
Addressing teacher self evaluation in Islamic religious texts [In English]

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ABSTRACT

Self evaluation is developing a greater self-awareness about the nature and impact of one's performance which provides opportunities for professional growth and development (General Medical Council, 2010). It is distinctly emphasized in Islam and its followers are advised to take some time periodically to evaluate their deeds. The present study aims at finding evidence that self evaluation has been taken into consideration in Islamic religious texts. It is also focused on how being inspired by self evaluation developed in Islamic religious texts can improve the quality of teachers' job. To this end, verses of Quran and traditions were looked into with respect to self evaluation. Meanwhile, the recently developed approaches to self evaluation were explored to find out the relationship between the two outlooks and the contribution they might potentially have to develop self evaluation particularly among teachers. The findings show that self evaluation is considered as one of the basic tenets of Islam and within its framework, humans are the best evaluators of themselves. Teachers, walked through the whole self evaluation process by numerous Quran verses and traditions, are called to be consistent and spiritually motivated in order to do consequentially valid self evaluation. Self-evaluator teachers are urged to avoid bias, arrogance, pride, and self-enhancement, and make upward comparison to develop professionally. The findings of this study have implications for teacher development and teacher education. They can also be employed by English teachers as well as syllabus and textbook designers in the sense that they can take self evaluation developed in religious texts into account in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Teacher Self-evaluation, Religious Texts, Consequential Validity, Professional Development

1. Introduction

Human beings are engaged in constant evaluation of their self including their abilities, personality, behavior, attitudes, potentials, appearance and so forth. Self-evaluation (henceforth SE) is a process that enables people to instinctively move towards perfection. It is an unavoidable need in man's life. No matter how difficult and complicated gaining accurate self-knowledge is, it is desperately needed to have successful life in all its aspects including one's career. In whatever career people work, they need to assess themselves to improve. Teachers need to be involved in regular and continuous SE in order to move towards efficacy.

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Teachers' SE of teaching effectiveness refers to their learning about students and themselves that comes from reflection on classroom experiences to make "judgments about the appropriateness or effectiveness of one's own knowledge, performance, beliefs, products, or effects, so they can be improved" (Airasian & Gullickson, 1994, p. 6). SE lies at the very heart of self-improvement and professional development. General Medical Council (2010) defined SE as developing a greater self-awareness about the nature and impact of one's performance which provides opportunities for professional growth and development.

SE is distinctly emphasized in our religion. It is suggested to the followers of Islam to take some time periodically to evaluate their deeds since every individual is going to be accountable for his/her deeds on the Day of Judgment. Imam Ali maintained that the one who knows himself/herself also knows his God (Tamimi, 505/1127). This statement demonstrates that knowing oneself which is the product of assessing one's deeds is a crucial prerequisite for knowing God. The great prophet of Islam emphasized the importance of evaluating oneself in another tradition where he ordered his followers to evaluate themselves before being evaluated by the Great Judge (Majlesi, 1403, p. 73). Above all, the Holy Quran calls attention of the followers' to self-judgment as evident in (1):

(1) Read thine [own] record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee. (Quran, Bani Israil 14)

SE is highly emphasized in Islamic texts, nevertheless there is little research done on its contribution to a teacher's job SE. Exploring religious texts can give us an in-depth insight into the nature and how of self-evaluation in an important job such as teaching. As such, we address the following questions:

Research Question 1: What evidence is there that self-evaluation has been taken into consideration in Islamic religious texts?

Research Question 2: How could being inspired by SE developed in Islamic religious texts improve the quality of teachers' job?

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: In section 2, we take a closer look at a number of issues including modern approaches to SE, influencing moderators in SE, Comparing Oneself to Others, and how to do SE. Section 3 is devoted to the methodology. In section 4, we present and describe a range of samples extracted from Quran and traditions having to do with SE. We show that how influential they can be in the field of teachers' self evaluation. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Literature review

Human beings are engaged in constant evaluation of themselves. The process of continuous SE enables them to instinctively move towards perfection; towards becoming a better person if done properly and timely. Accurate SE is a prodigious task. Buss (2009) claims that self-knowledge has survival values. He maintains that those who overestimate their knowledge and abilities are less likely to survive in dangerous situations. Teachers

with inaccurate SE and as a result flawed self-knowledge are more susceptible to making incompatible decisions and mismanagement in their career. The important role that self-evaluation of instruction effectiveness plays in teachers' *professional development* is incontrovertible. Teacher SE becomes of extreme importance as a great deal of emphasis is laid on it as an exceptionally serious task in Islam as teaching is considered the prophets' job.

The dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics defines self-monitoring or self-observation as:

Observing and recording information about one's own behavior for the purpose of achieving a better understanding of and control over one's behavior. In TEACHER EDUCATION, teachers may be taught procedures for self-monitoring as an aspect of their ongoing professional development. Techniques used include keeping a journal of their teaching experiences, regular and systematic use of self-reports or through making audio or video recordings of their own lessons (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.476).

2.1. Modern approaches to SE

Knowing what one can or cannot do influences the nature of one's self-concept, self-esteem, feeling of self-efficacy, goal setting, effort expenditure in life (Bandura, 1986) and the strength of self-regulation (McNamara & O'Hara, 2008).

Regehr and Eva (2006) declared that in order to regulate one's competence, a professional needs to self-assess gaps in his/her competence and also has to be willing to look for opportunities to close these gaps when identified. SE is a step toward self-directed learning. Self-directed learning is a technique of learning utilized by successful professionals to develop who take responsibility for their own learning. Such learning is typically goal-motivated, appropriate and applicable to their work or other responsibilities (General Medical Council, 2010; p. 11).

According to Regehr and Eva (2006), two assumptions of SE model can be challenged: the motivation to fill gaps in learning questionable point and the ability to self-identify gaps in learning. In addition, they maintained that individual self-regulation is excessively optimistic:

Personal, internally generated, isolated, idiosyncratic, and unguided reflections on practice merely do not supply the information adequate to guide performance improvements sufficiently (Boud, 1999). Regehr and Eva (2006) emphasized on the role of the whole profession in identifying and compensating for the gaps in its professional's skills. They concluded that any self-regulating profession that desires to see these gaps recognized must support policies to search for them rather than relying on the self-regulating professional's ability to do so himself/herself.

All things considered, "self-assessment is a process of formative assessment during which teachers reflect on and evaluate the quality of their work, decide the degree to which

they reflect explicitly stated goals or criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and revise accordingly” (Krebt, 2015; p. 1).

Because SE “components are not static and relations are not linear and predictable, SA accuracy seems to be frequently unreliable” (Sargeant, Armson, Chesluk, Dornan, Eva, Holmboe, Lockyer, Loney, Mann & van der Voluten, 2010, p. 1218). The first factor that makes SA very demanding is inherent in its multidimensional nature. Eva and Regehr (2008) referred to the concept of inflated SA and depicted the mechanism as follows:

Inflated self-assessments are not a result of inexperience, inadequate training, or inadequate practice. Rather, the tendency to be overly optimistic about one’s abilities is a fundamental property of the way our brains are wired... When we have a poor performance, usually it is easy to find a way to blame external circumstances. We do it quite automatically because it is adaptive to maintain a positive overlook (p. 17).

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (1998) indicated that change, even when it is made for the better, is uncomfortable and stressful. “Learning itself isn’t fun. Learning fun things is fun. But learning hard things is hard, and learning boring things is boring. Thus, it requires a great deal of internal self-control to make one learn in areas where one is weak (or bored)” (Regehr & Eva, 2006, p. 36).

Caulford, Lamb, Kaigas, Hanna, Norman and Davis (1994) referred to the importance of social factors in a seemingly individual enterprise like SE and indicated that one of the best predictors of incompetence is working in isolation.

Self-enhancement could inherently be another source of inaccuracy of self-judgment. Self-enhancement refers to a class of psychological phenomena that involve taking a tendentious positive view of oneself. In other words human beings tend to hold flattering views of themselves and of the things that are related to the self. Bias or the average overall mistake people make in estimating their performance and overconfidence are two of the main factors which undermine SE accuracy.

The most crucial challenges that might undermine any form of assessment practice center around issues of reliability and validity, mostly due to the fact that people are innately biased in their judgments due to preconceptions about themselves and others (Lanyon & Hubball, 2008). Are people aware of the biases in their self-evaluation? Zell and Krizan (2014) believed that “people remain largely unaware of the biases in self-evaluation” (p. 112). Pronin (2007) argued that people largely do not notice the biases they have themselves, but they can infer when others have judgmental biases.

In order to lessen the effect of bias on self-reporting, it is suggested to glean data from more than a single source, collect data longitudinally rather than just at one point in time (Little, Goe, & Bell (2009). This might entail training teachers on self-reporting and self-rating to obtain dependable information.

2.2. Influencing Moderators in SA

There are a lot of factors moderating the nature of SA. Assessing a general domain might also be influenced by subjective and self-serving criteria which in turn undermines the validity of the measurement (Greve & Wentura, 2003). A further moderator is the timing of the self-evaluation process; whether it is before or after the task.

Although individual personality characteristics can influence the evaluation of one's own self (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2005), cultural habits cannot be disregarded. General habits related to specific cultures also influence people's perceptions of the self (Zell & Krizan, 2014).

Moore and Esselman (1992, cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998) found that teachers who perceived a positive school atmosphere enjoyed greater self-efficacy. Additionally, sense of community in a school was the only greatest predictor of teachers' efficacy level (Lee & Smith, 1991). An accurate SA requires high metacognitive ability and entails the promotion of higher-order mental self-direction (Manning & Payne, 1989).

2.3. Comparing Oneself to Others

Comparing oneself to others is what most people use to evaluate themselves. It is claimed that human beings are in constant effort to resolve uncertainty about the self through comparisons with objective criteria, including relevant peers (Festinger, 1954) or past performances (Albert, 1977, cited in Zell & Krizan, 2014). Self-enhancement seems to be a more relevant phenomenon to social comparison (Wheeler et al., 1997). Research has put forward that people might make downward comparisons (compare themselves to people lower than themselves) to boost their self-esteem (Wills, 1981); and they might make upward comparisons (compare themselves to people higher than themselves) to feel better, particularly in case they believe they can get better (Major, Testa, & Bylsma, 1991) identify with superior others, or seek inspiration (Collins, 1996). In other words, people make social comparisons to self-enhance.

2.4. How to do SE

SA cannot be done haphazardly and without considering any specific criteria and standards. Like performing any intricate task, SE requires to be done accurately in order to enjoy reliability and consequential validity. To self-assess accurately, "one needs to know the ideal end goal, determine the current state of action, and develop strategies to close the gap between the two" (Madsen, 2005, p. 23). Reflection, in and of itself, does not imply improved action. Yet, accurate reflection is needed to deliberately improve future actions.

Supporting the personnel through training them to become competent self-evaluators is a long-term investment. SA competence is not something that can be achieved overnight. Rather, it requires systematic training in extended period of time (McNamara & O'Hara,

2008). The European Commission report (2004, p. 126) suggested that such a process would require governments, education departments and other support agencies to offer “human, financial and material resources” (p. 126) if it is to succeed. Some skills, such as “critical self-reflection” (Fallows & Chandramohan, 2001) are fundamental to SA.

Sargeant et al. (2010) stated that clear, timely, specific, constructive feedback, preferably offered by trusted, credible supervisors in a safe environment, to inform learners’ SE is essential for improvement. They found this often lacking which could potentially boost collective efficacy in every teaching context. “Trust, respect, and nonjudgmental attitudes fostered self-assessment at all levels by creating a safe environment where questions could be asked, knowledge gaps revealed, and mistakes discussed with openness” (Sargeant et al., 2010, p. 1217).

3. Methodology

The present research used content analysis as its basis. To this end, the concept of SE and the prominence given to it in Islamic religious texts were searched for. The whole body of corpus included the Holy Quran as the primary source and traditions including Nahj al-Balagha. At the same time, the recently developed approaches to SE were intently explored to find out the relationship between the two outlooks and the contribution they might potentially have to develop enhanced SE particularly among teachers.

4. Results and Discussion: Self-evaluation in Islam

As the educational pendulum moved from behaviorism to cognitivism, teacher’s thinking and its development became a major research area (Madsen, 2005). With the emergence of constructivism, there was a shift of attention from teacher as an individual who reflects alone to teacher as a member of teaching society who reflects and is helped to develop professionally by the society. Teacher SE is supposed to be done for the reasons of perfection and professional development. Nevertheless, the motivation and energy might get depleted and the path might be lost.

Bewildered in these shifts and switches the self-evaluating teacher needs something beyond to keep committed, motivated and inspired, something which originates from a higher divine source and relates deeply to the soul inside. The missing link in the chain is offered by the words of God and religious leaders. Accurate appraisal of one’s work and activities is such an important aspect of Islam that it is considered the basic tenet of Ma’ad or the Day of Judgment. Plenty of verses in Quran such as the following in (2) highlight evaluation on the Day of Judgment:

(2). The balance that day will be true [to nicety]. (Quran, Araf 8)

SE is in line with intrinsic and natural human tendency towards development. Man's mind is constantly analyzing his strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and hazards. According to Islam, SE is done to promote one's humanity. Keeping permanent watch over the self is attained as a result of knowledge of the self which is highlighted as the best way towards knowing the Creator in Imam Ali's words. In several occasions as shown in (3-5), Imam Ali maintained that the one who knows himself/herself also knows his God (Tamimi, 505/1127).

(3) The one who knows himself/herself also knows his God. (Majlesi, 1983, vol.2, p. 32)

(4) "The best enlightenment is that the man recognizes himself, and the greatest ignorance is when a person doesn't know his own self." (Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 16)

(5) "One who did not recognize himself; he strayed from the path of salvation, and took the road to ignorance and aimlessness." (Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 16)

As mentioned above, believing in the Day of Judgment is one of the main foundations of Islam and believers are called for considering the appraisal done on this Day while doing any deed. Men are the only witness of what they do, thus they can potentially be the best evaluators of their own actions if they enjoy sound mind and at the same time if they are willing and intentional to engage in SE. Muslims are strongly required to evaluate their own deeds for which plenty of evidence in the Holy Quran, as illustrated in (6-7), emphasizing the significance of evaluating one's own deeds for the believers. It is therefore wise for the believers to constantly evaluate themselves in this world and make amends before the final Judgment by Allah when they will not be given an opportunity to make up for their misdeeds. A Muslim teacher is not an exception. He/she is supposed to evaluate his work to improve his/her profession.

(6) Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah Calleth you to account for it. (Quran, Baqara 284)

(7) "O my son!" [said Luqman], "If there be [but] the weight of a mustard-seed and it were [hidden] in a rock, or [anywhere] in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah understands the finest mysteries, [and] is well-acquainted [with them]." (Quran, Luqman 16)

More importantly, The Holy Quran considers humans themselves to be enough to appraise their own deeds on the Day of Judgment. If it is possible in the life after death, it ought to be possible in this world. Thus God has bestowed the ability of SE to humans according to these two verses in (8-9).

(8) Read thine [own] record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee. (Quran, Bani Israil 14)

(9) O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be [against] rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. (Quran, Nisaa 135)

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The significance of the point is so high that Quran regards inaccuracy in SE as the worst loss and misfortune for which there is no hope of compensation. If he deviates from the right path and does not conceive his deviation and mistake, he has made loss in his efforts and endeavors. Self-reflection accuracy couldn't be more emphasized than it is in the following verse:

(10) Say: "Shall we tell you of those who lose most in respect of their deeds?- "Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works?". (Quran, Kahf 103-104)

Regehr and Eva (2006) maintained that individual self-regulation is excessively optimistic and challenged a number of assumptions of the recent approaches:

1. The motivation, commitment, energy and momentum to fill gaps identified through SE might diminish with time;
2. The ability to self-identify gaps in teaching is limited;
3. SE alone is not an effective mechanism to identify areas of personal weakness.

Taking all the above mentioned drawbacks into account, it seems that a link is missing to fill the gap; that is the commitment of teachers to evaluate themselves using divine inspirations. Regarding the first drawback, Muslim teachers are constantly ordered to evaluate their work, the order which urges them to be vigilant and cognizant all the time and encourages them to always be attentive and mindful of their SE. This motivation originates from inside and seems to be more long-lasting compared to those which urges the self-evaluator from outside such as punishing or encouraging forces in the work place.

As inferred from the above-mentioned extracts from Quran, teachers should ponder over their teaching. There are numerous traditions that stress SE and consider it as the path to eternal happiness and contentment. Two examples are given in (11-12):

(11) The one who assesses himself is happy. (Leysi Vaseti, 1997, p.424)

Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) said to his companion (Sahabah) Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra):

(12) Oh Abu Dharr! Take account of yourself before you're taken account of so your accounting will be easier tomorrow. And weigh yourself before you are weighed and prepare for the great staging; the day you will be presented, not the least of a hidden thing of you will be hidden from Allah. (Majlesi, 1983, vol.74, p.83)

In another profound tradition from the Holy Prophet shown in (13), we see that the followers are ordered to take SE of spiritual issues more seriously than material issues:

(13) Man will not be a believer until he reaches the account of his soul; More severe than auditing a partner with a partner and Lord with a servant. (Majlesi, 1983, vol.67, p.72)

With regards to the role and value of critical reflection in the edification of the character and purification of the soul, Imam Ali, Imam Sadegh, Imam Kazem, and Imam Reza also said respectively:

(14) How worthy it is for man to devote some time for himself, that nothing should occupy him, and at this hour, to calculate himself and see what he has done for his own benefit and what he has done to his own detriment, that night and that Day. (Leysi Vaseti, 1997, p. 479)

(15) It is necessary for every Muslim who has our knowledge to offer his deeds to himself every day and night, and to be an accountant of his own soul; If he sees good, he should try to add it, and if he sees evil, he should ask for forgiveness, lest he be disgraced on the Day of Judgment. (Majlesi, 1983, vol.75, p. 279)

(16) "He is not from us a person who does not hold himself accountable for his deeds; therefore if he has done good deeds, he ought to ask Allah to increase his good deeds and when he has committed sinful and bad deeds, he ought to seek forgiveness from Allah and return to Him." (Majlesi, vol. 67, p. 72)

(17) Wise is the one who continually assesses himself and performs good deeds for the life after death. Foolish is the one who follows his desires and entertains very high hopes from Allah. (Majlesi, 1983, vol.67, p.73).

Working on the *self* enjoys such significance that it is called the *Major Jihad* in Islamic education. Imam Ali (as) related: When he received the warriors that he had appointed for a campaign, Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) said to them:

(18) "Welcome to the people who performed successfully the minor Jihad. Their mission now is to perform completely the major Jihad. The major Jihad is self-control. The best form of Jihad is to act upon one's self, desires and whims." (Majlesi, 1983, vol. 67, p. 66)

4.1. How to do SE based on Islamic principles

Given what was said in the literature review, in order for teachers to have more dependable SE, it is suggested to glean data from more than a single source, collect data longitudinally rather than just at one point in time (Little, et al., 2009). Teachers need to compare their own results of SE to the data obtained from other sources such as peer and student evaluation of their work to compensate for the areas of weakness where there is dissonance between one's own assessment of competence and others' assessment of it.

This entails training teachers on SE to get reliable results. Making use of standard templates is also very beneficial in assisting the teachers to carry out accurate SE. A further factor at work in an effective and successful SE is *consistency*. Consistency is important and makes the task less overwhelming we might have high spirits at the beginning yet high spiritedness might decline by the passage of time.

Principally, accounting for mistakes is more accurate if it occurs on time and is not left to accumulate and man gets a more accurate result and is confronted by less problems on the one hand and on the other hand if accounting for the problems in teaching is delayed, with the passage of time we forget about them and thus they accumulate.

The process of SE is clearly depicted in Islamic traditions and the followers are not left alone through this intricate task. It is considered to be performed in 4 phases. The first phase is to be mindfully committed to do SE and to intentionally plan for it at the beginning of every day or classroom session. This is called Moshareteh or promising oneself to do SE. The subsequent step is Moraghebeh by taking which the self-evaluator teacher is required to pay careful attention to whatever s/he does during the teaching process. This is also called reflection-in-action. The third measurement to be taken is called Mohasebeh which happens at the end of the day or task which is also called reflection-on-action. Finally, Moatebeh or acting on the results, weaknesses, and strengths, is the beginning of change for better and long-lasting professional development.

4.2. Consequential Validity

The cornerstone of SE like all other kinds of evaluation is its consequential validity. Consequential validity of professional SE refers to the effect that it has on the quality of the self-evaluator's profession (General Medical Council, 2010). It has to be borne in mind that SE cannot be done haphazardly and without considering any specific criteria and standards. Like performing any intricate task, SE requires to be done accurately in order to enjoy reliability and consequential validity. Reflection, in and of itself, does not imply improved action.

For teachers who plan for professional development *consequential validity* of SE is of utmost importance. SE needs to be constant as well as consistent since no individual trait changes for better immediately after we notice it. Noticing that there is a problem is just the beginning of a long and hard endeavor ahead of the self-evaluating teacher. This process of formative assessment requires commitment, knowledge, and support. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (1998) indicated that change, even when it is made for the better, is uncomfortable and stressful.

Consequential validity of SE is obviously a final and determining factor in the whole process. Islamic education can be a determining loop of successful SE chain if teachers are to reach the ultimate goal of development. Islam considers the subject of SE as the starting point of a long process of controlling and dominating the self. SE is not enough by itself. It becomes reliable and valid when it results in a change in the behavior of the self-evaluator. In other words the self-evaluators reach the ultimate goal of SE, i.e. behavior betterment, when it is done perfectly. Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) highlighted the importance of consequential validity as illustrated in (19-20):

(19) "May Allah bless the person who performs a job with precision and perfects it". (Majlesi, 1983, vol. 22, p.264)

(20) “If you make up your mind to do something, think about its consequences. If the results of your decision are good, discharge that work and if its end were bad, abstain from it’.” (Majlesi, 1983, vol. 68, p. 342)

4.3. Cooperation

The importance of social factors in a seemingly individual endeavor like SE cannot be overlooked since one of the best indicators of incompetence is working in isolation. According to Sargeant et al. (2010), constructive feedback offered in a safe environment is crucial for improvement and boosting collective efficacy. “Trust, respect, and nonjudgmental attitudes fostered self-assessment at all levels by creating a safe environment where questions could be asked, knowledge gaps revealed, and mistakes discussed with openness” (p. 1217). It is essential that the whole profession assists the teacher to identify and compensate for the drawbacks. Moore and Esselman (1992, cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998) found that teachers who perceived a positive school atmosphere enjoyed greater self-efficacy.

Practice-based small-group learning such as participating in facilitated discussions of evidence to identify gaps in one’s and peers’ teaching is a helpful cooperative strategy. This kind of cooperation is what is emphasized and idealized as Islamic and spiritual environment where people help each other and work collaboratively receiving and offering adequate feedback from and to peers constantly. The followers are also encouraged and ordered to ask for help and cooperation, an excellent example of which are given in (21-23):

(21) Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor.

(Quran, Maida 2)

(22) One of the obligatory rights of God on His servants is to do good deeds as much as possible, and to help each other to establish the truth among themselves. (Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 216)

(23) Asking for cooperation in establishing the right is a sign of religion and trustworthiness. (Leysi Vaseti, 1997, p.319)

Seeking for advice by the self-evaluating teacher is another suggestion of Islam to improve professionally. It is heavily emphasized as one of the significant aspects of working together and assisting each other. There are numerous traditions by Imam Ali highlighting this helpful strategy to reach the end goal of SE as evident in (24-26):

(24) Whoever is arrogant will perish, and whoever consults with the people will share in their wisdom. (Leysi Vaseti, 1997, p.440)

(25) He who is unaware of different opinions is helpless in finding solutions. (Hakimi, Hakimi, and Hakimi, 1997, vol.1, p.97)

(26) There is no support like counseling. (Majlesi, 1983, vol. 72, p. 101)

Inaccuracy of SE is a major problem. Teachers are liable to overestimate and miscalculate their competence. Dunning and Helzer (2014) considered bias and overconfidence as two of the most important factors undermining SE accuracy. Inflated SE and the tendency to be overly optimistic about one's abilities is a fundamental property of the way our brains are wired. Self-enhancement which refers to taking a tendentiously positive view of oneself is another source of inaccuracy in SE. To nullify bias and arrogance as huge undermining factors affecting the accuracy of SE humility, humbleness, modesty, and avoidance of pride is advised in Islam. Bias and arrogance are caused by loving oneself and whatever is related to one's self. Low cultural habits, social isolation, being closed to other people's opinions and new information, besides laziness are a number of the elements leading to bias.

Pride also is repeatedly regarded as an obstacle in the way of accurate SE in Islam. Islam has stressed the necessity of controlling for pride as a weakening factor although its debilitating role in the validity of SE has not received a due attention in recent research.

(27) ... He said: "I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay. (Quran, Araf 12)

(28) [Those without] will call out, "Were we not with you?" [The others] will reply, "True! but ye led yourselves into temptation; ye looked forward [to our ruin]; ye doubted [Allah's Promise]; and [your false] desires deceived you; until there issued the Command of Allah. And the Deceiver deceived you in respect of Allah. (Quran, Hadid 14)

(29) To prove one's ignorance, it is enough to be complacent. (Hakimi, Hakimi, and Hakimi, 1997, vol.1, p.311)

(30) Stubbornness is the seed of evil. (Leysi Vaseti, 1997, p. 31)

(31) Stubborn has no management and tact. (Leysi Vaseti, 1997, p. 410)

Man is naturally inclined to be forgetful particularly about what is harmful to him/her. Psychologically, since mentioning and reminding man about his errors give rise to bad feelings about the self, he/she is not inclined to notice them and tries to forget those deficiencies. Self-enhancement is the factor at work here. Due to self-enhancement, man does not like to attribute what he does not like to himself.

Making upward comparisons (comparing oneself to people higher than oneself) to feel better, particularly in case of teachers who believe they can get better (Major, Testa, & Bylsma, 1991), as well as identifying with superior others to seek inspiration (Collins, 1996) are some strategies at hand for teachers to develop professionally. Making upward

comparison is also called the *proxy model* by Wheeler, Martin, and Suls (1997). Comparing oneself to others is what most people use to evaluate themselves. It is claimed that human beings are in constant effort to resolve uncertainty about the self through comparisons with objective criteria, including relevant peers (Festinger, 1954) or past performances (Albert, 1977, cited in Zell & Krizan, 2014). Religious leaders can set good examples to match up with. The Holy Quran introduces the prophets such as Ibrahim and Mammad as examples for upward comparison as in (32).

32. There is for you an excellent example [to follow] in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people: "We are clear of you and of whatever ye worship besides Allah. (Quran, Mumtahana 4)

SE competence is not a goal that can be achieved immediately. Rather, it entails systematic training in extended period of time (McNamara & O'Hara, 2008). The European Commission report (2004, p. 126) suggested that such a process would require governments, education departments and other support agencies to offer "human, financial and material resources" (p. 126) if it is to succeed. The Islamic government also should develop considerable number of initiatives and interventions taking the seriousness of the issue into account. So the role that an Islamic government can play in this regard is of utmost importance.

Imam Ali in Nahj al-Balagha eloquently referred to the educational duties that an Islamic government has towards its people: 1- guiding people towards the truth like a compassionate and supportive father, and 2- educating and teaching people and leading them towards the light of knowledge and towards avoiding ignorance.

Although individual personality characteristics can influence the evaluation of one's own self (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2005), cultural habits cannot be overlooked. General habits related to particular cultures also influence people's perceptions of the self (Zell & Krizan, 2014). "Culture and values, expectations and conventions vary from one setting to the next and from situation to situation" (Sargeant, 2008, p.855). Given what we stated above, building up and benefitting from commendable Islamic culture of SE is a necessity. Since religious inspiration can play heavily on SE, building Islamic cultural habits in teachers is crucial.

5. Conclusion

Self-evaluation is a natural human tendency towards perfection. Teachers as the people who do prophets' job also need to be engaged with continuous evaluation of their job performance to develop professionally. Besides being fully aware of the recent international findings in the field of SE, a committed Muslim teacher needs to be well-informed and educated about the Islamic teachings on the topic. Actually, Islamic education can play a considerable role in teachers' SE by keeping them internally committed and motivated. SE is considered as one of the basic tenets of Islam and within its framework, humans are the best evaluators of themselves. Teachers, walked through the whole self evaluation process

Addressing teacher self evaluation in Islamic religious texts [In English]

by numerous Quran verses and traditions, are called to be consistent and spiritually motivated in order to do consequentially valid self evaluation. Self-evaluator teachers are urged to avoid bias, arrogance, pride, and self-enhancement, and make upward comparison to develop professionally. The role that an Islamic government can play to assist the teachers in their endeavor cannot be neglected.

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Notes

1. We make use of the term ‘tradition’ in this paper for the wise sayings from Imam (peace be upon him) known as Hadith in Islam.

2. All the translations of verses of Quran used in this paper are taken from the translation of Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

3. Throughout this paper we use the order ‘Quran, name of the Surah, number of the verse’ to refer to the Quran verses.

4. All translations of traditions used in this paper are mine.