

Islamic Values and Principles in the Organization: A Review of Literature

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Abstract

This paper attempts to review the literature on the Islamic values and principles in an organization, then presents the importance of its delineated dimensions. Two main theories of Islamic work ethics and practices are discussed comprehensively based on the Qur'anic verses as the ultimate source in Islamic thinking. The review includes the comparison between certain components' implementations and the views of other religions in several countries. This reveals that each of dimensions are clearly functional in organizations. It suggests that Islamic emphasizes on commercial activities which denied the authors' opinions on its' teaching for not governing the materials aspect or success in business performance. The Islamic religion seeks to deliver the goodness to all mankind according to its rules and principles. The integrated system of the Islamic worldview encompasses all aspects of both *worldly* and *hereafter*- including the aspect of business.

Keywords: Islamic values, Islamic principles, Islamic work ethics, Islamic practices

1. Introduction

Religion is one of the most influential social institutions that is significantly associated with people's attitudes, values and behaviours. It tells specifically the effects to the organization matters include on the managers and employees' approaches and decisions. Spilka *et al.* (2003) asserted that religion plays an inseparable role in numerous forms of human interactions. As a comprehensive religion, Islam governed all aspect of life as an integrated system that clearly stressed on the importance of its values and practices in order to seek Allah's blessings and mercy (*rida*). While, in business field, a combination of profit and *mashlahah* maximization would bring the business into achieving real success.

The researches examine both relationships of religious and work attitudes on the linkage at the individual or firm level (Niles, 1999). However, further works need to examine both relationship with other religion perspectives like in Islam. Table 1. below is the summary of the impact of the religious elements in an organization.

Table 1. The impact of religion elements to the organization

Category	Authors	The Impact
Religion (Individual Level)	Emmons and Paloutzian, (2003); Pargament <i>et al.</i> (2005); Regnerus and Smith (2005); Krishnakumar and Neck (2002); Tischler <i>et al.</i> (2002); Kale and Shrivastava (2003); Fleming (2004); Anderson (2005); Kinjerski & Skrypnik (2006); Milliman <i>et al.</i> (2003)	Creativity, honesty and trust, personal fulfillment, commitment, motivation and job satisfaction, and organisational commitment.
Religion (Firm Level)	Brotheridge and Lee (2007); Duffy (2006); Ebaugh <i>et al.</i> (2003); Hilary and Hui (2009); Longenecker <i>et al.</i> (2004); Mickel and Dallimore (2009); Vitell (2009); Brown (2003).	Emotional development and spiritual competence, encouraged holistic ways of working, developed community at work, empowered the workforce and human society, risk aversion and ethics, stress management and career development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)

The implementation of the Islamic ethics or *akhlaqul karimah* was the first message of Allah given to His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). A Hadith clearly conveyed a message on the importance of *akhlaqul karimah* in Islam as narrated by Bukhari whereby: "I (Muhammad) have only been sent to complete good manners (Makarim Al- Akhlaq)" (Note 1). Ahmad (2006) has added that Muslims who wish to be granted the pleasure of Allah, may achieve this by applying the core values of ethics.

Islamic work ethics is rooted based on Al-Qur'an and *Sunnah* which concern with Islamic values, belief and practices (Arslan, 2005) which defined as the set of moral principles that differentiate what is right from what is wrong (Beekun, 1997). It inspires confidence in the workplace, reinforces social business responsibilities (Ali, 2005) and has a work-orientation as a virtue in human life (Rizk, 2008). These are also applied in any business applications and behaviors that every Muslims should observe and engage in as the servants of God (Beekun & Badawi, 2004) through hard working, commitment, dedication, work creativity, avoidance of wealth accumulation, cooperation and competitiveness at the work place (Yousef, 2001). It is noted that Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) encouraged Muslims to work as much on his/her ability (Ali, 2005). The IWEs' items are summarized in Table 2 as proposed by Ali (1988) and the reference in Al-Qur'an.

Table 2. The Al-Qur'an reference of Islamic work ethics

Subject	Al-Qur'an Verses
Agreements and promises	Ar-Rad 13:25, Al-Qasas 28:28, Yunus 10:71
Consideration for others	An-Nisaa' 4:36, Al-Mumtahina 60: 9.
Consultation	Ash-Shura 42:38, Taha 20:103, Al-Kahf 18:22
Continuous improvement	Al-Araf 7:42.
Cooperation.	Al-Hujraat 49:9, Maryam 19:96.
Equality and unity	Al-Isra' 17:35.
Fairness in dealings	Al-Anaam 6:152, Al-Mumtahina 60:8, An-Najm 53:32, Al-Maida 5:8.
Fairness in wages.	Al-Imran 3:57, Saba' 34:37.
Hard work.	Al-Baqara 2:62; 82, Al-Anaam 6:135
Helping others	As-Saff 61:14, An-Nahl 16:97, Yunus 10:41
Honesty and justice.	Al-Baqara 2:177, Az-Zumar 39:2; 3
Humble.	Hud 11:23
Patience.	Hud 11:11
Righteous/Intention	Al-Baqara 2:25; 225, Al-Baqara 2:62, At-Taubah 9:105, As-Saff 61:8, Al-Qasas 28:19
Social order.	Al-Imran 3:110, Al-Baqara 2:273
Truth.	Al-Anfal 8:27, Yunus 10:61, An-Nur 24:8

Source: Adapted from Ali (1987)

Many studies conducted by the following authors, i.e. Al Habtoor (2001),Yousef (2001), Ali (2005), Ali and Al-Owaihian (2008) have concluded that the IWE contributes to higher performance and brings widespread prosperity and societal welfare. They also agree on the adoption of the IWE in managerial, business operations and economic activities. One of the popular measurement scales of Islamic work ethics was constructed by Ali (1988). He ran a test, among 150 Arab students in major universities in the United States. This scale has been used by researchers in both organizational and management contexts (Yousef, 2001; Rahman *et al.*, 2006; Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2007; Khalil & Abu-Saad, 2009; Kumar & Rose, 2010). They conducted the studies in respective countries, such as the United Arab Emirate, Malaysia and Kuwait and concluded that the IWE is directly affected and that it has a strong relationship with organizational change, committment, and work satisfaction. However, in

his in-depth interviews of 32 business people in Turkish SMEs, Uygur (2009) establishes that the IWE is not a significant factor for their attitudes.

Comparatively, the studies on work ethics of the conventional version have been conducted by Koh and Boo (2001) and Lambert and Hogan (2009) for the cases in Singapore and United States respectively, whereby work ethics has been indicated to have the largest impact on work satisfaction. However, Elkins (2007) argues that there is a weak correlation between work ethics and work satisfaction in relation to the Japanese manufacturing company. Regardless of the positive or negative findings in terms of studies on work ethics and success either in the conventional concept or the Islamic concept, Muslims are obliged to adopt the IWE as instructed in Al-Qur'an and Hadith.

2.2 Islamic Practices and Firm Performance

Islam is a universal religion that is meant for all human beings on earth and could be implemented at any time at all, while the word 'comprehensive' relates to the complete and perfect teachings (syumul). This is stated in Al-Qur'an. Al-An'am 6:38. As stated earlier by Rivai *et al.* (2012) Islam has three pillars of *tawheed*, *shariah* and *akhlaq*. Ahmad (2006) briefly explains each of these three items; *Tawheed* is a basic belief of Muslim that means the establishment of the Unity of Allah; *Shariah* can be described as Muslims' code of conduct based on Al-Qur'an and Hadith; *Akhlaq* refers to the practice of virtue, morality and manners. A Muslim entrepreneur is required to have *Tawheed* as a total conviction to Allah as the Only Sustainer and the acceptance of His divine assistance that provides the Muslims with a source of security. The *Tawheed* paradigm can address the issue of integration in organisations and it provides an intellectual understanding of the unity of the creation and existence (Ahmad, 2006). This is asserted in the Al-Qur'an. Al-ikhlas 112:1 and Al-baqara 2:186.

Islam integrates religious practices of business activities with personal worship. Combining these practices in good intention is called an *ibadah*. All of the practices have been cited in Al-Qur'an and Hadith or based on the guidelines encompassing various *shariah* rules, *muamalat* and *ethical values* (akhlaq Islamiyyah) such as Islamic finance, *halal* certification, Islamic motivation in work, Islamic education, Islamic business training, Islamic networking (jemaah), payment of zakat, honesty, good intention (niyyah), dedication, creativity, optimism, commitment, tenacity and hard working.

The Islamic practices are categorized into actions of *fardhu a'in* (individual's compulsory obligation) and *kifayah* (individual's optional obligation). *Fardhu a'in* refers to practices that are mandatory to the Muslims and ignoring them is sinful and therefore, punishable. These include the Islamic pillars of belief in One Creator –God as the Sustainer and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the messenger of God, praying or (solat) five times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, paying zakat, perform Hajj to Mecca, and other *ibadah* of obeying Allah by doing everything that He ordains and avoiding everything He forbids. Meanwhile, *fardhu kifayah* refers to that the condition whereby if any Muslim has done the practices, other Muslims are not required to do so. For example, attending Islamic business training to learn financial or marketing strategies, where Muslims are not obliged to learn such knowledge (although in other perspectives, every Muslim has the responsibility to acquire knowledge).

The involvement of Islam in business and management has been explained in detail. All of these influences of Islamic practices on an organisation aim at achieving *al-falah* (success in this world and the hereafter). This, therefore, negates the notion that Islam does not emphasize commercial activities or that it is unrelated to any of the organisational behaviors. Some studies on Islamic management practices in various countries are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3. Islamic management practice

Islamic Management Practices	Authors
Ethics & social responsibility in management	Beekun (1997); Ahmad (1996); Hanafi and Sultan (1995); Gambling and Karim (1991); Al Habshi and Ghazali (1994)
Organisational behavior	Shareef (1995); Al-Alwani (1995)
Leadership in organisations	Beekun and Badawi (2004); Ezzati (1982); Shirazi (1980)
Motivation in organisations	Abdel Rahman (1995); Sharfuddin (1995); Ahmad (1995).

Human resource management	Ali (2005); Aghazadeh (2003); Tayeb (1997); Ramzan (1992); Beekun (1997).
Organisational communication	Siddiqui (1988)
Quality management	Sadeq and Israil (1996)
Mutual consultation, advice, conflict resolution, work satisfaction, merit system in recruitment and promotion, mutual trust (management and employees) and the use of control and authority	Ahmad (2006); Beekun (2006); Ali (2005); Sharfuddin (1987).
Self-management, managing people, managing business transactions, and managing time	Moursi (1995)
Planning, collectivism, leading, competition and conflicts	Jabnoun (1994); Al-Buraey (1990); Abu Sin (1981)
Strategic Management	Khalifa (2001)

In regard to the implementation of Islamic practices, it prescribes an extensive set of ways and regulations based on the four servitude principles namely the devotion to God, a committed heart, truthful words, and rightful deeds (Angha, 2002). It is also a framework that shapes the behavior of one-fifth of the world's total population including those who are engaged in business and other facets of life across 50 countries (Jamaluddin, 2003). The reference from Al-Qur'an as the guidance on the adoption of Islamic practices is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. The Islamic practices' sources from Al-Qur'an

Reference	Subject
Al Quran. An-Nur 24:37, Fatir 35:29	The importance remembrance of Allah, do prayers while in trade and sales engagement
Al Quran. Ad-Dzariyat 51:57	Obligation of mankind for an ibadat
Al Quran. Al-Qasas 28:77	Seeking of wealth, not to mischief and the aim of the Hereafter.
Al Quran. Ghafir 40:58; Al-Baqarah 2:30-33; Al-Mujadila 58:11; Luqman 31:20	The importance of training, learning and development
The Quran, An-Nisaa' 4:58-59	Implementation of human resources in the way of God with trust and responsibility
Al Quran. Al-Baqarah 2:286	Doing job based on capacity and competency
AlQuran.Al-Ahqaf 46:19	Grading the employees work based on quality and quantity of their work
Al Quran. Al-Araf 7:85	Understanding the contract and meet the conditions
Al Quran. Al-Kahf 18:87-88	Economic/Business Performance
Al Quran. Al-Baqarah 2:42, At-Taubah 9:16	Accurate information and prohibited false assertions, unfounded accusation and false testimonies
Al Quran. Al-Furqan 25: 67	Balance between those (extremes)
AlQuran.Al-Qasas 28:26-28	Mutual consultation and consent

Source: Adapted from Ali (1988), Ahmad (2006) and Rivai et al. (2012)

In adopting Islamic practices, Muslims are driven by a kind of faith which is otherwise known as *iman*. Islam considers *iman* as the basic motivating factor for believers which determines their conscience. All business decisions must be guided by *iman*, which practically means abiding by the *shariah* law, engaging in the things that are permitted (halal), avoiding those that are forbidden (haram) (Alawneh, 1998). Business decision makers are free to make choices, but religious principles provide a framework for the appropriate exercise of that choice (Ali & Gibbs, 1998).

3. Conclusion

The Islamic values and ethics are based on the statements in Al-Qur'an and Hadith that may be cited in other religious thoughts but the *tawheedic* view may differentiate between Muslims and other adherents. Those elements are seen to be able to be adopted in analyzing business performance in the organizations through their beneficial concepts and functions; however, the empirical studies which argue on, and compare between the Islamic and the conventional methods used by many researchers for years, should be conducted. The *shariah*-compliance concept should be superior to other concepts. Muslims are obliged to implement all elements as an act of an *ibadah*, aiming to get the *rida'* or blessings from Allah SWT in their life endeavours.

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Note

Note 1. Hadith Al-Bukhari. Sahih Bukhari. Al-Jami'ul Musnad Al-Sahih Al-Mukhtasar min Umoorir Rasool Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam wa Sunanihi wa Ayyamihi, Juz 2:#4221. p. 670.

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