



Inculcating Leadership Principles of Successful Leaders among Muslims: Effective leadership Characteristics Framework from Holy Quran and Islamic History

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Abstract: This paper has prioritizes on the importance of inculcating Islamic leadership characteristics among Muslim leaders. This is a review paper that contributes to define the Islamic leadership characteristics of successful Muslim leaders. The aim is to introduce effective leadership characteristics derived from the holy Quran and Islamic history. The finding indicates that the early Muslim generation has proved that Muslims can be very successful leaders if they practice Islam in its entirety. This finding is of a great value to both theory and practice and have important implications for Muslim leaders. Furthermore, the paper argues that the leadership characteristics and of successful Muslim leaders must be included in any discussion on Islamic countries and what is happening among Muslim leaders. Failure to ensure the leadership characteristics among Muslim will mean increased corruptions, injustices, and prejudiced in Muslim countries.

Keywords: leadership Characteristics, Leadership Principle, Muslim leaders, Islamic Leadership, Leadership Framework

Introduction

Leadership in Islam is a trust; it is often takes the form of an explicit contract or pledge between a leader and his followers; who tries the best to guide, protect, and treat them fairly and with justice. Hence, the focus of leadership in Islam is on integrity and justice. Given the recent emphasis on ethical behavior in the leadership literature (Kouzes and Posner, 1995), an examination of the moral bases of leadership from an Islamic perspective may provide some interesting insights for the field of leadership in general. In this paper, we will examine what leadership is from an Islamic perspective, the moral dimensions of leadership and the uncover characteristics of leaders and followers as suggested by Islam.

Muslims always base their behavior as leader and/or as follower upon the Word of God as revealed in the holy Qur'an. They believe that the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (*saw*) has modeled the way for Muslim leaders and followers for all times. This belief is supported when God says about Muhammad (*saw*) in Surah al-Qalam 68:4: "*And you stand an exalted standard of character*".

Islam plays a very important role in the lives of Muslims all the times (e.g. Deresky, 2006; Cavusgil, Knight and Riesenberger, 2008). It also influences the way management is applied in Muslim countries. In particular, much has been written about what is often called "management from an Islamic perspective" (Khaliq and Fontaine, 2011). Islam also guides the way leaders manage, furthermore, Muslim scholars of management have talked lots about Islamic leadership principles and approaches. Thus, this study focuses on leadership principles that based on practices, traits, behaviors, processes, roles, and styles of leaders have and do in order to lead the followers, emphasizing on the importance of the situational factors.

These principles are extracted primarily from the *Qur'an* and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) and his companions for the orientation of governmental affairs and the construction of good and ethical leadership to guide the Islamic

leaders in running Muslim organizations appropriately and effectively. It draws upon the noblest Islamic traditions of science, worship, justice, and doing good, in addition, it seeks to inculcate these values in Muslims (Khaliq 2009).

Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) as an Effective Leader in Islam

Powerful leaders can affect millions of individuals; the power that they have to change the world can never be estimated. Look into what we have in the Islamic history; since the establishment of an Islamic state with the migration of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (pbuh) to Medina, no doubt, he was the leader for the whole Muslim's nations (Ummah); he had the power of leading people.

The Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) has modeled the way for Muslim leaders and followers for all times. He has made the leadership and follower take the meaning of friendship, caring and loving. According to Ali Zohery (2009), "the Prophet was successful leader, because he lived and stayed with the values of leadership. His communication was successful because he was the kindest man, the greatest friend, the best husband, and the Loving father. He provided a living example of his own interactions with family, believers, and non-believers. Furthermore, his daily interactions as husband, father, friend, businessman, public figure, and messenger of God reinforced his leadership ability and values orientation".

According to Ali Zohery (2009), "Prophet Muhammad's unique communication and leadership style led to the spread of Islam, not only within Arabia but also outside to the north, south, east, west and southwest of Arabia. As a leader during wartime or as a leader during peacetime, Prophet Muhammad always presented skillful techniques with which he accomplished his goals in delivering the message of Islam".

The Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) strongly believed that leadership must be based on three foundations: Rehema (mercy), ehsan (kindness), and adel (justice). Once these foundations are met, race should not be an issue in selecting a leader (Abbas, 2009).

According to the Prophet Muhammad (*saw*), leadership in Islam is not reserved for small elite. Rather, depending upon the situation, every person is the "shepherd" of a flock, and occupies a position of leadership. Muhammad (*saw*) is reported to have said: "*In most circumstances in life, Muslims are urged to appoint a leader and follow him*".

Based on this, Muslims must appoint a leader during a trip, select a leader to lead the prayer, and choose a leader for other group activities. Leadership, then, can be depicted as a process by which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of followers in an effort to reach certain objectives. This explanation suggests that leadership is essentially a process whereby the leader guides *willing* followers. At all times, a leader must remember that he/she cannot compel others to do things against their will.

Beekun (2006) viewed leadership as a dynamic relationship based on mutual influence and common purpose between leaders and followers in which both are moved to higher levels of motivation and moral development as they affect real intended change. In fact, Islam demands that leaders pay attention to followers' needs. It is trusteeship of God, a responsibility given from Him and a service to mankind (Toor, 2007). Therefore, Prophet (*saw*) said, "If Allah puts anyone in the position of authority over the Muslims' affairs and he secludes himself (from them), not fulfilling their needs, wants, and being spared from poverty, Allah will keep Himself away from him, not fulfilling his need, want, and being spared from poverty," (*SalĒī Muslim*).

Hence, in Islam, a leader is not free to act as he or she chooses, nor must he submit to the wishes of any group, he or she must act only to implement God's commands on earth. In the *Qur'ān*, God says: "*And We made them leaders guiding men by Our command and We sent inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and to practice regular charity; and they constantly served Us only.*" (*Qur'ān*, 21:73)

In addition to that, the two primary roles of a leader from Islamic perspective are those of servant-leader and guardian-leader (*sayyid al qawn khadimuhum*). The leader is the one who serves his followers, seeks their welfare and guide them towards good. The idea of a leader as a servant has been part of Islam since its beginning, and has only recently been developed by Robert Greenleaf: "*The servant-leader is servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. [...] The best test and the most difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons?*"

The Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) has emphasized more on the second major role of the Muslim leader as a guardian, who protect his community against tyranny and oppression, encourage God-consciousness and *taqwa*, and promote justice. Eventually,

whether as servant or as guardian, a Muslim leader may make use of certain bases of power to be effective. Islam recognizes the existence of power, but suggests etiquette for its uses.

Effective Leadership Characteristics Framework

It is not easy to describe who the effective leader is and what characteristics he/she should have. Throughout my reading, Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) is the good example to the effective leader. Because he is the one who work for his people, always humble, and kind to them; he is neither flaunt his status nor exploit his power. It is hard to come by such individuals in real life, and he is really the perfect combination of humility, knowledge, and charisma that is required of the perfect and innovative leaders.

Hawi (1982) attempted to synthesize the most desired traits of effective leaders. He described the attributes of effective leader as having the ability to reason or act rationally, to be knowledgeable, mentally stable, courageous, in control of desires, generous, wise, in control of his temper, forgiving, caring, flexible, relying on evidence, abiding by promises, honest, able to keep secrets, acting decisively, being cunning, humble, free from hatred and envy, patient, thankful, diplomatic, not listening to slanderers and backbiters, not appointing the non-faithful as deputies, following up and processing work, receptive and willing to give advice, attentive, a good organizer, rewarding and recognizing achievers and respectable in their appearance.

In the Islamic history, a part from Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) leadership characteristic, *Abu Bakr AlSiddiq*, *Umar Bin Al-Khattab*, and *Umar Ibn AbdulAziz* showed good characters of effective leaders. They stand an exalted standard of characters, because they were working for the betterment of the followers (Ummah); their leaderships characterized as follow:

Democratic: Umar Ibn Abdulaziz was appointed as caliph but he was declining to the people and that they have to choose their leader. Upon hearing that, his people shouted with one voice that they have chosen him and thus he became the Caliph. He has changed the selection system to election to show the importance of public support for developing countries. According to Jago (1982) on Leadership; good leaders are made not born and develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience. Even though he came from hereditary ruler but he still want the voice of people, nowadays we called as democracy.

Pious: Almost all companions of Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) emulate his leadership style; they became excellent leaders, because of their dedication to implement the Shariah rules. They restored all of the rights to the people that the Shariah had obligated, and they applied the correct Shariah rules related to the economy, business and dealing.

Concern: They were very concern about poor people, and during Umar Ibn Abdulaziz, for instance, people of Medina turned to be rich. His fruitful achievements lead to the wellbeing of his society, and even when the time for annual obligatory charity from came, no one accepted it, but was to be sent to other towns to raise other's standards of living.

Integrity/ Honesty: The companions of prophet Muhammad (*saw*) were very particular and honest about the country's wealth. They did not use any single thing of country's properties for themselves. They were really very firm about the national properties.

Justice: Umar Bin Al-Khattab and Abu Bakr AlSiddiq were very just rulers; they preached justice and practice justice. Followed by Umar Ibn Abdulaziz, the one who stands the good example for those who made the judiciary independent of the executive committee to allow for fair treatment of all Muslims without the interference of the executive committee. He removed all the shadows of royal influence, which generally interfere on the administration of justice. He did not allow any personal, family, clan or group's interest to intervene with justice. He was just in his dealing with both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Communication: The companions of Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) were very concern about communicating with the societies. And during Umar Ibn Abdulaziz reign, he urged all the officers to listen to the complaints made by citizens and if any subject had seen an officer mistreating the people, the officer should be reported and that subject would be given a reward from 100-300 dirhams. He also urged the citizen to be his watcher over himself and guide him if he done anything wrong.

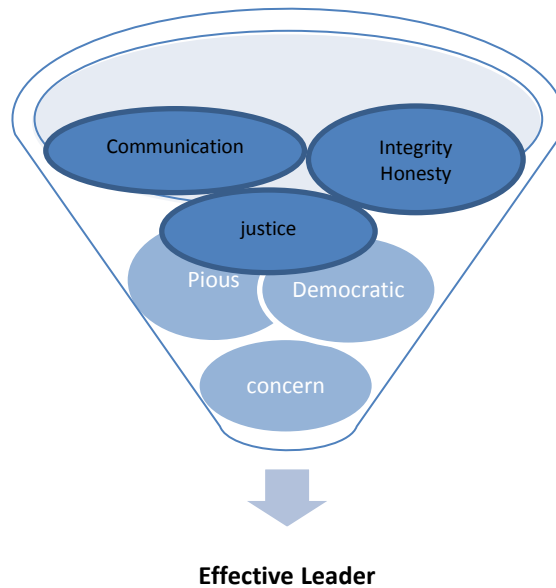


Figure 1

Conclusion

This study has looked at how Muslim leaders practices and what are the characteristics that helped them to be effective leaders. On the whole, there is a very strong emphasis on the Prophet Muhammad (saw) leadership characteristic, Abu Bakr AlSiddiq, Umar Bin Al-Khattab, and Umar Ibn AbdulAziz characters of effective leaders. This indicates that leadership characteristic is not merely a theoretical construct; it is, in fact, a construct that describes reality in at least one Muslim managed region. Moving forward, it would be interesting if comparison is made to the leaders of this time. As this is a review study, the authors recognize the limitations inherent in the study but we would argue that it serves as a useful start to empirically test theories and better understand to how leadership in the Muslim world would likely differ from others. Clearly, there is little data yet to support this paper but, hopefully, subsequent research would confirm or falsify this point.

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