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Reflective Practice as Spiritual Practice: A Classroom Management Bridging Model for Novice Islamic Religious Education Teachers

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Abstract

Novice Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers must manage a classroom effectively while nurturing students' moral and spiritual growth, a dual demand that pre-service training rarely fully prepares them for. When theoretical preparation meets an unpredictable classroom, novice teachers often experience pedagogical shock. Existing reflective practice frameworks explain how teachers work through such shock, yet they rarely examine how religious values shape that process. This study aims to explore the gap between theoretical and practical classroom management among novice teachers, examine the role of reflective practice in narrowing it, and develop a bridging model that integrates reflective practice with Islamic educational values. Using a qualitative case study design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis with four novice teachers. Credibility was secured through source and technique triangulation, and data were analyzed through data condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Findings reveal a persistent theory-practice gap that is addressed through two complementary reflective habits, retrospective evaluation and in-action adjustment, both reinforced by *tadabbur*, *rahmah*, *adab*, *muhasabah*, and *uswah hasanah*. These findings extend transformative learning theory beyond its secular foundations. They show that pedagogical shock can trigger not only critical reflection but also a spiritually grounded reworking of professional identity, offering induction programs a model in which reflection functions as both a pedagogical skill and a form of moral formation.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of a teacher has shifted from a simple transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator who shapes students' character and behavior in the classroom. This shift places a demanding dual responsibility on novice Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers. They must convey religious knowledge accurately while also modeling the moral and spiritual values that knowledge is meant to instill. Estaji & Haji-Karim (2024) and Alazmi (2023) describe reflective practice as a repeated, systematic process in which teachers gather evidence from their own teaching, analyze it, and use the analysis to improve future instruction. This process does more than sharpen technical skills. It also helps teachers understand themselves and the professional experiences that shape their growth. For a novice IRE teacher who carries both academic and spiritual responsibilities, this reflective capacity is not optional. It is the mechanism through which classroom management skills develop over time, rather than arriving fully formed from pre-service training alone.

However, the field reality facing new IRE teachers rarely matches this ideal. Many novice teachers experience what can be described as a shock to the pedagogical culture once they step into an actual classroom. Limited teaching experience collides with unpredictable student behavior, tight time constraints, and thin guidance from senior colleagues or the headteacher. Kellner &

Attorps (2025) documents concrete barriers behind this shock. Teachers struggle to find time for reflective journaling amid mounting administrative work. They also lack the analytical skill needed for honest self-critique and rarely receive peer support for examining their own teaching. These barriers compound rather than resolve themselves over time. Wettstein et al. (2021) links weak classroom management directly to lower student engagement and more frequent classroom disruptions. For IRE teachers specifically, the stakes run deeper than academic outcomes alone, since a poorly managed classroom also disrupts the transmission of the religious and moral values the subject is meant to deliver.

Scholarship on reflective practice has grown steadily over the past decade, yet its center of gravity remains largely secular. Much of this literature treats reflection as a generic cognitive routine that any teacher in any context can adopt regardless of institutional values. Studies that connect reflective practice explicitly to Islamic educational values remain far scarcer, and most that do exist approach the connection conceptually rather than through direct classroom evidence. Umar (2024) develop the theological grounding of *tadabbur* (contemplative reflection rooted in the Quran) as a learning approach, Gourlay (2023) argue for reconstructing Islamic educational identity through classical epistemology. However, neither study tests how these values actually operate inside the daily reflective routines of a working teacher. This leaves a gap between a well-developed theoretical argument for Islamic-grounded reflection and empirical evidence of what that reflection looks like in practice, particularly among novice teachers still forming their professional identity.

Research on reflective practice shows that structured reflection strengthens pedagogical awareness and connects classroom decisions to concrete evidence rather than habit. (Perkins, 2024; 2025). A related body of scholarship documents the persistent gap between classroom management theory and field reality, framing this mismatch as a normal, even necessary, trigger for professional adjustment rather than a sign of poor preparation (Edwards-Maddox et al., 2021; Wantu et al., 2023). Meanwhile, scholarship on Islamic educational institutions argues that these settings require a distinct epistemological foundation rooted in revelation rather than secular management theory alone, drawing on concepts such as *adab* and *rahmah* within classical Islamic pedagogy (Jamaludin & Rahmadi Bagus Wijaya, 2024; Sa'adi, 2025). These bodies of work rarely intersect within a single empirical study. What is missing is an account of how reflective practice and Islamic spiritual values actually combine inside the lived experience of one novice teacher managing one real classroom.

This study addresses that gap through a single bounded case rather than a broad survey, and MTs YPPMI Arjasa was selected for reasons directly grounded in the research problem. The school sits on Kangean Island in Sumenep Regency, a peripheral setting where novice teachers often receive less structured mentoring than their counterparts in urban madrasah. This makes the site an information-rich case for observing how teachers build classroom management competence largely through their own reflective effort rather than through institutional scaffolding. The four teachers selected through purposive sampling were in their first or second year of service. They already engaged in independent pedagogical reflection, making their experience directly relevant to the research questions rather than incidental to them (Elmas et al., 2023). A case study design suits this purpose because it captures contextual meaning without requiring the researcher to manipulate or standardize the setting under study (Taylor & Muir, 2025). Depth of understanding within this one setting, not statistical generalization across many, is the design's explicit goal.

The analytical lens for this study combines two frameworks that are rarely brought together explicitly. The first is reflective practice theory, most closely associated with Donald Schön's account of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, in which a practitioner treats experience itself as the raw material for professional learning (Chen, 2023). The second is a cluster of Islamic educational concepts, including *tadabbur* as contemplative reflection, *rahmah* as a compassionate orientation toward students, *adab* as habituated moral conduct, *muhasabah* as ongoing self-accounting, and *uswah hasanah* as leadership through personal example. Used separately, the first framework explains the mechanics of how reflection improves teaching. In contrast, the second

explains why a teacher would feel obligated to reflect in a particular moral direction in the first place. Brought together, they form a single lens in which reflection is neither a purely technical skill nor a purely devotional act but a practice shaped simultaneously by pedagogical reasoning and religious conviction.

Building on this foundation, the study pursues three interconnected aims. It seeks to describe the specific gap novice IRE teachers experience between theoretical classroom management knowledge and its practical demands, to examine how reflective practice functions as the mechanism through which teachers work through that gap daily, and to reconstruct a classroom management *bridging* model that treats Islamic spiritual values as integral to reflection rather than as an accessory belief system sitting beside it. The significance of this pursuit is not confined to a single school on a single island. Teacher induction programs across Islamic educational institutions face a similar structural problem: how to prepare new teachers for a classroom reality that pre-service theory cannot fully anticipate. A model that treats spiritual formation and pedagogical reflection as a single integrated process offers these programs a concrete alternative to treating classroom management training and religious values education as separate curricular tracks that share a building.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design following a descriptive approach. The design allows the researcher to capture how classroom management strategies are applied under natural conditions without altering the research setting (Flanagan & Symonds, 2022). A case study format also fits the research problem well since the study examines a specific, bounded group of novice teachers rather than testing a hypothesis across a broad population. The research was conducted at MT's YPPMI Arjasa, located in Sumenep Regency on Kangean Island, Madura, East Java Province. Research participants were selected through *purposive sampling* (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). The four participants were novice Islamic Religious Education teachers in their first or second year of service. Each participant was also actively engaged in independent pedagogical reflection as part of their daily teaching routine, which made them well suited to a study focused specifically on reflective classroom management practice. This combination of setting and participant profile provides rich, situated evidence for the research questions this study addresses.

Data for this study were collected through two primary techniques: semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with each of the four teachers on a flexible schedule that accommodated their teaching duties. These interviews were designed to elicit rich descriptive accounts of teaching challenges, emotional strain, and the reasoning behind reflective classroom decisions. Document analysis complemented the interviews by examining written materials the teachers had already produced. These documents included personal reflection diaries or journals and lesson implementation plans known locally as RPP (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran*). Reviewing these documents enabled the researcher to confirm how each teacher's planning and adaptation strategies aligned with the interview reports. Direct classroom observation was also used in a supplementary capacity, primarily to cross-check interview claims against actual classroom conduct as part of the triangulation process described in the following paragraph. **Table 1** Summarizes these techniques, along with their sources and purposes.

Table 1. Data Collection Techniques Employed in This Study

Technique	Data Source	Purpose
Semi-structured interview	Four novice IRE teachers	Capture challenges, emotional experience, and reflective decision-making
Document analysis	Lesson plans (RPP) and teachers' reflection journals	Confirm planning adaptation and classroom management strategy
Classroom observation (supplementary)	Direct classroom sessions	Cross-check interview claims against actual practice to triangulate techniques.

Source: Developed by the researchers based on the study's data collection procedure (2025).

As **Table 1** shows, these three techniques together support the triangulation strategy used to establish data credibility. Source triangulation involved comparing and cross-checking interview accounts from the four teachers to identify patterns that were consistent across the group. The triangulation technique involved cross-referencing interview data with evidence from classroom observations and written documents, such as the RPP and reflection journals. Once credibility was established through this process, data analysis followed an interactive model built around three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. During data condensation, raw interview transcripts and field notes were sorted, focused, and simplified into manageable units. During data presentation, the condensed data were organized into thematic tables that made pedagogical gaps, reflective habits, and model components visible at a glance. Conclusions were then drawn carefully and checked against the empirical evidence gathered throughout the study, ensuring that each finding remained grounded in what the four teachers actually said and did rather than in the researcher's assumptions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The five components are not parallel virtues but a layered structure. *Tadabbur* and professional reflection form the inner cognitive core, the act of thinking deeply about practice; *rahmah* and *adab* govern the relational surface where teacher meets student; and *uswah hasanah* binds the two by demanding that what the teacher reflects on inwardly be enacted visibly in conduct. The table's significance lies here: it shows that the bridging model does not bolt Islamic values onto a secular reflective cycle but reconstructs reflection itself, so that improving classroom management and forming moral character become the same act. This integration is what distinguishes the model from conventional reflective frameworks and gives it purchase in the Islamic educational setting.

Pedagogical Shock and the Theory-Practice Divide

Classroom management theory taught during pre-service education rests on a stable image of the student. It assumes attention can be won through consistent formulas. It assumes emotional regulation follows a predictable curve. None of these assumptions survive first contact with an actual madrasah (Islamic school) classroom. All four informants in this study described a gap between what they learned and what they encountered once they stood in front of real students. The gap did not appear as a single dramatic failure. It surfaced instead through daily friction: a lesson plan that stalled, a reward system that fell flat, a room that grew louder rather than quieter. This recurring friction forms the foundation of the first finding reported here. Understanding why this gap persists matters because it shapes how a novice teacher's first year unfolds professionally and emotionally. The following two accounts illustrate its cognitive and emotional dimensions, respectively.

Herdiyansah captured the cognitive side of this mismatch:

> *"In college, classroom management theory often assumes that students are subjects who are relatively ready to receive stimuli and are in a stable emotional state. Theory provides ideal formulas such as reward and punishment. However, on the field, the students' character is highly heterogeneous… Managing a classroom is not just about applying formulas in books, but the art of reading children's moods."*

Rizqi described the emotional weight during his first months of teaching:

> *"As a new teacher, I admit that at the beginning I often felt anxious, confused, and doubtful when the class was crowded or out of control. I sometimes feel like a failure and wonder, am I lacking authority? There are times when I feel mentally tired, disappointed, or even want to give up…"*

These two accounts point to a divide that operates on separate levels. Herdiyansah's account shows a cognitive divide. Theory supplies formulas built for stable conditions. Practice demands constant judgment calls that no formula anticipates. Rizqi's account shows a different divide. This one is emotional rather than intellectual. He describes doubt about his own authority and moments when he wants to quit. Neither divide closes through additional theoretical study alone. Both require direct classroom exposure before a teacher can develop working judgment. This pattern also appeared in how lesson plans functioned across all four informants. RPP (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran*, or lesson implementation plan) documents were treated as a starting reference rather than a fixed script. Teachers modified them mid-lesson when actual classroom conditions diverged from the planned lesson. That constant modification is itself evidence of the gap this study set out to examine. Reading experience this way turns each disruption into material for future adjustment rather than simple failure. The patterns recurring across the four informants are organized in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Sources of Divergence Between Classroom Management Theory and Practice

Finding	Description	Illustrative Evidence
Student character heterogeneity	Students' character, motivation, and background were more diverse than the case examples studied during pre-service education.	Reported by all four informants
Classroom discipline difficulty	Management strategies learned in theory did not consistently transfer to real classroom situations.	Herdiyansah, Syarief Halim
Pedagogical shock	Teachers experienced professional and emotional strain when student behavior diverged from expectations.	Rizqi
Divergence between plan and practice	Lesson plans required repeated on-the-spot revision once classroom conditions shifted.	All four informants
Demand for continuous adaptation	Teachers built new strategies from accumulated daily field experience rather than a fixed procedure.	All four informants

Source: Interview data with the four informants, processed by the researchers (2025).

Table 2 Shows five recurring patterns rather than one isolated complaint. Three of the five concern the mismatch between planning and delivery. Two concern the psychological cost of that mismatch on the teacher. This split matters because it shows the gap is not purely technical. A teacher cannot close it by memorizing more classroom management strategies. The gap also carries an emotional weight that a technical fix cannot address. What ties all five patterns together is unpredictability. Student character shifts from one class to the next. Behavior on a given day rarely matches the lesson plan written the night before. Novice IRE teachers respond to this unpredictability by treating experience itself as their primary training resource. No single informant reported all five patterns at once. Each reported enough of them to make the pattern visible across the group. That response sets up the second finding reported in this study.

Two Modes of Reflection in Daily Teaching

None of the four informants remained passive in the face of this gap. Each developed a personal routine for reviewing classroom events and adjusting what came next. That routine took two distinct forms across the data. One form worked backward from a finished lesson through structured evaluation. The other worked forward in real time through spontaneous adjustment while teaching was still underway. Both forms serve the same underlying purpose. They convert a difficult classroom moment into material a teacher can act on rather than endure. This distinction matters because reflective practice is not a single skill. It is instead a pair of complementary capacities that operate on different timelines. Herdiyansah exemplifies the first form through his end-of-day journaling habit. Syarief Halim exemplifies the second through his mid-lesson pivot toward storytelling. Together, their accounts trace the full arc of reflective practice from anticipation to review.

Herdiyansah described his structured post-lesson routine in concrete terms:

> *"Intentionally, I take about 10–15 minutes after the teaching hours are over or during a break in the teacher's room. I did a self-talk and jotted down an important point in a diary: What makes students rowdy at 20 minutes? Why isn't my question being answered? This process is important so that today's mistakes do not become a habit tomorrow."*

Syarief Halim described the opposite motion. He adjusts mid-lesson before a class can unravel:

> *"If stiff lectures and questions make students silent or talk to themselves, teachers often immediately switch to stories of prophets/companions that are connected to the material… The goal: turn your attention first, then move on to the main point… If the basic material is not stuck, forcing the lesson plan to continue will make students lose even more."*

These two accounts show reflection operating on different clocks but toward the same end. Herdiyansah's routine is retrospective. He sets aside ten to fifteen minutes to write down friction points from the day and ask why they occurred. That written record turns a single day's mistake into evidence he can revisit later. Syarief Halim's routine is immediate. He reads the room mid-lesson and pivots the material before disengagement spreads. Where Herdiyansah documents after the fact, Syarief Halim intervenes while the moment is still open. Neither approach alone would close the gap identified earlier in this study. Retrospective evaluation without real-time responsiveness leaves a teacher unable to save a lesson that is already failing. Real-time responsiveness without retrospective evaluation leaves patterns unexamined and prone to repeat. Their combination is what allows classroom friction to become cumulative professional growth instead of recurring failure.

Both routines described here rest on more than technique. They rest on why these teachers believe reflection matters in the first place. That underlying motivation reaches beyond classroom management as a purely professional skill. Herdiyansah frames his journaling as a way to prevent today's mistake from becoming a habit rather than as an administrative task. Syarief Halim frames his mid-lesson pivot as protecting students from losing the lesson entirely rather than as mere classroom control. These framings hint at values that extend past instructional strategy. Both teachers describe their reflective habits in terms that resemble self-examination and moral responsibility rather than technical troubleshooting. That resemblance is not incidental. The next finding traces the source of this motivation and how it reshapes reflective practice into something closer to a spiritual discipline than a management tool.

Islamic Values as the Foundation of Reflective Practice

Reflective practice among these four informants never stayed purely technical for long. Each teacher described evaluating a lesson while also weighing a moral or spiritual question tied to that lesson. This pattern appeared consistently enough to be treated as its own finding rather than a footnote to reflection. Two Islamic concepts recur most clearly across the data. The first is *tadabbur* (contemplative reflection that unites intellectual analysis with attentiveness of the heart, rooted in the Quranic call to ponder God's signs and one's own experience). The second is *uswah hasanah* (the practice of leading through exemplary personal conduct rather than through control). Both concepts reshape the purpose of reflection. Reflection ceases to function solely as a diagnostic tool and begins to function as a form of ethical self-accounting. These teachers treat both as inseparable from professional competence rather than as personal piety kept outside the classroom. The two accounts below show this fusion operating at two different points in the teaching cycle.

Rizqi illustrated *tadabbur* directly when describing his response to a student who broke classroom rules:

> *"When there are students who violate the rules, I do not immediately punish or scold harshly. I tried to do tadabbur first, pondering why he did so, whether there was a problem at home… I use a heart approach. I am aware that forcing it with rules alone can make students hate religious lessons."*

Herdiyansah illustrated *uswah hasanah* when explaining how he builds authority without relying on anger:

> *"I apply the principles of firm but not harsh, soft but not weak. The authority of a new teacher is not built on anger but on the consistency of words and deeds (integrity). I greet the students politely… When students see the teacher respecting them, they will automatically respect (takdim)."*

These two accounts place Islamic values at different points in the teaching cycle. For Rizqi, *tadabbur* functions as a pause before disciplinary action. Reflection redirects an impulsive reaction into an inquiry about a student's circumstances outside school. That inquiry is guided by *rahmah* (compassion), a disposition that favors understanding over punitive control. For Herdiyansah, *uswah hasanah* functions differently, as an ongoing standard against which daily conduct is measured. Authority in his account is not asserted through control. It is earned through consistency between what a teacher says and what a teacher does. Across both cases, reflection is not a neutral technique borrowed and then applied inside an Islamic school. It is reshaped by Islamic ethical categories that supply both the motivation to reflect and the standard by which teachers judge their own conduct. This reshaping is what distinguishes these findings from conventional reflective teaching frameworks.

The full set of Islamic values recurring across the four informants is organized in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Values Embedded in the Reflective Practice of Novice IRE Teachers

Value	Function in Reflective Practice	Manifestation in Classroom Interaction
Tadabbur (contemplative reflection)	Deepens reflection by pairing analysis with attentiveness of the heart	Pausing to consider a student's circumstances before responding to misbehavior
Rahmah (compassion)	Grounds correction in compassion rather than punitive control	Addressing rule violations through dialogue instead of harsh reprimand
Adab (Islamic manners and etiquette)	Builds classroom culture through modeled conduct rather than command	Habitual courtesy and respectful address toward students
Muhasabah (self-accounting or self-evaluation)	Converts self-evaluation into an ongoing moral accounting	Regular review of one's own decisions and their effects on students
Uswah hasanah (exemplary personal conduct)	Establishes authority through consistency between word and deed	Maintaining calm and dignified conduct even under classroom pressure

Source: Interview data with the four informants, processed by the researchers (2025).

Table 3 Shows five values doing distinct but connected work rather than repeating the same idea five times. *Tadabbur* and *muhasabah* operate inward. They shape how a teacher thinks about a situation before and after acting. *Rahmah* and *adab* operate outward. They shape how a teacher treats students in the moment. *Uswah hasanah* sits between the two. It converts internal reflection into visible conduct that students can observe and imitate. This division suggests that reflective practice among novice IRE teachers is not a single habit but a layered system in which cognitive, relational, and behavioral components work together. None of the four informants named all five values explicitly in a single conversation. Each named enough of them in different combinations for the pattern to hold across the group. That consistency justifies treating these values as components of one integrated model rather than as five separate coincidences.

The way these five values combine with pedagogical reflection into one coherent model is presented in **Figure 1**.

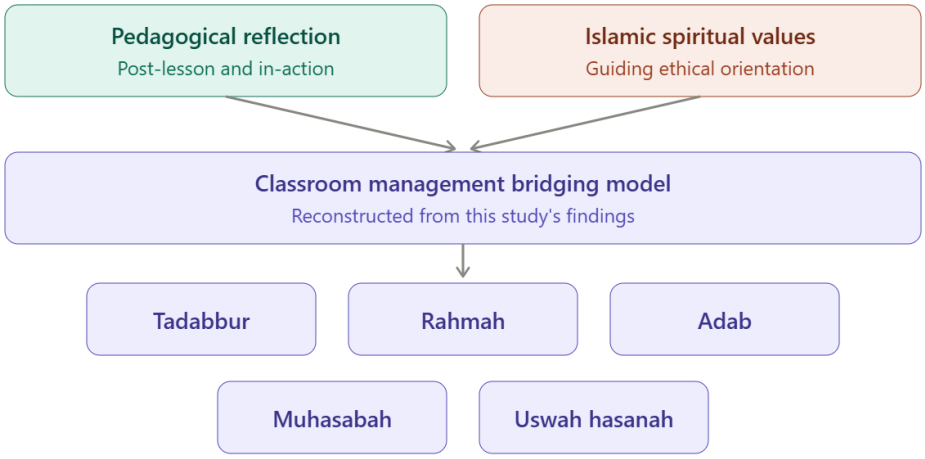

Figure 1. Reconstructed classroom management *bridging* model, integrating pedagogical reflection and Islamic spiritual values into five components.
Source: Developed by the researchers from the study's interview findings (2025).

Figure 1 Shows two separate streams of practice converging into one model rather than two competing frameworks. On one side sits pedagogical reflection, built from the retrospective and in-action habits described in the previous finding. On the other side sits Islamic spiritual value, supplying both motivation and ethical direction. Neither stream alone accounts for what these four teachers actually do inside their classrooms. Pedagogical reflection without spiritual grounding would explain the mechanics of adjustment but not why these teachers frame that adjustment as a moral obligation. Spiritual values without a reflective mechanism would explain the motivation but not how it translates into concrete classroom decisions. The model resolves this by treating the five values as the operational content of reflection rather than as separate add-ons layered on top of it. This integration is the study's central theoretical contribution and answers the third research objective stated in the introduction.

Taken together, these three findings trace a single narrative rather than three separate stories. Novice IRE teachers first encounter a gap between theory and classroom reality. They then develop reflective habits, both retrospective and in-action, to manage that gap day to day. Those habits are in turn shaped and sustained by Islamic values that give reflection its moral weight and direction. The resulting model does not treat spirituality as an addition to professional competence. It treats spirituality as one of the mechanisms through which that competence is built. Each finding also builds on the one before it, so the study's contribution rests on their sequence rather than on any single finding taken alone. Readers who work in similar novice-teacher induction settings may recognize each stage in their own context, even where the specific values involved differ. This sequence directly answers the three objectives stated in the introduction of this study.

Discussion

The gap novice IRE teachers described between theory and practice is not unique to this study. It matches a pattern long documented in classroom management research (Bekar & Kutlu, 2025) describe this pattern through the Discrepancy Evaluation Model. The model treats any mismatch between an ideal standard and lived classroom experience as a signal for ongoing pedagogical adjustment rather than as a failure to fix once and for all. Read through that lens, the difficulties reported by Herdiyansah and Rizqi are not evidence of poor preparation. They are the expected first stage of a professional trajectory that only experience can complete. This reframing matters for how teacher education programs should respond. A program built only to transfer more theoretical content would miss the point entirely. What novice teachers need instead is structured support for building judgment under uncertainty, a capacity no lecture alone can install.

Complex classroom dynamics compound this difficulty further. Intergenerational differences in expectation and communication style between teachers and students widen the very gap this study set out to examine (Josephine & Jones, 2022). Facing a stressful moment or outright pedagogical shock, a teacher needs more than technical routine. (Garaigordobil, 2020) calls this need intrapersonal intelligence, meaning the capacity to recognize one's own limits, regulate emotion under pressure, and respond with sharp situational judgment rather than panic. Herdiyansah and Rizqi both display early forms of that capacity even as they describe genuine distress. Their accounts align with Donald Schön's account of reflective practice and Thomas Farrell's extension of it, both of which reject the image of the teacher as a rigid technician executing fixed procedures (Farrell, 2022). Instead, these frameworks describe a teacher who continuously remaps theory and action in response to what a specific classroom actually demands, which is exactly the behavior this study observed in the field.

The two reflective routines described in this study, retrospective evaluation and in-action adjustment, closely align with what (Şener & Mede, 2023) identify as the core mechanism of reflective teaching. Their model describes reflection as passing through stages of mapping, informing, contesting, appraisal, and acting, a cycle through which ineffective habits are overhauled into more workable strategies. Herdiyansah's journaling maps onto the mapping and informing stages. Syarief Halim's mid-lesson pivot maps onto contesting and acting under pressure. Neither teacher works through this cycle in isolation from the wider school community, and this points to a factor worth naming. Reflection becomes more effective when teachers collaborate and share experience through professional forums such as subject teacher meetings, since collective reflection expands both material knowledge and pedagogical creativity through peer exchange (Segal, 2024). Digital tools add a further layer of support, since mobile learning platforms and interactive applications can make reflective evaluation more consistent and easier to sustain over time (Kadyrova et al., 2025).

The reflective practice described by these four teachers departs from the Western tradition in one important respect. Reflection here is never religiously neutral. Islamic education management has a theocentric-anthropocentric character, meaning its ontological and epistemological foundations rest on revelation rather than on secular professional standards alone (Saitul Mahtir et al., 2025). Rizqi's use of *tadabbur* before disciplining a student illustrates this directly, since the concept draws on QS. Shad [38]:29, which calls believers to unite intellectual reasoning with clarity of heart when interpreting a situation (Cruz, 2023). The compassion Rizqi describes through *rahmah* also resonates with Carl Rogers' concept of unconditional positive regard, yet its justification here comes from a different source. (Nurpratiwi, 2020) show that the wisdom principle in QS. An-Nahl:125 supports the same disposition, allowing pedagogical dialogue to proceed without coercion or force. Herdiyansah's insistence on integrity as the true basis of authority likewise reflects Al-Ghazali's epistemology, in which ethical consistency and intellectual clarity are inseparable (Burhanudin, 2023).

Beyond the individual classroom, the values documented in this study carry consequences at the institutional level. (Lestari & Nopiana, 2024) argue that classroom management grounded in moderation, manners, and local wisdom does more than maintain order. It also helps protect adolescents from exclusive ideology and radicalism circulating within educational institutions. The *bridging* model reconstructed here gives that protective function a concrete pedagogical form rather than leaving it as an abstract policy goal. A teacher who habitually practices *adab* and *uswah hasanah* is, in effect, modeling the moderate religious disposition that institutional policy on radicalism prevention can only describe from the outside. This has direct implications for how madrasahs and Islamic schools structure new-teacher induction. Rather than treating spiritual formation and classroom management training as separate tracks, induction programs could integrate them from the outset, using the five components identified in this study as a practical curriculum rather than as a set of separate virtues absorbed informally over time.

This study's most specific contribution lies in its addition to transformative learning theory. Mezirow's classic account treats a disorienting dilemma as the trigger for critical reflection, which in turn reshapes a person's underlying frame of meaning rather than adding an isolated new skill (Eschenbacher & Fleming, 2020). The pedagogical shock reported by Herdiyansah and Rizqi functions as such a dilemma, disrupting their prior assumption that classroom management could be carried out through fixed formulas. What this study adds is the specific frame through which that disruption gets resolved. For these teachers, resolution does not come from secular critical reasoning alone. It comes through *tadabbur*, *muhasabah*, and the other Islamic values documented here, which provide both the interpretive lens and the moral motivation to rework professional assumptions. The result is a transformation that is at once pedagogical and spiritual, producing a teacher who manages a classroom differently because they have come to understand their own role differently. This extends transformative learning theory beyond its largely secular origins and offers a model of professional transformation grounded in religious epistemology, one that future research on teacher induction in faith-based institutions can test and build upon.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the gap between theoretical and practical classroom management among novice IRE teachers, the role that reflective practice plays in narrowing that gap, and how Islamic values shape a reconstructed *bridging* model of classroom management practice. The findings confirm a persistent gap between pre-service theory and the unpredictable reality of madrasah classrooms. They also show that novice teachers close this gap through two complementary reflective habits, retrospective evaluation and in-action adjustment, both of which are shaped by Islamic values including *tadabbur*, *muhasabah*, *rahmah*, *adab*, and *uswah hasanah* rather than by secular technique alone. These findings were drawn from four informants at a single madrasah, so they describe one case in depth rather than a pattern that can be generalized across institutions or regions. The reliance on interview data also means the study captures how teachers describe their reflection rather than directly observing it. Future research could test this model across multiple schools, incorporate classroom observations directly, or use a mixed-methods design to measure its effect on teaching quality more rigorously.

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