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The Islamic Religious Education Teacher as a Facilitator of Students' Learning Needs: A Conceptual Analysis

Zulkarnain Dama[1*], Kasim Yahiji[2], and Herson Anwar[3]
[1,2,3] Islamic Religious Education, Postgraduate Program, UIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo,Indonesia
*zulkarnaindama17@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT
Islamic Religious Education (PAI) classrooms are often reported to rely on teacher explanation, memorization, and limited interaction, while the facilitator role is rarely defined as a process that links learning needs with religious aims. This article analyzes the concept of the PAI teacher as a facilitator of students' learning needs, integrates dimensions of learning needs into that role, and formulates a conceptual framework of facilitation. It uses a qualitative literature study with conceptual analysis of national and international journal articles, primary works by Rogers, Maslow, and Vygotsky, and Islamic education literature. The analysis yields three conceptual findings. First, a facilitator differs from a content deliverer and a guide because the teacher arranges relational conditions and learning support, not only content. Second, five dimensions of learning needs (cognitive, psychological, social, learning support, and understanding and applying Islamic values) can be linked to the facilitation role. Third, a four-stage framework (identification, design, facilitation, and evaluation with follow-up) remains bound to Islamic aims and normative values. The framework is a conceptual proposal that has not been tested empirically, so future studies should examine its usefulness and limits in different PAI contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not oriented only toward delivering content. It is also directed at students' active involvement in understanding, internalizing, and applying Islamic values. This shift in orientation requires teachers not merely to deliver material but also to understand students' conditions and learning needs. A literature review on the transformation of the PAI teacher's role under the Merdeka Curriculum explains that teachers need to be adaptive and responsive to students' needs (Ahmad, 2025). Likewise, a study on the design of differentiated PAI learning links teacher responsiveness to efforts to accommodate differences in students' abilities and learning characteristics (Choiriyah et al., 2026). Choices of methods and strategies should therefore rest on an understanding of learning needs, not merely on the teacher's habits of delivering content. The idea of the teacher as a facilitator is grounded in humanistic education. Carl Rogers treats the facilitation of learning as the creation of conditions that allow students to engage meaningfully in learning. Those conditions are supported by teachers who are genuine, accept students, and show empathy. A meta-analysis of 119 studies found an average correlation of 0.31 between learner-centered teacher-student relationships and learning outcomes, stronger for affective and behavioral outcomes (Cornelius-White, 2007). Although this finding is correlational and does not come specifically from PAI contexts, it indicates that the quality of the teacher-student relationship is an important aspect of learning. A positive relationship alone, however, cannot answer the diversity of learning needs. Teachers also need to know students' needs and adjust the assistance they give so that learning matches each student's readiness.

This need for facilitation is even more important in PAI because its aims are not limited to mastering knowledge but also include internalizing values and forming religious character (Choiriyah et al., 2026). Students' learning needs in PAI therefore need to be understood more broadly, covering cognitive, psychological, and social aspects, learning support, and the understanding and application of Islamic values. When learning emphasizes content delivery and memorization while these differences go unrecognized, students may receive learning experiences that do not fit their conditions and readiness. The problem lies not only in the choice of teaching method but also in the insufficient process of recognizing needs, determining forms of assistance, and evaluating how well that assistance matches students' progress. An illustration of this problem is found in a field study at SMPN 13 Gorontalo City. It reported that PAI learning at the site was still dominated by explanation, showed relatively low interaction, and tended to be oriented toward memorization. The study also noted that gradual learning assistance had not been provided optimally (Farhah & Tamwifi, 2026). Another study in the PAI context shows that uniform instruction does not fully accommodate differences in students' abilities (Choiriyah et al., 2026), and research on humanistic approaches reports that a dense curriculum and cognitively oriented assessment hinder their application (Katmani & Sudarsono, 2025). These findings must be read within the context and scope of each study. In particular, the SMPN 13 finding is a contextual illustration of the challenges of facilitating PAI learning at that site, not a picture that can be generalized to all schools. Even so, it shows the importance of attending to students' learning needs, especially in connecting students' learning conditions with the strategies and assistance teachers provide. Based on these problems, a conceptual understanding is needed of how PAI teachers can perform the facilitator role starting from students' learning needs. A facilitation framework is needed so that the teacher's role does not stop at providing a positive learning atmosphere but also includes a more directed process: identifying learning needs, designing responsive learning, giving assistance according to students' readiness, and evaluating and following up on learning. The framework must also respect the specific character of PAI, namely the link between mastering knowledge, internalization, and the application of Islamic values. Facilitation is thus not understood as freeing students without direction but as adjusting the learning process and support to students' needs without neglecting the normative aims of Islamic education. This article therefore addresses three research questions: (1) how the concept of the PAI teacher as a facilitator is understood according to educational and learning theories; (2) how students' learning needs are integrated into the facilitator role; and (3) what conceptual framework of facilitation can be formulated. Its novelty lies in a working definition of the teacher as a facilitator of learning needs, a classification of needs by the status of literature support, and a framework that explicitly handles differences in assumptions among the theories used.

2. METHODS

Research Type and Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review design directed at conceptual analysis. The two approaches serve different but related functions. The literature review is used to search for, select, read, and examine written sources relevant to the role of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher as a facilitator of students' learning needs. Conceptual analysis is used to identify, compare, connect, and develop ideas found in those sources so that they yield a conceptual framework. The study uses no field data, interviews, or direct observation. Its conclusions are therefore the result of reasoning and synthesis of the literature examined, not empirical findings on how facilitation is applied in schools. It is also not categorized as a systematic review or meta-analysis because it does not apply the search, screening, and pooling protocols those approaches require.

Literature Sources and Search

The literature search was conducted in October 2026 through web search engines, journal sites based on Open Journal Systems (OJS), and DOI pages, using keywords in Indonesian and English. The Indonesian keywords included guru PAI fasilitator, kebutuhan belajar peserta didik PAI, teori humanistik pembelajaran PAI, Maslow pembelajaran PAI, scaffolding pembelajaran PAI, and pembelajaran berdiferensiasi PAI. The English keywords included Islamic religious education teacher facilitator, person-centered education meta-analysis, Maslow needs subjective well-being, scaffolding Islamic education, and zone of proximal development Islamic education.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Sources were selected according to their fit with the focus and aims of the study. The inclusion criteria were: (1) the source discusses the role of PAI or religion teachers, students' learning needs, or relevant educational and learning theories; (2) contemporary research sources were published in 2020–2026, with the exception of classic works used to explain the theoretical foundations; (3) the source has bibliographic identity that can be traced through a journal or publisher site; and (4) the source is in Indonesian or English.

Information Extraction and Organization

Relevant information was extracted and arranged in a literature review matrix recording author, year, research context, method, main findings, relevance to the focus of the article, and source limitations. The matrix helped the researchers recognize recurring concepts, find differences in views, and identify each source's contribution to formulating the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Analysis Technique

The conceptual analysis was carried out in five interrelated steps. The first was identifying the main concepts: the selected sources were read to find concepts related to the facilitator role, students' learning needs, learning theories, and the aims of Islamic education. The second was grouping and categorizing the concepts into four categories: (1) the teacher's role as a facilitator; (2) dimensions of students' learning needs; (3) educational and learning theories; and (4) Islamic pedagogy and aims. This grouping was used to position each concept in the discussion and to see the relationship between students' needs and the teacher's role. The third step was a critical comparison among theories. The thought of Rogers, Maslow, Vygotsky, and Islamic pedagogy was compared in terms of main focus, assumptions about students, the teacher's role, forms of learning support, and educational aims. Rogers was analyzed to explain the conditions of a facilitative teacher-student relationship, Maslow to understand psychological needs related to learning, Vygotsky to explain social interaction and gradual learning assistance, and Islamic pedagogy to place facilitation within religious aims, the formation of adab, and the practice of Islamic values. The comparison also considered differences in assumptions so that the concepts were not merged directly without regard to their limits and characteristics. The fourth step was synthesizing the relationships among concepts. The comparison was used to build a logical relationship between students' learning needs and the teacher's facilitation actions. Rogers was placed as the basis for forming a facilitative relationship, Maslow as the basis for understanding psychological needs, Vygotsky as the basis for gradual assistance and social interaction, and Islamic pedagogy as the contextual foundation and normative limit of PAI learning. Through this synthesis, learning needs were grouped into five dimensions: cognitive, psychological, social, learning support, and understanding and applying Islamic values. Concepts directly supported by the literature were also distinguished from categories that result from the authors' analytical development. The fifth step was formulating the conceptual framework by connecting the identification of learning needs, the principles of responsive learning design, the process of

facilitation, and evaluation and follow-up. Identifying needs becomes the basis for design, the design guides the implementation of facilitation, and evaluation assesses students' progress and updates learning needs in the next learning process. All steps are placed within the limits of the aims and normative values of Islamic education. The resulting four-stage framework is therefore a conceptual proposal drawn from a synthesis of the literature, not a model that has been tested with field data.

Traceability and Consistency of Interpretation

To keep the analysis traceable, three measures were applied. First, every statement derived from the literature is accompanied by a citation that can be traced to the reference list. Second, claims directly supported by a source are distinguished from the authors' reasoning or development of ideas. Claims with direct support are marked D (direct support) and the authors' synthesis is marked S (synthesis), especially in the analytical tables. Third, the bibliographic identity of each source was checked through the journal or publisher site where accessible. Sources whose identity could not be checked directly were treated cautiously in building the argument. Through these steps, the conceptual conclusions are drawn from searching and examining the literature, categorizing concepts, critically comparing theories, synthesizing relationships among concepts, and formulating the facilitation framework (Figure 1).

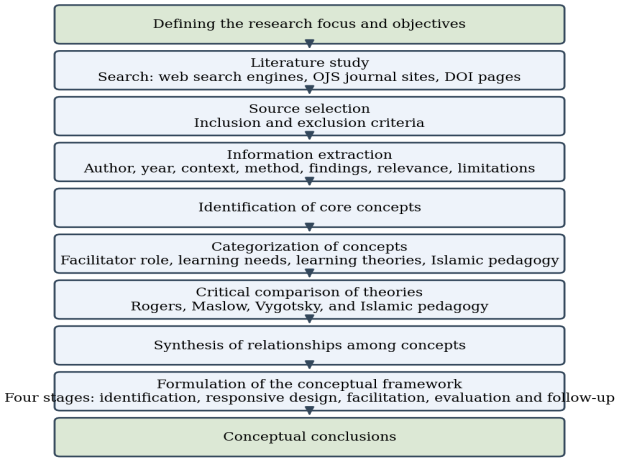


Figure 1. Flow of the literature study and conceptual analysis

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

This section answers the three research questions. The Results present the reconstruction of the facilitator concept (question 1), the analysis of learning-need dimensions and the integration of theories (question 2), and the conceptual framework (question 3). The Discussion then synthesizes the theories, sets out implications for PAI learning, and states the limitations.

3.1 Reconstruction of the Concept of the PAI Teacher as a Facilitator

Meaning of facilitator. In the humanistic tradition, a facilitator arranges the conditions that enable students to learn. Rogers names three teacher attitudes that support those conditions: genuineness, acceptance and appreciation of students, and empathic understanding (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Rogers (1983) also describes the facilitator as someone who shares responsibility for learning, provides learning resources, and gives students the opportunity to design their learning programs together with others. In this sense, facilitation is more than providing facilities. Studies of the PAI teacher's role often place the facilitator alongside the motivator and evaluator as one of several roles (Ahmad, 2025). This article adopts a narrower and more operational meaning. A

facilitator is a teacher who arranges two things: relational conditions and learning assistance. Relational conditions come from the Rogers tradition, and learning assistance comes from the Vygotsky tradition. Hasanah et al. (2025) found a similar meeting point: the thought of Ibn Khaldun and Vygotsky both place the teacher as a facilitator who adjusts support to students' abilities. Conceptual basis of each role. Content deliverer, guide, and facilitator are not understood as three separate types of teacher. They are three emphases of function that can appear in one teacher, even within one meeting. So that this distinction does not oversimplify teaching practice, each role is first formulated on its conceptual basis. Content deliverer. This role starts from the function of knowledge transmission: the teacher makes sure the content of the teaching reaches students accurately and completely. In the humanistic tradition, the teacher-centered model of delivery serves as a point of comparison for facilitation (Rogers, 1983). The role should not be viewed negatively. PAI contains normative content, such as the foundations of creed and the rulings of worship, which demands accuracy of delivery. A problem arises when the teacher's explanation becomes the only form of assistance, as reported by Farhah and Tamwifi (2026) at their research site. In the framework of this article, delivering content is a legitimate and necessary function but is insufficient when it stands alone (S).

Guide. This role starts from the function of directing attitudes and behavior and accompanying students in solving their problems. In Islamic education this function relates to *ta'dib*, the instilling of adab, which Al-Attas (1999) regards as the core of education. In contemporary PAI studies, a similar function appears in spiritual mentoring that guides *muhasabah* and *tazakkur* (Andhika et al., 2026). Conceptually, the guide differs from the content deliverer because what is directed is attitude and behavior, not only understanding of content. The guide differs from the facilitator because the main direction and decisions remain with the teacher. This distinction is the authors' reasoning (S). Facilitator. This role rests on two foundations. The first is the humanistic tradition, which emphasizes relational conditions of genuineness, acceptance, and empathy (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994) and shared responsibility for learning (Rogers, 1983). The second is social constructivism, which emphasizes gradual assistance in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976). Facilitation in this sense does not mean that the teacher stops giving direction. In the scaffolding literature, teachers in fact actively adjust the level of assistance to students' abilities (Van de Pol et al., 2015). Table 1 as an analytical typology. Table 1 is built as an analytical typology, a tool for distinguishing emphases of role conceptually. It is not an absolute classification of teacher behavior. In practice, one teacher can move between roles within a meeting. For example, a teacher explains the rules of prayer directly, guides a student who finds it difficult to perform, and then asks questions so that the student reflects on what prayer means for him or her. The cells of Table 1 are therefore read as tendencies of emphasis, not as traits attached to particular teachers. The differences in the table are deliberately sharpened for analysis and are the authors' synthesis (S). Table 1 is not meant to judge direct explanation as a less good practice.

Table 1. Analytical typology of the emphasis of the PAI teacher's role (authors' synthesis)

Aspect	Content deliverer	Guide	Facilitator
Conceptual basis	Function of transmitting normative PAI content (Rogers, 1983; Farhah & Tamwifi, 2026)	Directing attitudes and instilling adab (Al-Attas, 1999; Andhika et al., 2026)	Relational conditions (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994) and gradual assistance (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976)
Main emphasis	Accuracy and completeness of content	Direction of behavior and solving students' problems	Relational conditions and assistance that enable students to learn
Position of students	Tend to be recipients of explanation	Tend to be recipients of direction	Tend to be actors who help decide learning steps

Aspect	Content deliverer	Guide	Facilitator
Tendency of decision source	Tends to rest with the teacher	Tends to rest with the teacher, with student input	Tends to be shared between teacher and students according to readiness
Example in PAI (illustrative)	Explaining the procedure of prayer and legal rulings	Directing a student who struggles to apply a value	Asking questions, providing tiered assistance, inviting reflection
Risk if it is the only emphasis	Low interaction and rote memorization (Farhah & Tamwifi, 2026)	Students' dependence on the teacher	Normative content is poorly protected if assistance is undirected

Limits and relationships among the three roles. The three roles do not exclude one another. PAI contains normative content, such as the foundations of creed, the rulings of worship, and moral values, and teachers need to deliver it accurately. Facilitation does not replace direct explanation. Facilitation determines when the teacher explains directly, when to guide, and when to open dialogue, and students' needs and readiness determine that choice. The concept of contingency in the scaffolding literature helps explain this choice. Van de Pol et al. (2015) studied teacher support that adjusts to students' ability levels in the classroom. In the framework of this article, contingency becomes the rule for choosing a role: the teacher chooses the role that best fits the need at that moment (S). Farhah and Tamwifi (2026) show the consequence when this limit is not maintained. A teacher who tends to explain directly gives no gradual assistance, so the push toward independent learning weakens. Conversely, facilitation without guidance puts normative material at risk, because students who explore without guidance may form mistaken religious understanding. This risk is the authors' reasoning (S). Working definition. The PAI teacher as a facilitator of learning needs is a teacher who deliberately identifies students' learning needs, prepares fitting relational conditions and assistance, and adjusts that assistance gradually. The teacher keeps the direction on religious and moral aims.

3.2 Dimensions of Students' Learning Needs in PAI

In this article, learning needs mean the conditions and support students require to engage with, understand, and apply the material. Five dimensions are distinguished: cognitive, psychological, social, learning support, and understanding and applying Islamic values. Each is formulated through four elements: definition, theoretical basis, conceptual indicators, and reason it is needed in PAI. Table 2 shows the line of reasoning from theory to dimension and then to indicator. The status column distinguishes dimensions whose link to theory is directly visible (D) from dimensions that are analytical categories resulting from the authors' synthesis (S). The indicators in the table are conceptual. They have not been validated as an instrument and are material for the research agenda.

Table 2. Relationship among theory, dimension, and indicators of learning needs in PAI

Dimension	Theoretical basis and key concepts	Logic of deriving the dimension	Conceptual indicators	Status
Cognitive	Vygotsky (1978): understanding is formed through interaction, not merely received. Farhah and Tamwifi (2026): PAI learning is memorization-oriented at the research site.	Understanding is built from prior knowledge and experience, so students need opportunities to connect new material with what they already know.	Prior knowledge; ability to understand concepts; readiness to link material to experience	Partly D, partly S
Psychological	Maslow (1943, 1970): safety, belonging, esteem. Rogers and Freiberg (1994): acceptance, genuineness, empathy. Tay and Diener (2011): the order of needs is not rigid.	Engagement in learning is influenced by psychological conditions, so teachers need to check them as a checklist, not as a ladder.	Safety to ask questions; acceptance; self-confidence; appreciation of effort	D
Social	Vygotsky (1978): social interaction as a source of development. Muthahari and Dewantoro (2024); Fani et al. (2026).	Learning takes place in interaction, so students need space for dialogue and supportive relationships.	Opportunities for dialogue; cooperation with peers; relationship with the teacher	D
Learning support	Vygotsky (1978): zone of proximal development. Wood et al. (1976): scaffolding. Van de Pol et al. (2015): contingency. Choiriyah et al. (2026): tiered worksheets.	The gap between current and next ability is bridged by adjusted assistance, which is then withdrawn.	Type and level of assistance; adjustment of assistance; direction toward independence	D
Understanding and applying Islamic values	Al-Attas (1999): ta'dib, instilling adab. Andhika et al. (2026): muhasabah and tazakkur. Fani et al. (2026): internalization of values.	The aims of PAI include internalization and practice, so students need opportunities to connect teachings with action and reflect on them.	Link between material and daily action; self-reflection; habituation of good conduct	Analytical category (S), partly supported

Cognitive needs. Definition: cognitive needs are students' needs to understand material and connect it with the knowledge and experience they already have (Farhah & Tamwifi, 2026). Theoretical basis: according to Vygotsky (1978), understanding is formed through interaction, not merely received. This basis matters because Farhah and Tamwifi (2026) report memorization-oriented PAI learning at their research site. Indicators: students' prior knowledge, ability to understand concepts, and readiness to link material to experience. Reason needed: PAI material, such as creed concepts or the rulings of worship, is hard to understand meaningfully if only memorized, so teachers need to know students' starting point of understanding. The theories cited do not define cognitive needs specifically. The authors make it a separate dimension by reasoning (S). Psychological needs. Definition: psychological needs are the affective conditions that allow students to feel safe, accepted, and valued so that they are willing to engage in learning. Theoretical basis: Maslow (1943, 1970) groups human needs, including safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, while Rogers and Freiberg (1994) emphasize acceptance as a teacher attitude. Ruhaya et al. (2026) report that meeting needs from the basic level up to esteem raises motivation to learn

fiqh, and Katmani and Sudarsono (2025) report increased confidence, creativity, and empathy from a humanistic approach. Both studies are descriptive and rely on observation, interviews, or discussion with teachers at limited sites, so their claims of impact cannot be regarded as proven. A cross-national analysis by Tay and Diener (2011) also shows that the influence of each need does not follow a rigid order. Indicators: safety to ask questions, acceptance, self-confidence, and appreciation of effort. Reason needed: PAI learning often touches questions of personal belief and practice, and students who fear mistakes or judgment tend to hold back questions, including critical ones. The authors therefore treat this dimension as a list of conditions for teachers to check, not an order to be passed through one by one. This reason is the authors' reasoning (S). Social needs. Definition: social needs are students' need for opportunities to interact with teachers and peers as part of the learning process. Theoretical basis: Vygotsky (1978) places social interaction as a source of learning development. Muthahari and Dewantoro (2024) report that religion teachers play a role in building an environment that supports positive social interaction, and they describe their finding as preliminary, without exploring students' level of social maturity. Fani et al. (2026) conclude that cooperation, group discussion, and reflection activities deepen understanding of religious concepts. That study is a case study in one school, so the authors read its conclusion as a contextual finding. Indicators: opportunities for dialogue, cooperation with peers, and relationship with the teacher. Reason needed: religious understanding built through dialogue gives students the chance to test and deepen their understanding with others, not only to receive ready-made formulations from the teacher. This reason is partly supported by Fani et al. (2026) and partly the authors' reasoning (S).

Learning support needs. Definition: the need for learning support is students' need for support that fits their ability level and decreases as independence grows. Wood et al. (1976) introduced the term scaffolding for assistance that enables students to complete tasks beyond their independent ability. Van de Pol et al. (2015) studied contingency, the adjustment of support to students' ability level in the classroom. Choiriyah et al. (2026) designed worksheets with three levels of support, beginner, developing, and advanced, to lead students gradually toward independence. Indicators: the type and level of assistance given, adjustment of assistance to ability, and direction toward independence. Reason needed: abstract material and ritual practice demand gradual mastery. Needs for assistance differ among students and change over time, so one uniform form of assistance is inadequate (Choiriyah et al., 2026). Needs for understanding and applying Islamic values. This need is students' need to connect Islamic teachings with daily action and to reflect on them. Theoretical basis: this dimension starts from the aims of PAI, not from a single theory of needs. Fani et al. (2026) report that students not only understood the material but also internalized values in daily life through collaboration, discussion, and habituated reflection. Andhika et al. (2026) position the lecturer as a spiritual mentor who guides *muhasabah* and *tazakkur*. Al-Attas (1999) understands Islamic education as *ta'dib*, the instilling of adab. Indicators: the link between material and daily action, self-reflection, and habituation of good conduct. Reason needed: without this dimension, PAI learning risks stopping at mastery of knowledge, although its aims include internalization and practice. Based on these sources, the authors build this need as an analytical category. Literature support is partial because Andhika et al. (2026) concern higher education and do not address primary or secondary students (S). Relationships among dimensions and diversity of needs. The five dimensions do not stand apart. A sense of safety (psychological) encourages students to engage in dialogue (social), dialogue reveals needs for assistance (learning support), and fitting assistance supports understanding (cognitive) and the application of values. This relationship is the authors' reasoning (S). Needs are also not uniform. Uniform PAI learning does not accommodate differences in ability (Choiriyah et al., 2026), and Tomlinson (1999) offers the differentiated classroom as a response to each learner's needs. Needs may differ by age, religious experience, and emotional condition. Teachers should not

infer needs from general labels such as school level or gender. Identification is carried out with the students the teacher actually faces, respecting the privacy of their religious experience (S).

3.3 Integration of Humanistic, Human Needs, Social Constructivist, and Islamic Pedagogical Theories

Contributions and assumptions of each perspective. Table 3 compares the assumptions, contributions, and limitations of the four perspectives.

Table 3. Comparison of theoretical perspectives

Perspective	Assumptions about students and teachers	Contribution to the concept	Limitations
Humanistic (Rogers)	Students have a tendency to develop. Teachers provide relational conditions of genuineness, acceptance, and empathy.	Explains the facilitator's attitude and relationship, and students' room to decide learning steps	Less detailed on how to adjust cognitive assistance. Meta-analytic evidence is correlational and comes from outside PAI (Cornelius-White, 2007).
Human needs (Maslow)	Meeting needs affects motivation and engagement.	Explains the psychological and social conditions that influence engagement in learning	The hierarchical order does not apply rigidly (Tay & Diener, 2011). It does not explain teaching mechanisms.
Social constructivism (Vygotsky)	Learning originates in social interaction. A more capable party helps students in the zone of proximal development.	Explains the mechanism of facilitation: dialogue, gradual assistance, and fading of assistance	Gives little attention to emotional needs. The relation between scaffolding and the zone of proximal development remains debated (Xi & Lantolf, 2021).
Islamic pedagogy	Students have fitrah and need guidance toward morals and knowledge that is practiced. Teachers instill adab.	Sets direction, value limits, and the spiritual dimension (ta'dib, tazkiyatun nafs)	The sources examined are more normative than empirical. There is a risk of reading modern theory into classical sources.

The four perspectives do not operate at the same level. Within the concept of the PAI teacher as a facilitator, each performs a different function, described below. Rogers: building a facilitative relationship. Rogers and Freiberg (1994) formulate three teacher attitudes: genuineness, acceptance and appreciation, and empathic understanding. In this concept, those attitudes function as conditions of a relationship that makes students dare to ask questions, admit mistakes, and take part in deciding their learning steps (Rogers, 1983). In PAI, such a relationship appears when a teacher responds to critical questions about worship without judgment, admits not yet knowing an answer, and tries to understand why students find something difficult. This example is the authors' illustration (S). A facilitative relationship is not an end in itself. It opens access to learning assistance but does not explain how the assistance is adjusted. This limitation is recorded in Table 3, including meta-analytic evidence that is correlational and comes from outside PAI (Cornelius-White, 2007). The function of Rogers in this framework is therefore limited to forming relationships and sharing responsibility for learning. Maslow: understanding students' psychological conditions. Maslow's theory (1943, 1970) is used as a lens for reading the conditions that influence students' readiness to engage, namely safety, belonging, and esteem. It is not used as a ladder to be climbed in order, because the influence of each need does not follow a rigid order (Tay & Diener, 2011). Maslow functions as a checklist for teachers. A student who is silent in discussion has not necessarily failed to understand the material. The student may fear making a mistake or being judged, or may not yet feel accepted by the group. This reading is the authors' reasoning (S). The studies by Ruhaya et al. (2026) and Katmani and Sudarsono (2025)

give a picture that meeting psychological needs relates to motivation and confidence, but both are descriptive and are not read as evidence of impact. Maslow also does not explain teaching mechanisms (Table 3). The results of reading these conditions become input for the two other functions: determining which of Rogers' attitudes the teacher should emphasize, and determining the timing and form of assistance in Vygotsky's sense (S). Vygotsky: explaining gradual assistance. Vygotsky (1978) explains that students can reach the next level of ability through interaction with a more capable party in the zone of proximal development, and Wood et al. (1976) call that assistance scaffolding. This function answers the question that Rogers and Maslow leave open, namely how the teacher helps. The teacher assesses students' current ability, gives assistance across the gap toward the next ability, and then reduces that assistance as independence grows. The principle of contingency (Van de Pol et al., 2015) governs this adjustment, and Choiriyah et al. (2026) illustrate it with worksheets of three levels of support.

In learning about prayer, for example, a teacher may begin with a direct demonstration, move to step-by-step guidance, and then let students practice independently with feedback. This example is the authors' illustration (S). This perspective gives little attention to emotional needs, and the relation between scaffolding and the zone of proximal development remains debated (Xi & Lantolf, 2021). Gradual assistance therefore needs to run together with a facilitative relationship and a reading of psychological conditions. Islamic pedagogy: determining direction and normative limits. Islamic pedagogy regards students as persons with fitrah who need guidance toward morals and knowledge that is practiced. Al-Attas (1999) understands education as *ta'dib*, the instilling of adab, and Andhika et al. (2026) show a form of spiritual mentoring through *muhasabah* and *tazakkur*. This perspective performs two functions. The first is determining direction: learning aims at internalization and practice, not only mastery of knowledge, so the assistance a teacher gives is measured by how far students can connect teachings with their actions. The second is setting limits: normative content, such as the principles of creed and the rulings of worship, is not negotiated and its accuracy is guarded by the teacher, whereas understanding, meaning, questions, and application to students' life contexts are open to exploration. With this limit, facilitation changes the path of learning, not its normative aims, and gradual assistance does not stop at a mistaken understanding. This formulation of functions is the authors' reasoning (S). The sources examined are more normative than empirical, and there is a risk of reading modern theory into classical sources (Table 3). Islamic pedagogy is therefore used here to set direction and limits, not as empirical evidence of the effectiveness of facilitation. How the four functions relate. The four functions complement one another and do not form a hierarchy. Rogers builds a relationship that lets students be open. Maslow helps teachers read whether the relationship is felt and which conditions still hinder students. Vygotsky provides assistance that is adjusted and gradually reduced. Islamic pedagogy keeps the whole process moving in the right direction and within the limits of normative content. Without Islamic pedagogy, facilitation risks losing direction. Without Rogers and Maslow, scaffolding risks becoming a mechanical technique. This relationship is the authors' reasoning (S). Points of convergence. The four perspectives position students as active subjects and teachers as parties who provide relationships and support. Watawalaini et al. (2025) and Maharani and Lestari (2024) discuss Rogers and Maslow within one humanistic framework. Hasanah et al. (2025) found that Ibn Khaldun's ideas on gradual teaching, repetition, and psychological readiness are in line with Vygotsky's scaffolding. Katmani and Sudarsono (2025) link the humanistic approach with fitrah and al-Ghazali's thought. Andhika et al. (2026) add a spiritual dimension to scaffolding. These points of convergence show that the integration has a basis in the literature. Differences in assumptions and how they are handled. The integration must not ignore three tensions. The first concerns trust in the tendency to develop. Rogers trusts that tendency, whereas Islamic education treats the guidance of revelation as a direction that is not negotiated. The authors handle this tension by separating two areas. The first contains normative

content, such as the principles of creed and the rulings of worship, whose accuracy the teacher guards. The second contains understanding, meaning, questions, and application to students' life contexts, which are open to exploration. Facilitation changes the path of learning, not its normative aims (S).

The second tension concerns the teacher's directiveness. Rogers' approach tends to give students wide room, whereas Vygotsky's places the teacher as an actively helping party. The authors handle this tension with the principle of contingency: the teacher gives as much assistance as needed and reduces it when students are able (Van de Pol et al., 2015). This principle is in line with the meaning of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286, that Allah does not burden a person beyond his capacity. The verse speaks of burdens in a general sense, so its use as a basis for a learning principle is the authors' analogy (S). The third tension concerns the final aim. Maslow places self-actualization at the highest level, whereas Islamic education places its aim in forming morals and worship, with adab at its core (Al-Attas, 1999). The authors do not equate the two. They treat the development of potential as part of fitrah that is directed by religious aims, as in the link between fitrah and the humanistic approach put forward by Katmani and Sudarsono (2025) (S). Relevance for PAI learning. The integration is relevant for three reasons. First, the aims of PAI include internalizing values, so relational and psychological conditions affect the process of internalization, a reason supported by the findings of Fani et al. (2026) and Andhika et al. (2026). Second, normative content demands clear limits for facilitation. Third, abstract material and ritual practice require gradual assistance. The second and third reasons are the authors' reasoning (S). On this basis, the authors place humanistic theory as the main perspective on the facilitator's role, social constructivism as the explanation of the facilitation mechanism, Maslow's theory as the perspective on psychological needs, and Islamic pedagogy as the contextual foundation and value limit.

3.4 Conceptual Framework of the PAI Teacher as a Facilitator of Students' Learning Needs

The framework below is a synthesis of the literature. It consists of four repeating stages: identification of learning needs, responsive learning design, facilitation of the learning process, and evaluation and follow-up. Table 4 details the aim, conceptual indicators, theoretical basis, and implication of each stage, and Figure 2 summarizes the framework.

Table 4. Four stages of facilitating learning needs in PAI (conceptual proposal)

Stage	Aim	Conceptual indicators	Theoretical basis	Implication
1. Identification of learning needs	The teacher gains a provisional picture of students' cognitive, psychological, social, assistance, and value needs	(a) Teacher knows students' prior knowledge of the material. (b) Teacher checks sense of safety and confidence. (c) Teacher observes patterns of social interaction. (d) Teacher determines the level of assistance needed. (e) Teacher learns students' religious experience while respecting privacy.	Empathic understanding (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994); needs (Maslow, 1943, 1970); zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978)	Short dialogue, diagnostic tasks, observation, and reflective journals. Results are provisional and updated.
2. Responsive learning design	The teacher plans learning with the same aims for the class and paths and support that may differ	(a) Aims cover knowledge, attitude, and practice. (b) Material is broken into gradual steps. (c) Tiered assistance is available. (d) Social interaction activities are planned. (e) Formative assessment is planned.	Vygotsky (1978); Tomlinson (1999); Choiriyah et al. (2026); Hasanah et al. (2025)	Tiered worksheets. Methods and media follow the needs profile.

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Stage	Aim	Conceptual indicators	Theoretical basis	Implication
3. Facilitation of the learning process	The teacher maintains relational conditions and adjusts assistance contingently	(a) Teacher is genuine, accepting, and empathic. (b) Teacher uses guiding questions, modeling, and discussion. (c) Teacher reduces assistance when students are able. (d) Teacher gives feedback that preserves students' dignity. (e) Teacher invites students to reflect on values in action.	Rogers & Freiberg (1994); Wood et al. (1976); Van de Pol et al. (2015); Andhika et al. (2026)	The teacher combines direct explanation, guidance, and dialogue according to the need at the moment.
4. Evaluation and follow-up	The teacher assesses students' progress and updates the needs profile	(a) Assessment covers cognitive, affective, and practical domains. (b) Students reflect on themselves. (c) Teacher recognizes progress. (d) Teacher sets follow-up: enrichment, repeated assistance, or communication with parents. (e) Results update stages 1 and 2.	Maslow (1943, 1970); Vygotsky (1978); Ahmad (2025); Andhika et al. (2026)	Assessment does not stop at written tests. Results feed the next cycle.

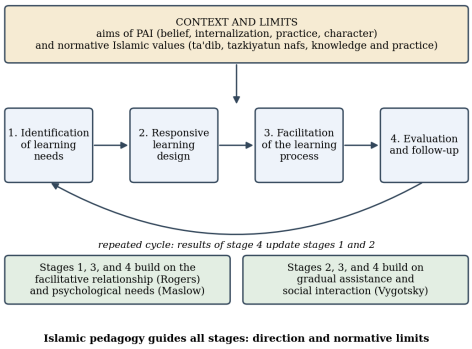


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the PAI teacher as a facilitator of learning needs (conceptual proposal; not yet tested on field data)

Logical relationship among the stages. Stage one produces a provisional needs profile. That profile becomes the basis of stage two, which determines the level of assistance, the form of tasks, and interaction activities. Stage three carries out the design while collecting new evidence about needs. That evidence returns to stage one in a short cycle. Stage four assesses progress and directs follow-up, and its results update stages one and two in the next meeting. Stage one. Identification uses Rogers' empathic understanding, Maslow's needs, and an assessment of the student's position in the zone of proximal development according to Vygotsky. The teacher treats the results of identification as a provisional picture, not a fixed label, and protects the privacy of students' religious experience (S). Stage two. Design applies the principle of differentiation: the aims stay the same while paths and support may differ (Tomlinson, 1999; Choiriyah et al., 2026). Hasanah et al. (2025) link gradual teaching with the thought of Ibn Khaldun. In this framework, tiered assistance serves as a way to protect the accuracy of normative content while leaving room for exploration. Stage three. Facilitation combines a facilitative attitude with contingent assistance. The Qur'an mentions the basis of conveying teachings with wisdom, good counsel, and dialogue in the best manner (QS. An-Nahl [16]: 125). The verse is set in the context of da'wah, so its use for learning is the authors' analogy

(S). The hadith of Mu'awiyah ibn al-Hakam describes correction without scolding or hitting, with calm explanation (HR. Muslim no. 537). Another hadith teaches making things easy rather than difficult and giving glad tidings rather than driving people away (HR. Bukhari no. 69). Both hadiths support the teacher's attitude in giving feedback, and their application to learning design is the authors' reasoning (S). Stage four. Assessment needs to cover three domains (Ahmad, 2025). Katmani and Sudarsono (2025) report cognitively oriented assessment as a barrier. The assessment of attitude and practice therefore requires triangulation and caution so that teachers do not judge religiosity from outward appearance alone (S). Reflection such as *muhasabah* in the model of Andhika et al. (2026) can serve as material for self-assessment. Status of the framework. The framework is a conceptual proposal. This study has not tested it on field data, and further testing and development are needed before any claim about its effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

Synthesis of Theories in the Facilitation Framework

Table 5 connects each concept, its theoretical source, its contribution, and its implication for PAI learning. It shows that each element of the framework traces back to a body of literature and to a specific function, which supports the analysis in the Results.

Table 5. Synthesis of theories in the facilitation framework

Concept	Theoretical source	Contribution	Implication for PAI learning
Facilitative relationship	Rogers & Freiberg (1994); Cornelius-White (2007)	Explains relational conditions that support meaningful learning	Teacher accepts students' questions, including critical ones, without judgment
Psychological and social needs	Maslow (1943, 1970); Tay & Diener (2011)	Explains conditions that influence engagement, without a rigid order	Teacher checks safety, acceptance, and appreciation
Gradual assistance	Vygotsky (1978); Wood et al. (1976); Van de Pol et al. (2015)	Explains the mechanism of facilitation	Tiered support and fading of assistance
Social interaction	Vygotsky (1978); Muthahari & Dewantoro (2024); Fani et al. (2026)	Explains the role of dialogue and collaboration	Group discussion and shared reflection
Direction of values and adab	Al-Attas (1999); Andhika et al. (2026); Katmani & Sudarsono (2025)	Sets aims and limits of facilitation	Assessment of attitude and practice, not only memorization
Differentiation	Tomlinson (1999); Choiriyah et al. (2026)	Operationalizes the response to diversity	Tiered worksheets and tasks

The synthesis agrees with studies that report the limits of teacher-centered explanation in PAI (Farhah & Tamwifi, 2026) and with studies that link scaffolding to Islamic educational thought (Hasanah et al., 2025; Andhika et al., 2026). It adds an explicit rule for choosing among delivering, guiding, and facilitating, and it separates areas of normative content from areas open to exploration. These two additions respond to a tension that the humanistic literature on PAI (Katmani & Sudarsono, 2025) mentions only in passing.

Conceptual Implications for PAI Learning

Table 6 summarizes the implications of the framework by separating three things. The first column contains implications that have a direct reference in the literature (D). The second contains recommendations derived from the authors' synthesis (S). The third contains examples of application in PAI learning. A literature reference in column D shows that an idea has been discussed or reported in that source, not that the idea has been proven effective. Most empirical sources are descriptive

studies at limited sites, and some come from higher education or from outside PAI. The examples of application are the authors' illustrations and have not been tested on field data (S).

Table 6. Implications of the framework for PAI learning

Area	Direct support from the literature (D)	Authors' recommendation (S)	Example of application in PAI (illustrative)
Planning	Choiriyah et al. (2026) designed worksheets with three levels of support (beginner, developing, advanced) and state that uniform instruction does not accommodate differences in ability.	Aims are set the same for the whole class while paths and support differ. Teachers allow a short time for identifying needs.	In learning the procedure of prayer, the aim is the same: students can perform it correctly. The beginner sheet gives pictures of the sequence of movements, the developing sheet asks students to complete a sequence with blanks, and the advanced sheet asks students to explain the reason for each movement and correct a mistaken example.
Choice of methods and media	Fani et al. (2026) report that cooperation, group discussion, and reflection deepen understanding of religious concepts (case study at one school). Farhah and Tamwifi (2026) report memorization-oriented learning at their research site.	Choice of methods and media follows students' needs profile. Direct explanation is still used for normative content.	In basic creed material, the teacher explains the core concept directly, asks small groups to link it to daily experience, and clarifies at the end if any understanding is mistaken.
Teacher-student interaction	Rogers and Freiberg (1994) place genuineness, acceptance, and empathy as relational conditions. Cornelius-White (2007) reports a correlational relationship outside PAI. Muthahari and Dewantoro (2024) report the role of religion teachers in building a positive social interaction environment (preliminary finding).	Teachers maintain a sense of safety for asking questions, including critical questions about religion, and listen before explaining.	A student asks why he must wake for the dawn prayer when sleepy. The teacher first responds to the student's reasons without treating the question as defiance, then explains the ruling and its wisdom. The content of the ruling does not change.
Giving feedback	Van de Pol et al. (2015) studied teacher support adjusted to students' ability. The study addresses adjustment of support in general, not feedback in PAI.	Feedback is specific, preserves students' dignity, and points to the next step. Hadiths on calm correction and not driving people away (HR. Muslim no. 537; HR. Bukhari no. 69) are used as a basis for attitude by the authors' analogy.	When a student misreads a verse, the teacher does not interrupt in front of the class. The teacher acknowledges the parts that are correct, points to one part to improve, models it, and gives a chance to repeat.
Assessment of learning outcomes	Ahmad (2025) stresses assessment that covers three domains. Katmani and Sudarsono (2025) report cognitively oriented assessment as a barrier. Andhika et al. (2026) use reflection through muhasabah (higher education context).	Attitude and practice are assessed with triangulation. Teachers avoid judging religiosity from outward appearance.	For prayer practice, the teacher combines observation of practice, a short reflective journal, and notes from school activities. The teacher does not infer piety from attendance or appearance.

Area	Direct support from the literature (D)	Authors' recommendation (S)	Example of application in PAI (illustrative)
Religious aims and character formation	Fani et al. (2026) report internalization of values through collaboration, discussion, and reflection (one school). Andhika et al. (2026) describe mentoring through muhasabah and tazakkur in higher education, not at primary or secondary level.	Follow-up connects understanding with good habits. Teacher modeling is treated as part of facilitation.	After material on honesty, students write one situation they face this week and one honest action they will try, reviewed briefly at the next meeting. For primary and secondary levels the form of reflection needs adjusting because direct references are limited.

This separation shows that literature support is strongest for tiered worksheets, the role of discussion and collaboration, and assessment across three domains. Support is partial for feedback and the formation of character. The rule of choosing methods by needs profile, triangulation in assessment, and teacher modeling as part of facilitation are the authors' recommendations (S). The implications in the table are therefore read as directions of application to be tested, not as practices proven to improve learning outcomes. Implementation faces barriers. Katmani and Sudarsono (2025) report a dense curriculum and cognitively oriented assessment. These barriers mean the framework cannot be applied in full without support in time and assessment policy. Ahmad (2025) stresses continuing training and policy support for transforming the PAI teacher's role. The authors judge that identification of needs is most feasible if it starts in a brief form, for example one opening question at the start of a meeting, such as "Which part of performing ablution do you find hardest?", or a short diagnostic task before new material. This judgment is the authors' reasoning (S). The examples in Table 6 are also not yet differentiated by school level and type of institution. Adapting them to primary schools, secondary schools, madrasahs, and pesantren requires further study.

Limitations and Research Agenda

This analysis has several limitations. First, the framework derives from a literature synthesis and has not been tested on field data, so the authors do not claim that it is effective. Second, the search did not cover paid databases and did not follow a systematic review protocol, so further searches may find sources not covered. Third, the authors limited claims about empirical sources to information in abstracts and metadata, and reading the full texts might change some interpretations. Fourth, most empirical studies examined come from one or a few sites in Indonesia with qualitative designs or small surveys, and their findings cannot be generalized. Fifth, the meta-analytic evidence on teacher-student relationships is correlational and comes from outside PAI. Sixth, Maslow's theory and the relation between scaffolding and the zone of proximal development remain debated. Seventh, there is a risk of reading modern theory into classical Islamic sources, and other researchers need to check that correspondence against primary texts. Further research can follow six directions: (1) expert validation of the dimensions and indicators through expert judgment or the Delphi technique; (2) development of an instrument for identifying learning needs suited to PAI levels and contexts; (3) action research or design-based research to test the four stages in primary schools, secondary schools, madrasahs, and pesantren; (4) quasi-experimental studies measuring students' engagement, motivation, understanding, and behavior; (5) case studies of implementation barriers, including the dense curriculum and cognitively oriented assessment; and (6) a follow-up systematic review with a written protocol, structured databases, and reported selection criteria.

4. CONCLUSION

This article concludes that the PAI teacher as a facilitator does not only deliver content. The teacher identifies students' learning needs, provides supportive relational conditions, adjusts assistance gradually, and evaluates students' progress while keeping the normative aims of Islamic education. Delivering content and guiding remain necessary because PAI contains normative content that must be conveyed accurately. Facilitation determines when the teacher explains directly, when to guide, and when to open dialogue, with contingency as the rule of choice. In the working definition of this article, the PAI teacher as a facilitator of learning needs is a teacher who deliberately identifies learning needs, prepares fitting relational conditions and assistance, and adjusts that assistance gradually while keeping the direction on religious and moral aims. The synthesis contribution of this article lies in three things. First, learning needs are classified into five dimensions: cognitive, psychological, social, learning support, and understanding and applying Islamic values. The psychological, social, and learning support dimensions have direct theoretical grounding, the cognitive dimension is partly supported, and the fifth dimension is an analytical category resulting from the authors' synthesis. Second, those needs are linked to the facilitator role in a repeating framework of four stages: identification of learning needs, responsive learning design, facilitation of the learning process, and evaluation and follow-up. Third, the functions of the four theories are distinguished. Rogers builds the facilitative relationship, Maslow helps read students' psychological conditions, Vygotsky explains gradual assistance, and Islamic pedagogy determines direction and normative limits. Differences in assumptions among the theories are handled by separating the area of normative content from the area of exploration and by treating the development of potential as part of fitrah directed by religious aims. This contribution is conceptual and limited to the corpus examined. The framework has not been tested on field data, so this article does not claim its effectiveness. Further research needs to validate the dimensions and indicators through expert judgment and then test the four stages through action research and quasi-experimental studies at various levels and types of PAI institutions.

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