



Affective Assessment Dynamics in Islamic Education: A Public and Private High School Comparative Study

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Abstract:

This study investigates the dynamics of planning, implementing, and utilizing affective assessments in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) across divergent institutional contexts, addressing the "utilization blindspot" where affective data is frequently reduced to administrative formalities. Employing a qualitative multiple-case study design, this research was conducted at a public and a private senior high school. Data, gathered through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis involving IRE teachers, were evaluated using the Interactive Analysis Model and cross-case synthesis. Findings reveal that despite structural constraints, teachers' profound epistemological grounding in *Tazkiyatun Nafs* and *Muhasabah* preserves assessment authenticity. Furthermore, both institutions successfully transformed affective data into active formative feedback loops (*Assessment for Learning*) and established targeted tripartite pastoral care systems involving teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents. This study concludes that effective affective assessment transcends bureaucratic compliance, functioning as a transformative catalyst for continuous moral character development. Consequently, it is recommended that educational policymakers formulate adaptive administrative guidelines to structurally support authentic character evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century educational paradigm demands a definitive shift from a cognitive-centric approach to a holistic character education framework. In Indonesia, this transformation is operationalized through the *Kurikulum Merdeka* policy (Bulkani et al., 2025; Harjanti et al., 2026). Within this educational landscape, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) carries a fundamental philosophical and pragmatic responsibility. Theoretically, IRE is grounded in Al-Ghazali's epistemology of *Tazkiyatun Nafs* (purification of the soul), asserting that theoretical religious knowledge loses its transformative significance unless manifested in students' ethical conduct (Jenuri et al., 2025; Mulyadi et al., 2025). Consequently, affective assessment functions as a crucial pedagogical instrument to empirically evaluate the internalization of these ethical values. This

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epistemological need strongly aligns with the concept of *Muhasabah* (self-evaluation), representing a progressive shift in educational measurement towards Assessment for Learning (AfL) (Masuwai et al., 2024; Purwanto et al., 2023).

Empirically, however, the implementation of IRE affective assessment faces a significant paradox, as character evaluation is frequently reduced to mere administrative compliance. Systemic constraints such as heavy workloads, high student-to-teacher ratios, and the inherent abstraction of the affective domain contribute to educator burnout. Consequently, these challenges often force teachers to simplify complex character assessments into static, end-of-semester checklists (Salani et al., 2025; Williams et al., 2026; Zubaidah et al., 2026). Existing literature on affective assessment in Islamic education generally encompasses three major themes. First, several studies focus on developing and validating technical measurement instruments, such as collaborative rubrics and digital peer-assessment platforms, to minimize subjectivity bias (Lin et al., 2024; Setiawan et al., 2019; Zaibout et al., 2024). Second, other scholars map the pedagogical and structural constraints educators face during implementation (Salani et al., 2025). Third, contemporary research has begun to examine how institutional governance such as the decentralized autonomy of private schools versus the hierarchical structure of public schools moderates the transmission of moral values (Claes et al., 2026).

Despite these contributions, a fundamental literature gap remains. Previous research predominantly focuses on the technical aspects of data collection, often neglecting the post-assessment phase. This omission perpetuates the "utilization blindspot" phenomenon (Lui & Andrade, 2022), wherein affective data are rarely integrated into meaningful formative feedback. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of comparative studies examining the complete cycle of affective assessment across differing institutional ecosystems. To address this gap, this study investigates the dynamics of IRE affective assessment encompassing planning, implementation, and the utilization of results by comparing a public and a private senior high school. This research highlights how institutional autonomy and teachers' epistemological beliefs can effectively mitigate the utilization blindspot in character evaluation. Ultimately, the findings are expected to enrich the literature on Islamic pedagogy and provide a robust framework for educational policymakers to design authentic, collaborative, and sustainable character assessment guidelines.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design (Yin, 2014) to investigate how IRE teachers plan, implement, and utilize affective assessments. The research was conducted across two sociologically divergent educational institutions: a public senior high school and a private senior high school. Employing a purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2023) to secure information-rich cases, this study selected two IRE teachers representing distinct institutional governance systems and pedagogical experiences: Teacher A, a novice educator at the private school, and Teacher B, a senior educator at the public school.

Data were collected through methodological triangulation, comprising in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. The interviews explored the teachers' epistemological understanding

and their post-assessment strategies. Concurrently, field observations examined the instructional implementation and school-wide cultural routines, such as the morning Quran recitation (*Ngaji Pagi*). Furthermore, document analysis systematically evaluated the 1-4 scale attitude rubrics, reflection journals, and digital peer-assessment instruments. To guarantee data credibility and trustworthiness, both source and methodological triangulations were rigorously maintained throughout this phase.

Data were analyzed employing the Interactive Analysis Model (Miles et al., 2014) in conjunction with a cross-case synthesis. The analytical procedure followed four sequential yet interactive stages: (1) data condensation, which involved coding and sorting interview transcripts into core emergent themes; (2) data display, which utilized a comparative matrix to map pedagogical practices across both institutions; (3) conclusion drawing and verification, based on the formulated theoretical propositions; and (4) cross-case synthesis. This final synthesis critically examined how divergent institutional governance and school cultures moderate teachers' pedagogical decisions in executing affective assessments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Teachers' Understanding of Affective Assessment

The triangulation of interview and observation data reveals that IRE teachers in both the public and private schools possess divergent pedagogical understandings of affective assessment. Both educators acknowledge that evaluating students' character and attitudes differs fundamentally from measuring cognitive abilities. Table 1 presents the extracted interview data regarding the teachers' epistemological understanding of affective assessment within their respective contexts.

Table 1. Interview Result Data on Teachers' Understanding of Affective Assessment

Interview Data	Coding	Resources
"The main challenge I feel is that measuring the affective aspect still feels abstract compared to cognitive numerical scores. To overcome this, I use more structured instruments like 1-4 scale rubrics, reflection journals, and consistent behavioral observations."	Understanding Affective Abstraction and Quantification	Teacher A (Private School)
"Professionalism itself must be reflected by the person delivering it. As an IRE teacher, when delivering this affective assessment, it must start from oneself before others. The point of professionalism is about how we can be an example or a role model for others."	Moral Exemplar (<i>Uswatun Hasanah</i>) and Organic Habitation	Teacher B (Public School)

The data in Table 1 illustrate two distinct paradigms in how the educators conceptualize and approach affective assessment. Teacher A, representing the private school context, perceives the affective domain as an abstract entity

requiring quantification to achieve objective measurement. This perspective drives the teacher to rely on detailed, structured instruments, such as rubrics and reflection journals, to minimize subjectivity and systematically evaluate students' character.

Conversely, Teacher B from the public school views affective assessment primarily through the lens of moral exemplar (*uswatun hasanah*). Rather than relying strictly on structured rubrics, Teacher B approaches professional affective evaluation as an organic habituation process. This paradigm emphasizes that the teacher must internally embody religious values and serve as a central behavioral compass before formally assessing the students. Despite these methodological differences, the empirical data confirm that both educators understand affective assessment not as a mere administrative checklist, but as an authentic evaluation of students' actual daily behavior.

Planning of Affective Assessment

The planning phase of affective assessment exhibits operational differences influenced by each school's institutional governance. Document analysis and interviews indicate that although both teachers align their planning with the national curriculum, their methods for constructing assessment indicators diverge. Table 2 presents the extracted interview data regarding how both educators plan their affective assessments.

Table 2. Interview Result Data on the Planning of Affective Assessment

Interview Data	Coding	Resources
"In planning the assessment, I rely heavily on the standardized rubrics developed through the Subject Teacher Deliberation Forum (MGMP). Because we have many classes and a strict system, using the MGMP syllabus ensures that all IRE teachers assess student attitudes uniformly."	Bureaucratic Standardization and Reliance MGMP	Teacher B (Public School)
"I derive the attitude indicators directly from the learning objectives, but I tailor the observation instruments to our school's specific religious culture. I have the autonomy to design my own self-reflection sheets that fit our contextual needs."	Pedagogical Autonomy Contextual Adaptation	Teacher A (Private School)

The data in Table 2 highlight two distinct pathways in assessment planning. Operating within the public school system, Teacher B utilizes a standardized approach that relies on the Subject Teacher Deliberation Forum to maintain consistency across classes. Document analysis of Teacher B's lesson plans confirms the adoption of a structured 1-4 scale observation rubric provided by the forum. This approach limits individual modification but guarantees strong administrative compliance within the public school's hierarchy.

On the other hand, Teacher A from the private school exercises greater pedagogical autonomy. Instead of relying on standardized external rubrics, Teacher A contextually adapts the planning to fit the specific religious programs of the institution. Document analysis of the private school's teaching modules

reveals custom-designed instruments, such as self-assessment reflection journals and digital peer-assessment forms, explicitly tailored to the students' specific character needs. Thus, the empirical data demonstrate that institutional governance directly dictates whether the planning of affective assessment leans toward rigid standardization or flexible contextual adaptation.

Strategies for Implementing Affective Assessment

The findings indicate that both schools implement affective assessment primarily through continuous observation rather than isolated formal testing. The teachers systematically embed character evaluation into the daily instructional flow, integrating the assessment seamlessly without disrupting students' learning. However, distinct approaches are evident in how each teacher executes these strategies. Table 3 presents the extracted interview data regarding the implementation strategies utilized by the educators.

Table 3. Interview Result Data on the Strategies for Implementing Affective Assessment

Interview Data	Coding	Resources
"We must not hold the view that assessing students is only confined to the classroom... children can reflect their piety to Allah anywhere and anytime."	School-Wide Cultural Routines and Direct Observation	Teacher B (Public School)
"I create assessment Google Forms because there are group assignments every week, so I send the Gform to each group to assess their own and their group members' performance."	Digital Integration and Collaborative Peer-Assessment	Teacher A (Private School)

The data in Table 3 highlight how institutional contexts shape the execution of assessments. Teacher B integrates affective assessment deeply into school-wide cultural routines. Field observations reveal that Teacher B actively evaluates students' religious and disciplinary attitudes outside the classroom, specifically during morning habituation routines such as communal Quran recitation (*Ngaji Pagi*). Inside the classroom, the assessment is conducted through the strict enforcement of rules, such as the prohibition of smartphone usage. To maintain objectivity during these direct observations, Teacher B systematically records students' behaviors using a 1-4 scale rubric focusing on core values like honesty, discipline, and tolerance.

Conversely, Teacher A from the private school employs a more diverse methodological strategy by combining direct observation with digital tools. Recognizing the need for objective evaluation during collaborative tasks, Teacher A utilizes platforms like Google Forms to facilitate self-assessment and peer-assessment techniques. Document analysis confirms this integration, showing structured peer-assessment instruments explicitly based on the *Syu'abul Iman* (branches of faith) concept. Field observations further validate that Teacher A seamlessly evaluates students' teamwork, politeness, and responsibility during active group discussions, capturing their authentic social interactions.

Despite utilizing structured rubrics and diverse strategies, field observations reveal that both teachers encounter similar practical constraints. High student-to-teacher ratios and limited instructional time restrict their capacity to conduct comprehensive observations for all students. Consequently, observation reports indicate that the teachers primarily focus their affective assessments on students exhibiting prominent behaviors, whether highly active or markedly passive.

Utilization of Affective Assessment Results

The findings reveal that teachers in both schools overcome the 'utilization blindspot' by employing affective assessment results as an active formative feedback loop rather than solely as summative administrative scores. Both educators systematically use the data to evaluate students' spiritual progression, adapt pedagogical approaches, and design targeted character-building interventions. Table 4 presents the extracted interview data regarding how both educators utilize their affective assessment results in practice.

Table 4. Interview Result Data on the Utilization of Affective Assessment Results

Interview Data	Coding	Resources	
"The assessment results help me adjust my approach, for example, by providing more role modeling or collaborative activities if students' social attitudes are still low."	Pedagogical Adjustment Formative Feedback	and (Private School)	A
"When a child has been given warnings one, two, three times and there is still no change, then I will allocate a special time to guide this child so that there is a change in terms of their character."	Targeted Care and Intervention	Pastoral Direct (Public School)	B

The data in Table 4 demonstrate how both teachers promptly modify their strategies when assessment data indicate that students have not met the expected affective indicators. Teacher A utilizes these results to adjust teaching methods, making the instruction more engaging and exemplary through collaborative activities. In contrast, Teacher B utilizes the data as a signal to reinforce his role as a moral exemplar. Teacher B applies a direct and firm intervention strategy by allocating specific personal coaching time for students who exhibit persistent negative behaviors.

Furthermore, field observations and document analysis reveal distinct collaborative approaches shaped by the governance of each school. To encourage independent moral supervision at home, Teacher B proactively communicates the affective assessment results directly to parents. Conversely, Teacher A relies on a structured tripartite collaboration, using affective data to coordinate with homeroom teachers and guidance counselors for personalized coaching. Document analysis of teaching modules in both institutions confirms the inclusion of student reflection sheets and self-evaluation journals designed to prompt self-correction. These empirical findings indicate that affective assessments in both schools function beyond standard evaluation tools, serving as an active medium

for continuous character development, acting as an active medium for continuous character building.

DISCUSSION

Teachers' Understanding of Affective Assessment

Empirical evidence indicates that IRE teachers in both school contexts perceive affective assessment as an authentic evaluation of students' spiritual habituation (*akhlak*) rather than a mere administrative checklist. This epistemological stance corroborates contemporary literature integrating Krathwohl's affective taxonomy with the Islamic trilogy of *Iman*, *Islam*, and *Ihsan* (Badri & Malik, 2024; Mahfuzah, M.Z. et al., 2022). Teachers acknowledge that theoretical religious knowledge loses its transformative function unless manifested in ethical behavior. This perspective conceptually mirrors Al-Ghazali's paradigm of *Tazkiyatun Nafs*, framing moral education as a holistic spiritual journey rather than mechanical compliance (Jenuri et al., 2025; Mulyadi et al., 2025).

Teacher B's emphasis on being a moral exemplar (*uswatun hasanah*) reflects the spiritual competence required of IRE teachers to serve as central behavioral compasses for their students (Samad et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Teacher A's effort to quantify the abstract affective domain through structured instruments operationalizes the concept of *Muhasabah* in a modern pedagogical context (Purwanto et al., 2023). This approach empowers students to continuously correct their moral weaknesses autonomously. By translating abstract learning outcomes into empirically measurable indicators, both teachers successfully operationalize the holistic education paradigm embedded within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Amalia et al., 2024; Harjanti et al., 2026). The empirical evidence from this study confirms that effective affective assessment is fundamentally driven by the teachers' spiritual competence and profound epistemological beliefs (Fadilah et al., 2025; Samad et al., 2023). The theoretical implication of this finding highlights that a strong epistemological foundation acts as the primary defense mechanism, preventing affective assessment from being reduced to bureaucratic compliance amidst high administrative burdens and large class sizes (Zubaidah et al., 2026).

Planning of Affective Assessment

Teachers in both institutions systematically integrate affective assessment planning into their pedagogical design. This practice confirms recent literature emphasizing the necessity of translating abstract learning outcomes within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* into empirically measurable behavioral indicators, such as the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* and the operationalization of *Syu'abul Iman* (Amalia et al., 2024; Harjanti et al., 2026). However, comparative analysis highlights distinct planning variations driven by institutional governance. The public school's reliance on the MGMP for rubric standardization exemplifies a hierarchical bureaucratic system. Such systems prioritize uniformity and structural neutrality, utilizing iterative co-construction to minimize teacher subjectivity bias across massive student demographics (Mincu & D'Addio, 2026).

Conversely, the private school's adaptive planning approach reflects the broader pedagogical autonomy typically found in decentralized faith-based institutions. This autonomy grants teachers the latitude to deeply contextualize

assessment criteria to the specific socio-cultural climate and character needs of their students, resulting in a more consolidated transmission of moral socialization (Claes & Moulin, 2026; Zubaidah et al., 2026). The essential contribution of this study underscores that the successful planning of IRE affective assessment does not operate in a vacuum; rather, it is significantly moderated by the sociological climate and policy governance of the institution, which ultimately dictates whether teachers adopt a structurally standardized approach or an autonomous-contextualized strategy (Mincu & D'Addio, 2026; Zubaidah et al., 2026)

Strategies for Implementing Affective Assessment

In both ecosystems, the implementation of affective assessment relies primarily on continuous observation integrated into daily instruction rather than isolated testing. The public school's strategy of utilizing school-wide cultural routines, such as *Ngaji Pagi* and strict disciplinary enforcement, aligns with the sociological perspective that school culture acts as a dynamic moderator in internalizing ethical values (Nizariah et al., 2025). This corroborates the premise that continuous religious habituation converts ritual compliance into authentic moral self-regulation (Ristiana et al., 2025). Conversely, the private school's integration of digital tools, such as utilizing Google Forms for peer-assessment and self-assessment, operationalizes the Islamic epistemological concept of *Muhasabah* in a modern context. Recent literature corroborates that this digital integration not only resolves the abstraction of character evaluation but also facilitates students' self-regulation, empathy, and honesty without adding excessive administrative burdens (Lin et al., 2024; Zaibout et al., 2024).

Despite differing pedagogical strategies, both educators face similar structural constraints, specifically high student-to-teacher ratios and limited instructional time. These limitations force teachers to focus their observations primarily on students exhibiting prominent behaviors, either exceptionally active or passive. This finding corroborates the systemic paradox highlighted in previous studies, where the ideal complexity of comprehensive character measurement frequently clashes with practical classroom limitations and heavy administrative burdens (Salani et al., 2025; Williams et al., 2026; Zubaidah et al., 2026). The practical contribution of this study emphasizes that while cultural routines and digital assessment innovations are effective strategies for capturing affective data, their optimal and equitable execution requires systemic institutional support to overcome the persistent challenge of large classroom sizes.

Utilization of Affective Assessment Results

This study demonstrates how IRE teachers transcend the 'utilization blindspot' frequently highlighted in previous literature (Lui & Andrade, 2022). Rather than reducing affective data to summative report card scores, educators actively employ these results as a dynamic formative feedback loop AfL. By adapting pedagogical strategies such as increasing role-modeling or collaborative activities when social attitudes decline teachers operationalize the concept of *Muhasabah*. In this context, assessment is transformed from a rigid measurement tool into a spiritual-ethical instrument that triggers internal moral correction for both students and educators (Purwanto et al., 2023). This utilization confirms that

precise and reflective affective measurement is an essential pedagogical bridge preventing IRE from becoming mere doctrinal rote learning (Wang et al., 2026; Zubaidah et al., 2026).

Furthermore, the comparative findings regarding targeted interventions reveal how institutional structures shape pastoral care. The public school teacher's direct parental communication and firm personal coaching reflect a centralized, teacher-driven intervention model. In contrast, the private school teacher's reliance on a structured tripartite collaboration involving homeroom teachers and guidance counselors demonstrates a systemic, decentralized approach. Despite these structural differences, both approaches effectively align with contemporary literature recommending that successful character building requires an integrated ecosystem linking school authorities and families (Halimah et al., 2025; Kang et al., 2025). The theoretical and practical contribution of this study lies in redefining affective assessment in Islamic education: it is proven not as the final destination of learning evaluation, but rather as an active, transformative catalyst that systematically guides pedagogical interventions to achieve the ultimate goal of moral excellence or *Ihsan* (Nurhakim & Rahman, 2025).

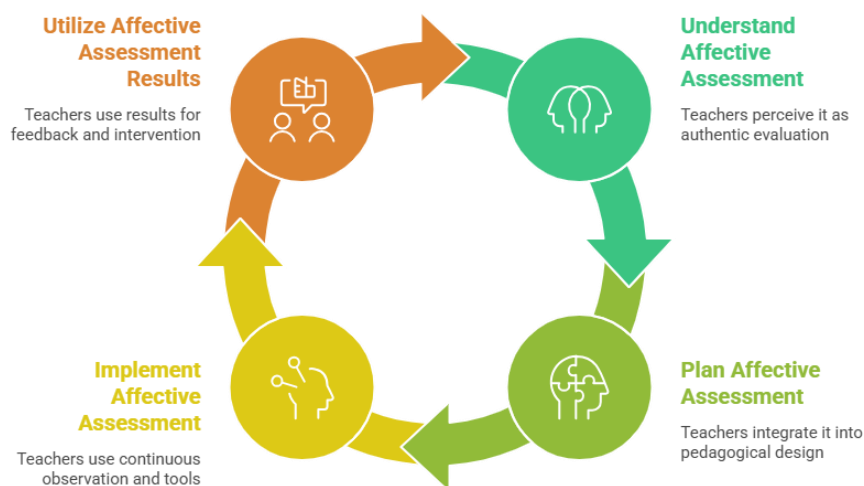


Figure 1. Affective Assessment Cycle in IRE Education

CONCLUSION

Effective affective assessment in IRE transcends mere administrative compliance, functioning fundamentally as an authentic and transformative catalyst for moral character development (*Ihsan*). Despite operating within divergent institutional ecosystems where the public school relies on bureaucratic standardization and school-wide cultural routines, and the private school leverages pedagogical autonomy through digital peer-assessments both institutions effectively mitigated the 'utilization blindspot.' The educators transformed affective data into active formative feedback loops (*AfL*) and established targeted, tripartite pastoral care. Ultimately, the success of character evaluation depends not solely on the technical sophistication of the measurement instruments, but rather on the educators' profound epistemological beliefs and the institutional support that contextualizes the assessment.

Despite these pedagogical insights, this study acknowledges certain methodological limitations. The qualitative multiple-case study design was

confined to two schools within a specific socio-religious environment, inherently limiting the broader generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, empirical data revealed that both institutions continue to face systemic constraints namely high student-to-teacher ratios and limited instructional time which occasionally hinder comprehensive character observation. Consequently, educational policymakers are encouraged to design adaptive administrative guidelines that structurally support teachers in managing these constraints without compromising assessment authenticity. For future research, employing a mixed-methods approach or longitudinal design across a wider demographic of educational institutions is suggested to comprehensively investigate the long-term impact of affective assessment on students' holistic character formation.

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