) argues that violations of deeply held values may generate profound moral wounds characterized by loss of trust, emotional distress, and psychological alienation. Accordingly, dissonance does not necessarily culminate in positive transformation; it may also evolve into experiences that undermine an individual's moral engagement and sense of meaning.

The present findings suggest that both perspectives have relevance within the context of religious education. Religious dissonance may become a source of reflection and personal growth when students encounter opportunities for dialogue, positive role models, and supportive pedagogical environments. However, when contradictions persist over time without clarification, accountability, or moral consistency from educational actors and institutions, dissonance is more likely to develop into a negative affective experience. The prominence of the AMI dimension indicates that students do not merely experience cognitive tension; they also experience tangible emotional and moral consequences arising from the pedagogical contradictions they observe.

These findings carry important implications for the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education. Educational quality cannot be assessed solely through cognitive achievement and mastery of religious content. Rather, the findings suggest that the quality of religious education is also shaped by how students experience, interpret, and emotionally engage with the values being taught. Consequently, the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education should move beyond conventional learning outcomes toward a more comprehensive understanding of students' affective and moral experiences. In this regard, educational success is reflected not only in what students know but also in the extent to which educational processes foster trust, moral integrity, and authentic religious meaning.

Implications of SDRPM for the Reorientation of Islamic Religious Education Evaluation

The findings of this study demonstrate that students' religious dissonance is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the interaction of cognitive conflict (Religious Cognitive Dissonance), institutional contradictions (Hidden Curriculum), educators' moral inconsistency (Perceived Religious Hypocrisy), and the affective–moral consequences arising from these experiences. This structure suggests that the quality of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) cannot be adequately understood solely through academic achievement or mastery of religious content. Students may demonstrate a strong understanding of religious teachings while simultaneously experiencing religious tension when confronted with discrepancies between professed values and actual pedagogical practices. Consequently, the effectiveness of religious education depends not only on what students learn but also on how they experience those values within everyday academic life.

These findings challenge the dominance of learning outcomes–based evaluation paradigms in Islamic Religious Education. Influenced by Bloom and Engelhart (1956), conventional evaluation approaches have primarily defined educational success in terms of learning objectives, knowledge acquisition, and changes in attitudes and behaviors. While these indicators remain important, the present findings suggest they are insufficient to capture the quality of students' religious experiences. In religious education contexts, this limitation may create a pedagogical paradox in which students achieve the intended learning outcomes while simultaneously experiencing distrust, moral disappointment, or religious dissonance due to contradictions embedded in the educational environment.

In contrast, the SDRPM findings resonate more closely with Guba & Lincoln's (1990) fourth-generation evaluation approach, which emphasizes stakeholders' experiences and perspectives as central sources of evaluative knowledge. Within this perspective, students are not merely objects of evaluation but active informants capable of revealing dimensions of educational quality that often remain invisible within conventional assessment frameworks. Religious dissonance, therefore, functions as a reflective indicator of the degree of alignment between taught values, institutional culture, and pedagogical practice.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Whereas Festinger conceptualized dissonance primarily as a consequence of inconsistencies among individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, the present findings demonstrate that, within religious education, dissonance may also emerge from pedagogical contradictions rooted in institutional and social contexts. Accordingly, religious dissonance should be understood not merely as an individual psychological phenomenon but as a pedagogical phenomenon produced through interactions among students, educators, and institutional culture.

The findings also reinforce critical pedagogy perspectives advanced by Freire (1970), Giroux and Penna (1979), and Apple (2004), which view educational institutions as sites where values, ideologies, and power relations are reproduced and contested. The emergence of Hidden Curriculum as an independent dimension indicates that students actively evaluate the consistency between institutional realities and formally promoted values. Similarly, the findings support Berger and Luckmann's (2011) theory of social construction, which demonstrates that religious understanding is shaped not only through formal instruction but also through lived social experiences within academic environments.

At the same time, the study raises important questions regarding the value-transmission paradigm that has long influenced Islamic Religious Education. While this paradigm assumes that value internalization primarily occurs through effective teaching and understanding of religious doctrines, the findings suggest that internalization is equally dependent on the moral consistency of educational actors and on the alignment between institutional culture and professed values. Thus, the study does not reject the importance of knowledge acquisition and value internalization; rather, it demonstrates that these dimensions alone are insufficient to explain educational quality without authentic pedagogical experiences.

Taken together, the findings strengthen critical pedagogy and social constructionist perspectives, extend Cognitive Dissonance Theory into the domain of pedagogical and institutional contradictions, and simultaneously challenge the sufficiency of conventional outcome-based and value-transmission approaches

in evaluating Islamic Religious Education. In response, this study proposes a reorientation of Islamic Religious Education evaluation from an exclusive focus on learning outcomes toward a broader framework that incorporates students' pedagogical and moral experiences.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings and their practical applicability. Although the sample size was adequate for EFA and CFA, participants were drawn from Islamic higher education institutions in East Java, which may limit the generalizability of the SDRPM structure to other regions, institutional types, or educational contexts. The instrument was also validated within a specific higher-education context and has not yet undergone broader cross-contextual or longitudinal validation. Moreover, because SDRPM relies on students' self-reported perceptions, its application may be influenced by contextual and subjective factors. Therefore, implementation beyond the present context should be undertaken cautiously and accompanied by further validation across diverse institutions, regions, and student populations. Such studies are also needed to examine the stability of the factor structure and the applicability of SDRPM as an evaluative tool in different educational settings.

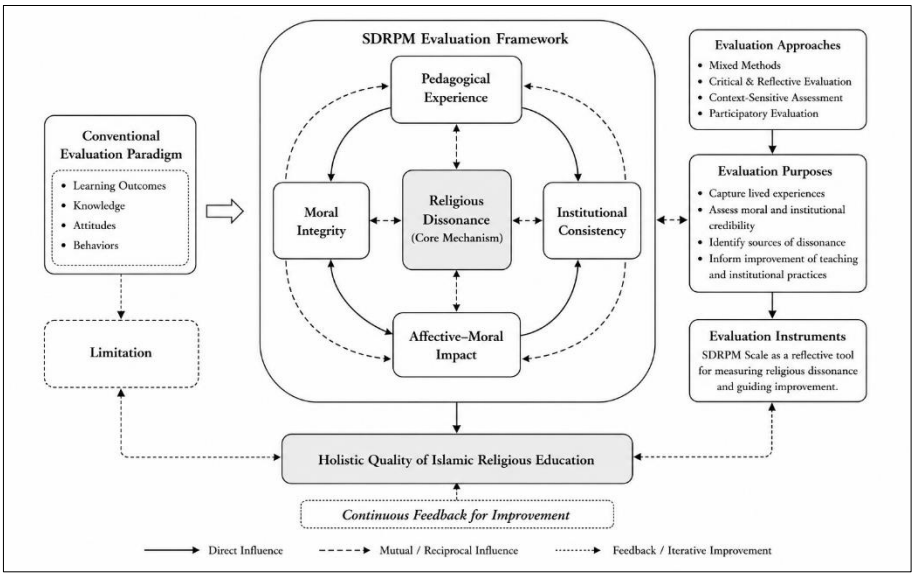

Figure 10. SDRPM-Based Reorientation of IRE Evaluation

Within this framework, the SDRPM Scale serves not only as a psychometric instrument for measuring students' religious dissonance but also as a reflective evaluation tool for assessing pedagogical integrity, institutional consistency, and the quality of students' religious experiences. Therefore, the principal contribution of this study lies not only in the development of a new measurement instrument but also in the introduction of a more critical, reflective, and experience-oriented paradigm for evaluating Islamic Religious Education.

CONCLUSION

This study conceptualized and validated pedagogical religious dissonance as a multidimensional construct capturing students' tension arising from inconsistencies between religious teachings and pedagogical realities in Islamic Religious Education. Four dimensions—Religious Cognitive Dissonance, Perceived Religious Hypocrisy, Hidden Curriculum, and Affective–Moral Impact—were empirically confirmed and operationalized into the SDRPM Scale, demonstrating satisfactory psychometric validity and reliability. The findings reposition religious dissonance as a pedagogical rather than merely psychological phenomenon, showing that IRE quality depends not only on learning outcomes but also on the consistency of religious values embodied by educators, institutional culture, and pedagogical practices. SDRPM can therefore support lecturers and institutional leaders in identifying value–practice inconsistencies, strengthening pedagogical integrity, and informing quality improvement and policy decisions. However, generalization remains limited because participants were drawn from Islamic higher education institutions in East Java, and the instrument has not yet been validated across diverse regions, institutional types, or educational

populations. Future research should conduct cross-institutional, cross-regional, longitudinal, and measurement-invariance studies to examine its stability and broader applicability. SDRPM may subsequently be adapted for institutional evaluation, comparative research, and continuous quality assurance across educational contexts. Thus, the study advances IRE evaluation toward a more reflective framework that incorporates students' pedagogical, moral, and religious experiences as essential indicators of educational quality.

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