
**Islamization on Modern leadership Perspective:
A Conceptual study**

Munazza Saeed*, Dr. Lukman Thaib, Mohd. Zaidi Abd Rahman*****

Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT.

The recent emphasis on ethical leadership literature stimulates a debate on leadership from an Islamic perspective. This may provide some interesting insights for the field of leadership. Modern businesses can benefit from the values and principles contained in Islam by implementing them in their management practices. In an Islamic context, leadership is based on integrity and justice as it is an explicit contract between a leader and his followers that he will try his best to guide them, protect them, and treat them justly. This study examines leadership in the light of Islam, its implication in modern business activities, and highlights the principles of Islamic leadership. Furthermore, this study provides insights to the implications of Islamic norms and values in contemporary business practices.

Key words: Business Ethics, Islamic leadership, Managerial Leadership, Modern Business.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, solicitous and agonizing leaders have left their marks on civilization (Ali, 2009). Small groups, families, organizations, states, empires and the world at large need good leaders who can lead their respective followers and organizations to success. An effective leader is a must for attaining success in family life, business, and governance, as every human endeavour needs a unifying and driving force for success. This driving force is ultimately traced to good leadership. Every individual in some capacity is a leader. Leadership is one of the core corners in our social activities (Patwary, 2003). It refers to a process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving an

objective (Koontz, 1994). A leader is expected to exercise influence in forming and accomplishing the targeted ethical goals and objectives. Furthermore, the success of a leader is dependent on team building that leads to team spirit.

In an organization, managerial leadership is an approach of effectively and efficiently achieving goals through others. Organizational success depends on the leading qualities of leaders. Leadership is one of the most complex processes facing managers in organizations. There are over 10,000 books and articles on the topic of leadership (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 2002). This indicates that the world's traditions are highly concerned with how individuals can intensify the practice of leadership in organizations.

In Islam, a leader is a member of a team who is given a certain rank and is expected to perform in a manner consistent with it (Athar and Subhani, 2007). This paper seeks to analyse leadership through the lens of Islam and its application in contemporary leadership settings.

If practiced, the principles of Islamic Leadership practiced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and subsequently by his Caliphs and pious followers will lead to success for both Muslims as well as non-Muslims. The subject of religiosity and religion has recently come to the forefront of management and organisational research. The increasing interest management scholars have shown in religion and management is a reflection of the growing evidence affirming that religious beliefs and values have significant direct and indirect effects on a wide range of behaviours in the workplace (King and Williamson, 2005; Reave, 2005; Weaver and Agle, 2002; Morgan, 2005; Budhwar and Fadzil, 2000). Eighty per cent of people worldwide report that religion constitutes an important part of their daily life (Sedikides, 2010). The majority of research in business and management consider organisations as a religion neutral sphere. Matiaske and Grozinger (2010, p. 5) note that by considering organisations a neutral sphere, members of organisations are expected to shed their religious ideas.

The recent explosion of interest in the association between religion and management is also reflected in the increasing number of articles published on the relationship between religion,

management, and organisational performance in both academic outlets (e.g. Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Mitroff and Denton, 1999), and business media (Gunther, 2001; Symonds, 2005). To accommodate the recent interest in this growing field of research, several new journals have been launched to address the issue of religion and spirituality in organisations.

METHODOLOGY

This is a conceptual study and library-oriented research. To determine the managerial implications of Islamic leadership and related Islamic concerns, the authors consulted various publications, research monographs, journals, and magazines in this field.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP

This is the age of managerial revolution. Leadership in our society exists at the political, societal and managerial levels. Businesses are based on managerial leadership, and organizations develop rules and regulations, through which finance, operations, and marketing activities are regulated (Anisuzzaman et al, 1996). Managerial leadership views an ability of a person to guide the efforts of others in achieving specific objectives. Thus, the three basic elements of leadership are the leader, followers, and objectives (Ibid, 6). In recent years, many theorists and practitioners have highlighted the difference between managers and leaders. A manager performs a hierarchical role in an organization that is guided by the prescribed rules and regulations, whereas a leader attempts to change the rules and regulations if necessary and guide the group in carrying out organizational goals and objectives (Northhouse.2010).

Islam is more than just a belief; it is a complete way of life that goes beyond the acts of worship to guide all one's social and economic conduct (Ali, 2008). Islam is an Arabic word that means to submit to the will of God in verbally and deeds (Abu Zanaid, 2006). The ultimate goal of the Muslim community is to struggle to achieve a peaceful and healthy society by following the guidance of God. For a Muslim, the purpose of life is to be a good trustee on earth by doing good to others.

The sources of Islamic Jurisprudence are the Quran and Hadith. Managers first look to these sources for solutions. The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam and the constitution of Muslims (Mohiuddin and Bhuiyan, 2013). The Sunnah (Hadith) concerns the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which Muslims are encouraged to follow. The Prophet's (PBUH) ideal life is largely understood through the Hadith, which preserves his sayings and deeds (Duderija, 2012). Literally, Sunnah means to flow a path, indicating that the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplifies what it means to be a Muslim. In the Qur'an and the Hadith, one finds extensive discussions of the nature of leadership, and of its relationship with governance, authority and power; and the complexities of decision-making (Cerimagic, 2010; Ali, 2005).

Human activities may vary with changing circumstances, but the belief in God (Tawhid) and all worship in its broader sense remains the same. In Islam, all activities are based on three basic principles, namely all wealth and resources belong to God, human beings manage God's wealth and resources as trustees, and the most loved by God are those who are most pious, helpful and useful to other creations, including humans, animals and the environment. Islamic management was derived on the basis of these socio-economic and theological principles.

The subject of leadership is given considerable attention in Islamic philosophy because in Islam leadership is the most significant instrument for the construction of an ideal society. The ideal society is based on justice and compassion. That is, justice "is the mainstay of a nation" (Imam Ali, died 661) and leaders are held responsible for promoting and enforcing justice. The Quran in chapter 4:58 instructs its believers: "When ye judge between people that ye judge with justice." (Surah al-Nisa':58). Indeed, the thriving of justice is closely linked to the subject of leadership and leaders.

In Islam, leadership is a shared process, as leaders are not expected to lead without the agreement of those who are led, and at the same time, the decisions made by these leaders should be influenced by input from their followers. The Quran clearly calls for a leader to be flexible and receptive to followers and states in chapter 88:21-22 which bring the meaning "So thou reminding; thou art only a reminder. Thou art not, over them a compeller." (Surah

al-Ghashiyyah:21-22). The basis for understanding and leading has to be fundamentally based on wisdom and spirited debate, otherwise followers become resentful and dissatisfied. The role of a receptive leader is captured in the Quranic instructions in chapter 16:125 stated which means “Argue with them in manners that are best and most gracious.”(Surah al-Nahl: 125).

The leader is obliged to exemplify openness, a willingness to listen and compassion in dealing with subordinates or followers. For example, during the course of a public meeting, an individual criticized the second Caliph, Umar. Some in the audience thought the criticism was harsh. Umar’s answer was that it was the duty of the leader and followers to listen to each other and to voice concerns. He was quoted as saying, “When followers do not participate and provide input, they are not contributing something useful. And we are not useful if we do not consent to their contributions.”(Muhammad Asad, 1980). Umar thought that public participation is fundamental and, as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) insisted that it is a policy choice. Umar, however, pursued the matter further when he informed followers, “When you see me engage in a wrong doing, straighten me out.” In this context, the shared influence is not only built on “two way influence” through dialogue and debate, but also on the right of subordinates to take a proactive role in confronting and correcting the leader. This foresighted model was possibly founded on Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) instruction, which made it mandatory that followers not blindly follow leaders: “Obedience is due only in that which is good”. (Sunan Abu Daud.2009) .

ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Islamic leadership deals with management of organizations from the perspective of Islam and results in applications compatible with Islamic beliefs and practices (Kazmi, 2007). Human beings have been ordained with great faculties and qualities which if properly deployed could result in the achievement of incredible goals (Khan, 1998). Reaching these goals requires the application of certain Islamic principles or tools. These principles are derived from the doctrine of Tawhid as practiced by the Prophet (PBUH) (Khaliq, 2007a, b). These principles are not new, but rather they represent a fresh application of certain basic assumptions that might not have been thought of as having an action element (Hossain, 2007). This implies the new beginning of our thoughts and consciences towards the revealed sources of knowledge

(Quran and Sunnah). These principles promote the culture of God-consciousness and justice within the organization while guarding against oppression (Khaliq, 2009).

The principles of Islamic leadership compiled by Muslim authors are endless. The Prophet of Islam (PBUH) was a positive thinker and his activities were always result oriented by completely refraining from all such steps as may prove counterproductive. Among the principles practiced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are begin from the possible, see advantage in disadvantage, change the place of action, make a friend out of an enemy, turn minus into plus, the power of peace is stronger than the power of violence, not to be a dichotomous thinker, to bring the battle in one's own favourable field, gradualism instead of radicalism, and to be pragmatic in controversial matters (Khan, 1998).

Kassem and Al-Buraey (Ismail, 2007) gave instances of leadership principles in Islam. They discoursed that team-building techniques could be seen in Friday (Juma'at) sermons, congregational prayer, and zikr circles. They also emphasized two principles practiced by the Prophet (PBUH), namely receiving the message; a principle likened to the act of seeking guidance and knowledge in order to direct the affairs to the followers; and spreading the message; referring to the act of delegating tasks and ensuring that they are accomplished well.

ISLAMIC QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

The manner in which we manage ourselves and organizations is a central part of being an effective leader. It is vital to recognize the qualities for effective Islamic leadership. Among the leadership qualities exemplified by the Prophet (PBUH) are patience (Sabr), eloquence (Fasahah), enterprise (Iqdam) and leniency (Linah) (Khaliq, 2007a, b). Khan (2007) grouped some fundamental Islamic leadership principles and values; faith and belief, knowledge and wisdom, courage and determination, mutual consultation and unity (fraternity and brotherhood), morality and piety (honesty and trust), superior communication, justice and compassion, patience and endurance, commitment and sacrifice, lifelong endeavour, and gratitude and prayers.

There are ten personal qualities of a Muslim leader, namely conviction (yaqin), mutual consultation (shura), knowledge (ma'rifah), justice ('adl), self-sacrifice (tadh'iyah), humility, eloquence (fasih), patience (sabr), leniency (lin), and enterprise (iqdam). Lukman (1995) also identified six general principles: sovereignty (al-siyadah), mutual consultation (al-shura), justice (al-'adalah), equality (al-musawat), freedom (al-hurriyyah) and enjoining the right and forbidding the evil. He regarded them as the modern terms involved in setting up an Islamic organization (Adnan, 2006).

IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESSES

Most of the research on leadership places considerable emphasis on specific attributes (Blau, 1963; Dow, 1969; Stogdill, 1974). Identifying attributes were thought important for differentiating effective leaders from others. Friedland (1964) and Wolpe (1968), among others, consider social and historical contexts as critical in determining leadership. Hughes et al. (2006) assert that leadership is a result of the interaction between a leader and followers. Willner (1984) argues that leadership is neither personality based nor contextually determined but is largely a relational and perceptual phenomenon. Conger and Kanungo (1987) agreed with Willner and view leadership as an attribution phenomenon.

Talib, Hisham Al (1991) identified four important characteristics for managerial Islamic leadership in organizations. Allegiance: The Islamic managerial leader is bound in committed to Allah. Global Islamic Goals: The leader perceives the goals of an organization in the interests of wider Islamic objectives instead of a small group. Adherence to Shari'ah and Islamic Manners: His behaviour must conform to Islamic manners. Delegated Trust: Islamic leadership is a position with divine trust and he should develop this trust with highest degree of responsibility. God said in chapter 22: 41 which means that “ Those, who, if we give them power in the land, establish Salat and pay Zakah and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, with Allah rests the end of affairs” (Surah Al Hajj: 22:41)

The primary duties of a leader are to lead the people in offering prayers, to look after their interest with justice, and run their activities in a disciplined and systematic manner (Ahmad,

2006). However, an Islamic managerial leader will serve his followers or subordinates under some distinctive principles, such as:

Shura: Managers in an organization must consult with their subordinates in formulating strategies and policies. God directed his Prophet (PBUH) to consult with his companions as recorded in chapter 42 : 38 which carry the meaning :“And those who have answered the call of their lord and establish prayer and who conduct their affairs by consultation and spend out what we bestow on them for sustenance.” (Surah al- Shura 42:38).

Freedom of Thought: The Four Caliphs of Islam considered this as an essential element of their leadership (Patwary, 2003). Practicing managers should create an environment of freedom in the organization so that the employees can easily speak out on any issue.

Justice: Leaders behave with team members without any discrimination regardless of their race, colour or religion. God say it chapter 4:135 which means : “ O you, who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witness to Allah, even as against yourselves or your parents or your kin and whether it be against rich or poor, for Allah protects both”. (Surah al-Nisa:135).

Dependence on God: The managers must prepare managerial plans and policies in order to achieve the rational (halal) objectives but he must depend on Allah for the success of his plan. Allah says, “When you have made a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)” (Surah Al-Imran, Verse-159).

Accountability: The managers must be accountable for their duties and responsibilities to the Board of Directors and the board must be accountable to the beneficiaries or stakeholders God says in chapter 99:7-8 which means: “ whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it”. (Surah al-Zalzalah:Verse- 7-8)

Sincerity: An Islamic managerial leader must be sincere enough to achieve the objectives of an organization. The Quran urges people to be utmost sincere in his praying, meditations, and good deeds.

Dignity of Labour: According to Islam, the best earning is that earned by the toil of the labour. Hence, managers should duly recognize the dignity of all categories of efforts especially physical labour. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says, “Pay the wages to the labour before his sweat dries up” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2009).

Esprit de corps: Islam encourages esprit de corps i.e. team efforts. The highest level of unity should be maintained among the executives, staff and workers for motivating and energizing team work. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says, “The Hand of Allah is with the jama’ah (team)” (Muhammad Asad, 1980).

CONCLUSION

Islam is indeed a comprehensive, integrated, and holistic religion that governs and interweaves all aspects of life. Everyday life and hereafter do not stand in conflict with each other. The ultimate goal of Muslims is to seek Allah’s pleasure by operating a business and worshipping in sincere faith. Thus, Islamic leadership is seen as one that assists the individual in attaining happiness in both worlds. It directs utilizing human resources properly in order to serve society or an organization in achieving peace and happiness.

In this conceptual paper, the concept of leadership in Islam was discussed. The paper provided an Islamic perspective on importance of leaders and leadership. It is argued that leadership is a process of shared influence. It is social and relational in nature and is ultimately shaped by the nature of followers and the prevailing values and beliefs.

Nowadays, leadership is considered a key factor for organizational success. Muslim managers of global business must possess Islamic leadership skills to survive in the competitive market. In today’s demanding and dynamic leadership environments, managers who are incompetent in an organization must be willing to constantly upgrade their skills. Doubtless, continuous efforts to acquire skills will lead a manager to become a successful leader. Teamwork under an effective leader is recognized as a vital force in achieving organizational goals and objectives. The success of a team is dependent on the group efforts

under a team leader. For effective results, members of the team must be trained about Islamic values, ways of communicating within the team, behaviour & attitudes, and consensus formation.

REFERENCES

- I. Adnan, A. (2006), “A study of Islamic leadership theory and practice in K-12 Islamic school in Michigan”, available at : <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/ETD/image/etd1273.pdf> (accessed 30 January 2009).
- II. Ahmad, A.B. Rafique (2006), Leaders-Followers’ Relation in Organizations: An Islamic Perspective, IIUC Business Review, Vol. 1, July 2006 PP.6-7
- III. Ali, A.J. (2005), Islamic Perspectives on Management and Organization, Edward Elgar, London.
- IV. Al-Talib, Hisham (1991), Training Guide for Islamic Workers, Published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Herndon, Virginia, USA, PP.50-52, 130 – 135
- V. Anisuzzaman, M. AND Majumder, M. Z. A. (1996), Leadership: Western and Islamic – A Conceptual and Explorative Study, published by Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT), Dhaka, PP.6-7, 22-23, 41-45
- VI. Ather, Syed Mohammad (2006), Islamic Management – An Introduction and Its Contrasts to Traditional management, IIUC Business Review, Vol. 1, July PP.20-23
- VII. Bass, B. M. (1990). Handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial implications (3rd Edition). New York7 The Free Press.
- VIII. Blau, P. (1963), “Critical remarks on Weber’s theory of authority”, American Political Science Review, Vol. 57, pp. 305-15.
- IX. Budhwar, P. and Fadzil, K. (2000), “Globalisation, economic crisis and employment practices: lessons from a large Malaysian Islamic institution”, Asia Pacific Business Review, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 171-98.
- X. Cerimagic, S. (2010), “The effects of Islamic law on business practices”, Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 40-47.

-
- XI. Collins, R. (1986), *Weberian Sociological Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- XII. Dow, T. (1969), “The theory of charisma”, *Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 10, pp. 306-18.
- XIII. Duderija, A. (2012), “Evolution in the concept of Sunnah during the first four generations of Muslims in relation to the development of the concept of an authentic Hadith as based on recent Western scholarship”, *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 393-437.
- XIV. Duderija, A. (2012), “Evolution in the concept of Sunnah during the first four generations of Muslims in relation to the development of the concept of an authentic Hadith as based on recent Western scholarship”, *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 393-437.
- XV. Garcia-Zamor, J.C. (2003), “Workplace spirituality and organizational performance”, *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 355-63.
- XVI. Gunther, M. (2001), “God and business: the surprising quest for spiritual renewal in the American workplace”, *Fortune*, 9 July, pp. 58-80.
- XVII. Hossain, M. (2007), “Case studies of Muslim managed organizations in Bangladesh”, paper presented at International Conference, Management from Islamic Perspective at Hilton Kuala Lumpur, 15-16 May, Organized by KENMS.
- XVIII. Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. and Gordan, C. (2006), *Leadership*, McGraw Hill, Boston, MA. Conger, J.A. and Kanungo, R.N. (1987), “Toward a behavioral theory of charismatic leadership in organizational settings”, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 637-47.
- XIX. Ismail, Y. (2007), “A proposed approach to the development of Islamic management as a discipline”, paper presented at International Conference, Management from Islamic Perspective at Hilton Kuala Lumpur, 15-16 May, Organized by KENMS.
- XX. Kazmi, A. (2007), “Managing from Islamic perspectives: some preliminary findings from Malaysian Muslim-managed organizations”, paper presented at International Conference, Management from Islamic Perspective at Hilton Kuala Lumpur, 15-16 May, Organized by KENMS.
-

-
- XXI. Khaliq, A. (2003), “Management model from Islamic perspectives: some reflections”, *Ulum Islamiyyah*, No. 1, pp. 43-60.
- XXII. Khaliq, A. (2007a), “Leadership and work motivation from Islamic perspective”, paper presented at International Conference, Management from Islamic Perspective at Hilton Kuala Lumpur, 15-16 May, Organized by KENMS.
- XXIII. Khaliq, A. (2007b), *Management from Islamic Perspectives – Principles and Practices*, Research Centre, IIUM, Kuala Lumpur.
- XXIV. Khaliq, A. (2009), “Leadership and work motivation from the cross-cultural perspective”, *International Journal of Commerce & Management*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 72-84, available at: Emerald Database (accessed 20 March 2009).
- XXV. Khan, A. (2007), “Islamic leadership: a success model for everyone and all times”, available at: <http://americanchronicle.com/articles/view/33073> (accessed 5 January 2009).
- XXVI. Khan, M.W. (1998), “Prophetic principles of success”, *Minaret*, September, pp. 8-9, available at: <http://makkah.wordpress.com/leadership-and-islam/> (accessed 17 December 2008).
- XXVII. King, J.E. and Williamson, I.O. (2005), “Workplace religious expression, religiosity, and job satisfaction: clarifying a relationship”, *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 173-98
- XXVIII. Lukman, T. (1995), *The Islamic Polity and Leadership*, Baron Production Sdn Bhd, Klang.
- XXIX. Matiaske, W. and Grozinger, G. (2010), “Religion and the organisation man”, *Management Revue*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 5-7.
- XXX. Mitroff, I. and Denton, E.A. (1999), *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America: A Hard Look at Spirituality, Religion, and Values in the Workplace*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- XXXI. Muhammad Asad.1980. *The Principles of States and Government in Islam* . Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus Limited.
- XXXII. Mohiuddin, M. and Bhuiyan, F. (2013), “Muslims contributions in management”, *European Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 5 No. 11, pp. 1-9.
-

-
- XXXIII. Morgan, J.F. (2005), “Religion at work: a legal quagmire”, *Managerial Law*, Vol. 47 Nos 3/4, pp. 247-59.
- XXXIV. Patwary, Enayet ullah (2003), *Leadership in Islamic Perspective, Executive Views*, Vol. 2, International Islamic University Chittagong, PP.58
- XXXV. Reave, L. (2005), “Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness”, *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 16 No. 5, pp. 255-87.
- XXXVI. Sedikides, C. (2010), “Why does religiosity persist?”, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 3-6.
- XXXVII. Stogdill ,R. (1974), *Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of the Literature*, The Free Press, New York, NY.
- XXXVIII. Symonds, W.C. (2005), “Earthly empires: how evangelical churches are borrowing from the business playbook”, *Business Week*, 23 May, pp. 78-88.
- XXXIX. Weaver, G.R. and Agle, B.R. (2002), “Religiosity and ethical behavior in organizations: a symbolic interactionist perspective”, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 77-97.
- XL. Willner, A. (1984), *The Spellbinders Charismatic Political Leadership*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.
- XLI. Wolpe, H. (1968), “A critical Analysis of some aspects of charisma”, *Sociological Review*, Vol. 16, pp. 305-18.
- XLII. Yukl, G. A. (2002). *Leadership in organizations* (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ7 Prentice-Hall.