



ISLAMIC MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP: THE ROLE OF MANAGERS IN PROMOTING TEAM SPIRIT

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ABSTRACT

This research intends to investigate the Islamic Managerial leadership's operational principles or paradigm ship element used will depend entirely on its most important factor of production, the human labour. This factor on way or another would affect greatly on the organization's performance. Therefore to measure/monitor the effectiveness of a team spirit is of vital importance for both practitioners and researchers. This study critically studies on Islam as a complete code of life as it provides set of principles, guidelines for managers to lead the human resources in an organization as well as the role of, managers in encouraging team spirit in the workforce. These researches are done with hopes that better understanding of the human resource and business methodologies can be gained.

Key Words: human factor, team spirit, code of life, satisfaction, environment.

Introduction

It is important for Islamic Managers to place priority on both concern for people and concern for production. For those who has this way of thinking, they would believe that an excellent production plan is to team building and team spirit and to involve all stakeholders in decision-making process, which, in turn, leads to heightened levels of employee commitment

In Islam, The concept of brotherhood serves as one of the pillar in ensuring good team spirit in any Islamic organization. Allah S.W.T has created mankind with noble objective that people would lead their lives in peace and harmony following the tenets of His revelations sent down through Prophets from time to time since the very beginning of the society

But a faith, if it is to fulfil man's needs of today, must, therefore, transcend tribal, national, racial and cultural limits, and must speak to men at a universal level; This is achieved by Islam as it teaches us with the values of unified concept of humanity. The message of Islam is not confined to any section of mankind; instead it embraces the whole of mankind and the entire universe. As the Holy Quran relates“

Say; 'O mankind! truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah to Whom belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no God, but He. He gives life and He causes death' (Ch. 7: verse159)

The purpose of this study is to evaluate *building- team spirit and qualities of a managerial leader from the Islam perspective to enhance such working environment*, thus establishing the Islamic paradigm of team management for the benefit of Muslim professionals, business organization and researchers.

The second important objective of this paper is to describe how the Islamic managerial concept plays a crucial role in encouraging team spirit in an Islamic organization. In this article, the authors have placed great importance in managerial leadership that shapes the team spirits within the organization. Especially placing interest from the Islamic point of view, it highlights the rationale of the principle used and how it differs from the conventional's.

Operational Principles of Islamic Managerial Leadership

To provide the right working environment that promotes team spirit, it is essential for the organization to have a leader. To fully enhance the spirit, Islam has provided specific guideline for leaders to practice.

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 way (Ahmad, 2006). However, an Islamic managerial leader will serve his followers or subordinates under some distinctive principles, out of which some distinct operational principles are mentioned below:

i. Shura

Shura is an Arabic word for "consultation". The *Al-Quran* and *Hadith* encourage Muslims to decide their affairs in consultation with those who will be affected by that decision, thus, making Managerial leaders in Islam to consult with their people before making any decision.

Islam requires all decisions made by and for the Muslim organization to be made by *shura* as it serves as the fundamental aspect of democracy of the Muslim community and believe this to be the basis for implementing representative democracy. With every level of the organization take part in the *Shura*, any decision that come out from it would easily accepted make them to be more accepted in the team.

Following the example of the prophet Managers in an organization must consult with their subordinates in formulating any strategy or policy. Allah S.W.T directed his Prophet, Muhammad S.A.W to consult with his companions. Allah says

“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, Verse-38).

“And by the mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah’s) forgiveness for them; and consult with them in affairs. Then when you have made a decision, put your trust in Allah.”

(Surah Al-Imran, Verse-159)

ii. Open minded

Every member of the team should have the right to ask questions. A person feels valued and motivated for being part of this team and enjoys his work. These could not only increase his work quality, but could also contribute to a healthier working environment for the team. Islam encourages freedom of thought. Practicing managers or executives should create such an environment in the organization so that the staff members can easily opine on any issue.

The Four *Khalif*s of Islam considered this as an essential element of their leadership. Hazrat Umar (R) praised Allah (SwT) that there were people in the *Ummah* who would correct him if he went astray.

During the era of the second *Khalif*: Umar ibn Khattab, he was once giving instructions to the public regarding the dowry that a man should be allowed to give to his bride. He specified that it be a small amount to which a woman from the crowd replied that Allah says in the Quran *“If you give them a Qintaar (large amount)”*, to which Umar (Radi Allahuanhu) realized his mistake. He acknowledged his error and stated that the woman was correct. How fair and humble he was.

iii. Fair & Just

Team leader treats members fairly and listens to their ideas and concerns. A satisfied man is the one who meets deadlines at work. Without any discrimination regardless of their race, color or religion, it is compulsory for leaders to behave with team members justly and fairly As urged by Islam constantly,

The *Qur’an* commands Muslims to be fair and just in any circumstances even if the verdict goes against their parents or themselves. Allah says

“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 An-Nisa, Verse-135)

To act fairly, would not just to avoid discrimination, but also to reward deserving staff fairly. Islamic standard of team management introduces unique concept of rewards and accountability based on Devine teachings. Al - Qur’an says:

“He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit, but he that doeth evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: no wrong shall be done unto (anyof) them (al - Qur’ān 6: 160)”.

Islamic paradigm multiplies rewards of good performance and recognizes the contribution of every team member. Thus, it provides highly energized performing environment to the team. On the other hand, there is equally a strong mechanism of accountability, which is the Islamic paradigm of team management. Al - Qur’ān says:

“Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it also (al - Qur’ān 99:7-8)”.

In other word, reward would not be in just worldly possession, but also in the hereafter. This serve as a strong motivational factor for a staff to increase effectiveness and to work in group.

iv. Tawakkal

Tawakkal is the word for the Islamic concept of reliance on God or "trusting in God's plan. The managerial leaders in Islam must depend on Almighty Allah (Swt) for the outcome of any action. One is answerable to Allah (SWT) and his fellow humans to discharge duties assigned to him as this would then encourage the Team to have clarity and pride in its mission.

Allah S.W.T asked his believers to depend on Him. 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).

However, dependence on Him without any endeavours is not supported by Islam. The managers must prepare managerial plans and policies in order to achieve the rational (*halal*) objectives. But he must depend on Allah S.W.T for the success of his plan.

v. Accountability & responsibility

The functions and operations of the organization must be guided and controlled by the rules of Islamic Sharia i.e. Qur’an, Hadith, Izmaand Qias. As Islam teaches accountability as 1 of the criteria for being a good leader, the managers must be accountable for their duties and responsibilities to the Board of Directors and must be held responsible to ensure all sharia’s guidelines are complied. In the sense of promoting team spirit, leader’s accountability would build trust among the member of the organization; this would then ensure a better coordination for the leaders to unify the members into a team.

According to Islam, each and every human being will be made responsible for his good or bad deeds and accordingly he will be rewarded or punished. Allah says

“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 Az-Zilzal, Verse- 7-8)

Accountability is both an instrument and a goal. What started as an instrument to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency has gradually become a goal in itself. Accountability has become an icon for good performance both in the public and private sectors (Bovens, 2005), nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burden. If one heavily laden should call another to (bear) his load, not the least portion of it can be carried (by the other), even though they are virtually related.

Accountability in this very broad sense is basically used to positively influence a state of affairs or the performance of a team. It comes close to ‘responsiveness’ and a sense of responsibility’, that is, a willingness to act in a righteous and trustworthy manner (Bovens, 2005).

vi. Sincerity

An Islamic managerial leader must be sincere enough to achieve the objectives of an organization. These would react as the uniting or pushing factor for the management to encourage team spirit. The *Qur’anic* terminology of sincerity is *Khulusiat*. The Holy *Quran* urges people to be utmost sincere in his praying, meditations, and good deeds.

vii. Labour Welfare

With welfare and the dignity of labours are well taken care of, it would render them to be more happy with their work. As mentioned by the prophet Muhammad S.A.W “Pay the wages to the labor before his sweat dries up” (*AlHadith*). Islam pointed out that earning as the best, which is earned by the toil of the labor. Hence, practicing managers should duly recognize the dignity of all categories of efforts especially physical labor of the workers and employees.

viii. Esprit de corps

The managerial leaders must try to achieve organizational goals and objectives with team rather than individual endeavours. The highest-level of unity should be maintained among the executives, staff and workers for motivating and energizing team works. Islam encourages *esprit de corps* i.e. team efforts.

Islamic Paradigm Elements of Team Spirit

To make sure the right environments are set for the performance, Islamic paradigm has identified several elements that need to be included in a team. The concept of environment provides a way to describe the impact of organization and organizational life on the motivation and behaviour of team members. It is defined as the individuals' perception of aspects of their working surroundings that directly affects performance. Components of team management, subsequently delineated, describe the environment which the Islamic paradigm of team management establishes across all types of teams for their effectiveness and success.

i. Flexibility

Flexibility is an important element in ensuring workplace effectiveness. In an organizational environment, flexibility can improve employee engagement and job satisfaction and reduce stress. Flexibility leads to minimized bureaucracy in the organization and encourages innovation.

Islam requires Muslims to be effective and productive members of teams. Flexibility is an integral part of the Islamic way of life including social, cultural and legal aspects. For individuals to be able to work as a team, flexibility is crucial, as it acts as the convenience factor that makes the development of team spirit easier to achieve.

ii. Responsibility

As quoted by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, *"Whenever God makes a man responsible for other people, whether in greater or lesser numbers, he will be questioned as to whether he ruled his charges in accordance with God's decrees or not; and that will not be all. God will question him even about his family members"*

(Ibn Hanbal, on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar).

In Islam, responsibility serves as obligations that bind the team together. Team members should know their responsibilities, their targets, what they need to do to get which rewards, and what the consequences would be if they make mistakes.

iii. Consistency

To be consistent, require individuals to possess high disciplinary awareness. Discipline is a must for every Muslim as Islam's act of worship such as Praying for 5 times require proficient and timely acts. The tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has taught Muslims to be consistent in their work. Allah (SWT) loves one who is diligent and consistent in his work.

With relations to promoting team spirit, Islamic paradigm of team management promotes consistent excellence in meeting performance standards both in personal and collective efforts.

and encourages continual improvement in all related fields A good team member is one who is dedicated and consistent in his work, that is, consistent in delivering performance, maintaining standards and pursuing sustained improvement. Consistency demonstrates leadership confidence and control.

iv. Commitments

Team spirit according to Islamic values emphasizes on commitment and dedication to work. Proper ethical value in managing team spirit focuses on strengthening, for example, honesty, righteousness, truth, justice, etc., among team members. These concepts of goodness has proven to increase the value of the teams output as bind the team together in achieving common goal.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

“You are not better than people with red or black skins, unless you excel them in piety”.

Conclusion

Even with advent of new technology and advance method for better operation of organizations, human factor. Labour keeps playing an important role in the organization performance. Thus with the rise of new managerial theory and philosophy, the Muslim managers of global business world must possess Islamic leadership skills to survive in the competitive market. In today’s demanding and dynamic leadership requirement, managers who are incompetent in an organization must be willing to constantly upgrade their skills.

With Qur’ān and the tradition as reference, Islam has proven to stay relevant with today’s managerial requirement as it provide a complete code and provides guidance for every aspect of life. Teamwork is of a significant importance to Islamic management. 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 the greater interest of the team, a team member in an Islamic organization must be willing to sacrifice his opinion if needed for the greater interest of the team. For effective results, members of the team must be trained about Islamic values, ways of communicating within the team, behaviour & attitudes, and consensus formation.

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