

# The Importance of Self-Assessment for Islamic Education Teacher as *Mudarris*

Azwani Masuwai, Hafizhah Zulkifli and Ab Halim Tamuri

Faculty of Education, National University of Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

Email: hafizhah\_zulkifli@ukm.edu.my, abhalim@ukm.edu.my

Corresponding Author Email: azwanimasuwai@yahoo.com

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## Abstract

Self-assessment is an approach of self-directed learning that gives an autonomy for teachers to prepared their respective professionalism. It comes from the concept of *mahasabah* by Al-Ghazali aimed to form self-discipline in determining the pattern of life with self-reflect. Bandura through Social Cognitive Theory presents that teacher change arises through the teacher's own self-assessment experience. Teachers' cognitive about their practice is their perception of effectiveness in student learning. Thus, as reflective practitioners, teacher need to perform self-assessment as a process of self-reflection to identify deficiencies and weaknesses in their teaching in terms of knowledge, skill and personality. As *mudarris* that able to organize his teaching in an instructional manner, practicing self-assessment is the best approach to achieve a teaching objective in the classroom especially in creating the instructional quality of Islamic Education teachers.

**Keywords:** Self-Assessment, Islamic Education Teacher, *Mahasabah*, *Mudarris*, Professional Development

## Introduction

The goal of Islamic Education is an effort towards the development of producing knowledgeable, noble, and responsible person as well as being good citizens who are able to develop individual potential, knowledgeable, faith in God, skilled, have noble character and able to achieve personal well-being that can contribute to the family, society and country. The role of Islamic Education teachers (IET) to perceive this objective faced high challenge by dealing with various forms of tests on the fundamental of responsibility towards society, community and country. IET need to persevere and resilience to carry out this trust as best as possible as a means to dignify this respected teaching profession.

As regards, professional development among IET is the main focus in the current education system. Specifically in Malaysia, Chapter 4 of the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013 - 2025, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has been introduced to all Education Service Officers (ESO) as a process to gain learning experience formally and informally throughout their careers (Teacher Education Development Master Plan Ministry of Education, 2016). One of the main objectives of CPD is to develop the professional competence of ESO towards strengthening the desired specific attributes which

are aspirational, competent, efficient, strategic, and visionary. This study focusses on the third initiatives of CPD initiatives for individual self which is:

*“Practices to cultivate self-directed learning and provide autonomy for the development of professionalism that is driven through self-planning, self-regulating, self-assessment and self-improvement.”*

This activity approach gives priority to independent initiatives to plan and develop their own capabilities in line with the outlined Competency Standards and Performance Standards. This is an effort that needs to be done by a teacher in particular towards the development of their respective professionalism as Al-Ghazali himself said that an excellent and professional IET are those who emphasize aspects of personality, teaching and learning as well as skills (Jasmi, 2010).

### **Background of the Study**

An effective teacher should emphasize the application of the vision and mission of Islamic Education into teaching and learning (TnL) preparation that involved induction set, teaching approach, class management, teaching aids, assessment and TnL closure which are important elements of TnL (Jasmi, 2010). It is supported by Batjo and Ambotang (2019), the formation of teacher teaching quality is observed from the teacher teaching practice. This quality needs to be prioritized among teachers as they are the main role in determining human capital formation (Kasmin et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, there are some issues that arise involving the knowledge, skills and personality of teachers. The teacher's challenge covers external or internal challenges that become apparent from the development of technology and the current era of globalization which entail with personality, knowledge, and skills issue (Ahmad, 2022). From the previous studies, the gap from the theoretical point of view has identified about the need for self-assessment practice among the teachers.

Self-assessment is a stimulus for a person to respond and produce a reflection on the assessment to change. It is important for teachers as an effort in making changes in their duties (Sulaiman, 2014) as recommended by (Al-Ghazali, 2004). It is as an attempt to awaken believers to achieve the nature (*fitrah*) and will of Islam. Aziz and Yamin (2012) stated that assessment is required to improve teaching and learning and it is important for teachers to learn and diversify their teaching methods. According to Tesser (1988), from the reflection process, self-esteem of the teacher can be increased. The better performance of a task can be achieved if a person shares his success or achievement by providing benefits to others.

Self-assessment in this study focuses on the reflective practice or *muhasabah* by IET to reflect on what has been done, especially the teaching activities in the classroom. Throughout, teachers can identify his/her weaknesses and deficiencies and take actions to overcome this problem. Self-assessment also can identify the aspects of a teacher's strength to guide teacher to assess other requirements needed to improve the instructional quality of teachers as *mudarris* and their level of professionalism.

### **Definition of Self-Assessment**

Self-assessment is widely defined from previous studies which refers to a person's assessment of himself for certain matters and actions. Shulman (1987); Cruickshank (1986) and Korthagen (1985) see reflection as an important element in learning to teach. Schön (1987) has

introduced the process of reflection from the perspective of building practical knowledge in the context of teachers' professional practice where all of them are contributors to our knowledge and understanding of reflection (Hussin, 2004).

According to Ajem & Memon (2011), evaluation and assessment is an Islamic pedagogical practice which is the basic value of the spiritual entity of self-evaluation (reflection) which aims to remove obstacles between teachers and students in order to achieve educational excellence. Assessment is a stimulus for a person to respond and reflect on the evaluation (Sulaiman, 2014) as it is carried out in non-threatening situation where the teacher does not need to be afraid or worried about bad assessments from other evaluators. Haertel (1993) added that self-assessment is the process of collecting data and information about a teacher's teaching self-achievement. This approach can be divided into two categories, namely reflective practice, and self-regulation (Masuwai et al., 2021).

On the other hand, reflection is a structured framework for assessing a need. It is an opportunity for us to respond to the assessment (Burns & Grove, 1982); Masuwai, 2018). It is the knowledge and belief to respond to a certain content that encourages a person to always think, be enthusiastic and always respond (Mezirow, 1990). Hussin (2000) stressed that reflection is a process of pondering, analysing problems, finding reasons, suggestions, and actions to improve oneself and a necessity where we look at the past to make changes today (Baba, 2006).

Self-assessment is similar to the concept of *hisbah* in Islam known as *muhasabah*. Makhzin (2012) has defined *muhasabah* as the calculation of practices derived from the part of self-reflection (*muhasabat al-nafs*) which means internal supervision where every practice or behavior is recalculated to ensure that it always receives the grace of Allah S.W.T. The concept of *hisbah* through reflection serves to make people aware of the responsibility of preserving the rights of God, human rights, and common rights. As defined in Dewan (2016), *muhasabah* is the act of self-evaluation (thoughts, attitudes and so on) for self-improvement, introspection, reflecting to assess ourselves to build stronger confidence.

In a nutshell, self-assessment can be concluded as an assessment in pedagogy practice to obtain information about teacher's teaching in order to identify what is happening. It will create reflective practice and self-regulation for a person and respond to the information obtained to create a positive change. Whilst, it is a process of self-awareness where teacher evaluates himself and their responsibility that needs to be taken in safeguarding the rights. It should be based on the calculation of practice to achieve the grace and pleasure (*redha*) of Allah S.W.T.

In addition, there are many "self" terms are involved with the concept of self-assessment to give a different meaning about the role of a teacher. The terms mentioned are for the purpose of better understanding of self-assessment and the difference between it. It needs to be understood well with it can be applied efficiently according to its own function. The differences between the terms can be identified through Table 1.

Table 1

*Self-Assessment Terms*

Terms	Definition
<i>Self-assessment</i>	Self-evaluation as an integration of three main processes that lead to professional self-regulation (Ross & Bruce, 2007).
<i>Self-regulation</i>	This self-regulation is used to observe and interpret their own attitudes by making self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction (Ross & Bruce, 2007). Involving emotional factors, personal growth, and development (Petty, 2009).
<i>Self-observation</i>	Activities that inform a lesson are documented or recorded for review or for teaching evaluation (Richards & Farrell, 2005).
<i>Self-judgement</i>	The results of individual thoughts about themselves where each meaning of their thought is interrelated (Phaedonos & Anastassiou-Hadjicharalambous, 2011). Example: If I am tough on myself, other people probably won't be as tough.
<i>Self-reaction</i>	Giving something (in return) or adapting to change a situation (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2022).
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	Self-assessment contributes to teachers' beliefs about their ability towards student learning, which is teacher efficacy which is also professional self-efficacy (Ross & Bruce, 2007). The self-perception of an individual's ability and capacity is related to their past self-condition (Bandura, 1993).
<i>Self-regulatory capability</i>	The ability of a person to develop his thinking to evaluate his own behavior and from that he can regulate himself which affects his subsequent behavior (Tarsidi, 2002).
<i>Self-reflective capability</i>	The ability of a person to do self-reflection by analyzing his experience and making an assessment from it (Tarsidi, 2002).

**Concept of Self-Assessment**

There are some theory and model underlying the concept of self-assessment in this study. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory introduced in 1997 stated that teacher change arises through the teacher's own self-assessment experience. His/her experience as self-efficacy becomes an intermediary that influences self-assessment in teacher practice. Teachers' cognitive about their practice is their perception of effectiveness in student learning. Through this theory, the self-evaluation done by a person can create self-efficacy which encourages a person's self-regulation towards something.

According to Tarsidi (2010), self-regulatory capability under the basic human cognitive ability explains that a person develops his thinking to evaluate his own behaviour and it can regulate himself which affects the next behaviour. While self-reflective capability is the ability to self-reflect by analysing one's experience and making an assessment from it. This process involves basic cognitive ability which is deep thinking in self-assessment that requires a person to assess his own ability to achieve various goals.

The idea of Self-Control and Evaluation (محاسبة النفس بعد العمل) that brought by Al-Ghazali (2004) in his book *Ihya' Ulumuddin* showed the close relation of self-assessment with the concept of *muhasabah*. *Muhasabah* is an effort to make believers aware of the nature and

will of Islam. It is aimed at forming self-discipline to always make evaluations in determining the pattern of life (Al-Battani, 2000) and recognize oneself with all the shortcomings one has and always make sure oneself strives to improve weaknesses (Makhsin, 2012). Salleh (2018) stated that self-assessment through reflection is a step that can be taken by IET as a necessity towards increasing self-competence in line with the demands of the Islamic religion itself.

Ibn Khaldun (2002) in his book *Muqaddimah* states that the purpose of *hisbah* is to invite people with good things and prevent evil where it aims to call people towards goodness. This purpose is consistent with the concept of *da'wah* where the goal and aspect of both are the same, which is to implement *al-'amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (Ibn Taimiyah, 1973). Through this equation, the concept of *hisbah* through evaluation practice (reflection) plays a role in making people aware of the responsibility of preserving the rights of God, human rights, and common rights (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

The application of reflection concept in educational practice requires a teacher to ensure that he performs his duties and responsibilities as best as possible. This demand is as a trust that needs to be done to preserve the rights of students over their teachers, the rights of school administrators over the teachers under their supervision, the rights of fellow teachers over their other colleagues and the rights of parents over the teachers who teach their children. The implementation of this trust is very important because it will determine the quality of a task. This affirmation is expressed in the words of God in Surah An-Nisaa' Verse 4: 58.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

*Meaning: Verily, Allah commands you to hand over all kinds of trust to those who are entitled to receive it, and when you administer the law between people, (God commands) you punish justly. Indeed, Allah with (His order) gives you the best lesson. Indeed, God is always Listening, yet always Seeing.*

A teacher who carries out his responsibilities diligently will produce a positive result to others. Students will get effective learning from quality teaching and a school administrator will get satisfactory work results from a competent teacher. While fellow teachers will get good cooperation from a teacher who has high confidence and parents will get positive expectation for their children by the efforts of aspirational teacher. Those are aspects of excellence teacher that must be present by IET as honouring teaching professionalism. The main principles of this self-assessment concept can be summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

*The Concept of Self-Assessment*

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977)	Self-Monitoring and Evaluation محاسبة النفس بعد العمل Imam Al-Ghazali (n.d.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher's own self-assessment experience where self-efficacy becomes an intermediary that influences self-assessment in the teacher's practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Muhasabah</i> is evaluation to yourself before or after doing something, whether it can be seen with the naked eye (outward) or what comes to mind.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers' cognitive about their practice is their perception of effectiveness in student learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is done to observe our intention, purpose and behaviour on a matter to get clarity whether the matter gives addition or reduction to the practice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating self-efficacy that encourages a person's self-regulation towards something.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-efficacy is related to faith, i.e. a person who believes in Allah S.W.T will perform the practices required by the <i>syara'</i>, which are pious practices performed based on the individual's belief in his own abilities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The four sources of teacher efficacy knowledge are mastery experience, setting goals and efforts taken, teachers' willingness to try new teaching ideas and influence the efforts made.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aiming to form self-discipline, recognize yourself with all the shortcomings you have and always make sure you strive to improve your weaknesses as well as a need towards increasing your own competence.</li> </ul>

The concept of *muhasabah* brought by Al-Ghazali appear as the basis for self-assessment concept. For Islamic approach, teachers as individuals who are responsible for imparting knowledge and skills to their students need to always make evaluation of their practices. All the rights entrusted to them can be properly fulfilled that called awareness. The teacher will do the right thing in the direction of achieving the goals of Islam. The evaluation process that has been practice create teacher's self-efficacy based on faith (*iman*) which demands the practice followed by the *syara'*. The teacher will shape himself to be disciplined, improve their weaknesses, and constantly strive.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory places self-efficacy as an intermediary between teachers' self-assessment and their practice. Every teacher's action is based on their efficiency, which is called self-regulation. They organize all the actions that will be done and it exists by reason of experience and targeted goals. It is also a result of the willingness and efforts of the teacher himself. Therefore, in carrying out self-assessment, teachers need to have self-reflective capability and self-regulatory capability as an impetus of reflective practice.

The better understanding of self-assessment concept will guide the implementation process of reflection. The aim of quality teaching can be achieved through the self-assessment process that carried out by the teacher himself. The good practice of self-assessment can bring teachers to achieve self-efficacy towards formation of instructional quality of teacher. Figure 1 shows the framework of the study.

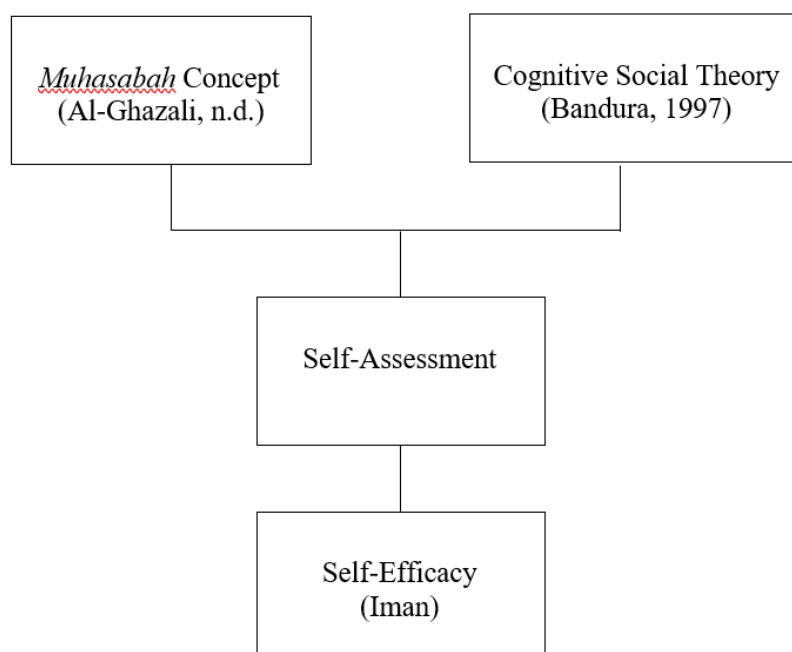


Figure 1: Framework of the Study

### Teacher as *Mudarris*

*Mudarris* means teacher which comes from the Arabic verb '*darosa*' or '*tadris*' which means study or lesson (Lubis et al., 2020). Lane (1984) stated that '*darosa ghairuhu*' means learning something else or re-reading or learning to remember or to read and learn. Anis et al (1974) defined '*mudarris*' as people who often deliver lessons and read from books. From the Qur'an, it can be understood that *mudarris* means a teacher who understands, believes, and practices what he teaches, and teaches students repeatedly (Muhamad, 2015).

The word '*mudarris*' or '*tadris*' is not mentioned directly in the Qur'an, but the word '*darosa*' is found some in the following verse Surah Ali Imran Verse 79:

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبِّيَ-نَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ

*Meaning: It is not appropriate for a human to whom God gave him the Book (Al-Quran), wisdom and prophethood, then he said to humans: "You should be my worshipers and not God's worshipers". But (He said): "You should be rabbinic people, because you teach the Book (Al-Quran) and because you keep studying it".*

Jasmi and Tamuri (2007) define *mudarris* as the characteristic of an effective instructor that involves aspects of teaching and learning (TnL) starting from teaching preparation to the TnL process that ends with self-assessment. Ismail and Tamuri (2006) have listed some key aspects to this domain which are good personal characteristics, having expertise, competence, and the ability to make mature or professional decisions. As agreed by Kawangit and Saringat (2014); Hassan et al (2009) by adding some other aspects which are the teaching methods used and the success of creating a good classroom climate and personality.

Teachers' perception of their practices to the effectiveness of student learning creates teacher self-efficacy, which is their confidence in delivering learning using certain teaching methods and their efforts in creating a conducive classroom climate for all students. It is a characteristic of a good teacher who has that prioritizes the comfort and success of his students' learning. This belief allows teacher to self-regulate in formulating all his teaching plans starting from teaching preparation, during teaching and after completing the teaching process that require an expertise, competency, and ability. Simultaneously, every choice for the preparation made is suitable and effective for the targeted student learning. This is a stage that allows IET to reach their level of maturity and professionalism in making decisions.

Exploring the role of *mudarris* requires teachers to act comprehensively in providing the best learning to their students. Rationally, teachers are not only responsible for imparting knowledge and skills but also act as "human shapers" including their physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social. The teacher's role as a motivator, for example, requires them to act as a motivator to increase student motivation in learning, which is included in the introspection of a teacher's personality. The teacher reflects on what is the best way to carry out this role, which is to encourage the mind and emotions of the students in carrying out learning activities that require teacher to have good personal qualities. Among these qualities, teachers need to accept cultural diversity, practice an educator's leadership style that is soft and soulful in teaching practice.

The teacher's role as a planner is that the teacher acts as a planner to ensure thorough preparation and readiness in implementing learning and facilitation. Teachers need to reflect on the sustainability of knowledge and reflection on teaching plan. From the perspective of knowledge orientation, teachers need to deepen and expand their knowledge of TnL. While from an instructional point of view, teachers need to implement TnL planning as best as possible. They need to aware of the situation, level and background of the students related to the topic to be taught. From the selection of the topic, the teacher will choose the appropriate teaching method by applying some well-thought-out techniques. From the selection of methods and techniques, the teacher also needs to design appropriate activities and forms of assessment that correspond with them. All of these plans require the selection of the right teaching aids and the teacher's skills in handling them with the aim of achieving the learning objectives.

The teacher as an executor is the teacher acts as a controller of the TnL implementation to ensure the smoothness of the learning process according to the plan. Teachers need to reflect on the sustainability of knowledge and reflection on teaching in planning a good TnL implementation. From the point of view of knowledge orientation, teachers need to understand philosophy, curriculum principles, and the latest educational trends. Meanwhile, from an instructional point of view, teachers need to implement TnL towards meaningful learning.

Based on these examples, the concentration of the teacher's knowledge, skills and personality are the main aspect to the success of the lesson plan. These are the characteristics of *mudarris* that able to organize his teaching in an instructional manner to achieve teaching objective in the classroom. This maturity does not only happen once or involve only one process, but it involves repeating process. Teacher needs to reflect and evaluate their knowledge and skills regularly and formulate a change towards improvement.



## 2. Self-Assessment Towards Professional *Mudarris*

Reflective practitioners as intended by Schön (2017) are teachers who evaluate their own practices as an effort to improve teaching. They are also aware that teaching involves individual values, beliefs and assumptions. An educational change requires the knowledge of the practice of the teaching profession among reflective teachers who are clear about the ethics, morals and political effects of the change (Rein & Schön 1991). Experienced teachers need to learn to be reflective which is a necessary skill to enable them to articulate their educational knowledge (Hussin, 2004).

One of the processes towards reflective teacher is starting from the teacher's own teaching. From the lessons, teacher will conduct self-assessment by looking at the achievement of the planned teaching objectives. Assessment can also be made from the students' work and also their interactions in the classroom. Thus, teachers can identify the aspects that need to be improved and also maintain the aspects of existing strengths. The purpose of this process is to determine the plans that need to be taken for future teaching whether it involves the delivery of teaching, teaching aids needed, teaching strategies and methods that need to be carried out and also the form of assessment that will be given to students.

This process contributes to teachers' beliefs about their ability towards student learning, which is teacher efficacy which is also called as professional self-efficacy (Ross & Bruce 2007). According to Bandura (1993), individual past self-condition relates to their self-perception of an individual's ability. Teacher's belief in making changes based on his past teaching experience help them to direct for the next action. From this, the teacher makes self-regulation (self-regulation) for any measures to be taken in relation to his teaching which aims to improve student understanding of learning, improve communication with students and improve student work results.

The actions taken by teacher are the instructional quality of a teacher who maximizes his role as a *mudarris* in the classroom. Kawangit and Saringat (2014) list the success of a teacher as a *mudarris* which includes aspects of personal characteristics, teaching methods, success in creating classroom climate and personality, expertise and decision-making competence. Yusop and Sidek (2010) asserted that *mudarris* is a teacher who prioritize fostering motivation, interest and unearthing students' curiosity in addition to mastering classroom management. A teacher who acts as a *mudarris* is one of the characteristics of a teacher who focuses on the continuous development of professionalism as a teacher that always proactive in developing himself to give the best in his profession.

## Conclusion

Self-assessment is an action that involves the entire self-assessment process. Larrivee (2000) states that this process requires the coordination of various tasks and requires our willingness to review past activities as consideration. It is not an easy task and teachers need to be aware of how this self-assessment process occurs and prepare themselves from a mental, physical, and emotional point of view. It can be concluded in Table 3

Teacher as	Needs
<i>Mudarris</i> ↑ ↓	good personality traits
	master teaching methods
	intelligently control the classroom situation
	be mature in making any decision needs
Reflective practitioner	evaluate their own practices as an effort to improve teaching
	aware that teaching involves individual values, beliefs and assumptions
	identify deficiencies and weaknesses in teaching entail with own knowledge, skills, and personality.

Table 3 shown that to be a good *mudarris*, teacher also need to be a reflective practitioner. These two roles were inter-related by self-efficacy of the teacher that only can generate through self-assessment. As mentioned in concept of *muhasabah*, the evaluation process that has been practice create teacher's self-efficacy based on faith (*iman*) consecutively as an intermediary between teachers' self-assessment and their practice based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.

Self-assessment will increase teacher's awareness by identifying aspects that are unbalanced and inconsistent in a teacher's practice which aims to change and improve factors towards effective teaching and the instructional quality of *mudarris*. By understanding the concept of self-assessment, IET can aware the demands that they need to fulfill is the rights and responsibilities in achieving the goals of Islamic Education (Al-Kaylani, 2005). Farrel (2007) and Koutselini (2008) stated that the practice of reflection by teachers in teaching is not just an additional matter but rather something that needs to be implemented.

This study provides a clear understanding to IET about self-assessment in term of theory, concept and process. Indeed, this study is important in shaping the individuality of a teacher as *mudarris* that able to achieves the education quality standards. For further research, this study can be extent to which aspects of self-assessment that need to be observed which involved knowledge, skills and personality of the teacher.

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