A Review of Islamic Leadership

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Abstract

The study is aimed at investigating the current status of leadership research from Islamic perspective. Islam being the last of all revealed religions offers a complete code of conduct for every aspect of life. One of those aspects is the business perspective and leadership is one of the most important aspects of business. This study highlights the status of academic literature on Islamic perspective of leadership and offers new directions for researchers to work at.

Key words: Islamic Leadership, Islam, Leadership, Literature survey

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Introduction

Islam is one of the most rapidly spreading religions in the world (Islam is fastest growing religion in the world, 2014; The List: The World's Fastest-Growing Religions, 2014). This has not only increased the significance of Muslim rights but also need of understanding of Islamic laws about various aspects of life i.e. political, social, economic, worship, and all other aspects. One of these aspects is related to business and organizations, as ALLAH S.W.T. says in His Holy book Quran:

"[….] whereas Allah permitteth trading and forbiddeth usury […..]" (02:275).

So it is imperative to notice that trade is the permitted thing by ALLAH S.W.T. so its dealings and ways of doing should also be within the prescribed rules of Shariah. These rules range from management (Al-Buraey, 2001; Garah, Beekun, Habisch, Lenssen, & Adaui, 2012), objectives (Dusuki, 2008), employees relations (Syed &

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Ali, 2010), motivation (M. B. Khan & Sheikh, 2012), human resource perspectives (Ali, 2010; Branine & Pollard, 2010; Hashim, 2009, 2010; B. Khan, Farooq, & Hussain, 2010; Mellahi & Budhwar, 2010; Tayeb, 1997), problem solving (Fontaine, 2008), training and development (Hassi, 2012; M. B. Khan & Sheikh, 2012), resources allocation (Chowdhury, 1999), human capital development (Abdullah, 2012), environmental ethics & CSR (Khurshid, Al-Aali, Soliman, & Amin, 2014; Riham R. Rizk, 2014), marketing (Arham, 2010; Jafari, 2012; Sandıkcı, 2011; J. Wilson, 2012; J. A. J. Wilson & Grant, 2013), work ethics (Alhyasat, 2012; Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008; Kumar & Rose, 2010; Riham Ragab Rizk, 2008), meaning of work (Sharabi, 2012), stress (Barhem, Younies, & Muhamad, 2009), and accounting (Velayutham, 2014). But it is important to notice that leadership from Islamic perspective is, like other areas, is still in its infancy stage (Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011; Ali, 2009; Almoharby & Neal, 2013; Marbun, 2013). Considering the dearth of academic literature on Islamic leadership, this study is aimed at investigating the current status of Islamic leadership and provides direction to future researchers.

Annotated Bibliography of Islamic Leadership Studies

While going through from literature a comprehensive investigation have been made from all respected data bases including Emerald Insight, Springer, Science Direct, Wiley, Sage, Taylor and Francis; moreover, the web pages of web of science have also been investigated with key word "islamic leadership, leadership in Islam, Islamic perspective of leadership". The investigation was made between June-September, 2014. The articles and their main considerations are given below:

"Attributions and requirements of Islamic leadership" by "Dahlena Sari Marbun" (2013)

This study was an attempt to unveil the relationship requirements and attributions of Islamic leadership. It starts its ideas with the definition of leadership, links it with management literature and then leads it to the concept and application of attribution principles (where attribution is defined as needs, desires, motives, causes of a specific behavior). Moving a step forward, it links attribution with the requirements of leadership (Kartono, 1986's view; Fayol, 1949's view; Terry, 1960's view on requirements of leadership). It is commented that a leader from Islamic perspective should possess rational awareness (ALLAH's vicegerent) and spiritual awareness (ALLAH's slave). It gives a narrative of a good Islamic leader, as given, in literature, and traits it should possess: good at intentions, mindfulness of ALLAH S.W.T. (Taqwa), kindness and care (Ihsan), Justice (Adl), Trust (Amana), Truthfulness

(Sidq), Self-improvement (Itqan), Keeping promises and sincerity (Ikhlas), Consultation (Shura), and Patience (Sabar). It further discusses Ahmad model which highlights three main attributes namely: taqwa, itqan and akhlaq.

"Clarifying Islamic perspectives on leadership" by "Darwish Almoharby & Mark Neal" (2013)

This study entails at investigating the basics of Islamic leadership as highlighted in the major sources of Islam i.e. Quran and Sunnah. It further highlights the basic ideas, concepts and prototypes as highlighted in these scripts. Thus it provides the foundations of Islamic leadership. It uses content analysis approach to identify the key concept related to the leadership in the abovementioned scripts. These contents are further refined after seminars, conference presentations and subsequent discussions. Islamic leadership is based on a legal system which is aimed at unity of purpose, acknowledgement of oneness of ALLAH S.W.T., and taking the life of ALLAH's Apostle S.A.W.W. as the practical guidelines of a true leader. It is therefore suggested that an islamic leader is a person who is true believer (oneness of ALLAH and His Apostle S.A.W.W.) and a really practicing Muslim (implementing the teachings on every moment of his/her life). It concludes that Muhammad S.A.W.W. is the sole and the ultimate leader to follow and is the sole referent and charismatic leader. His life is the true parameters for a person to be a leader. Thus His personality provides us the standard and yards stick to measure and evaluate the leadership and define a leader to be an Islamic or not.

"An empirical assessment of Islamic leadership principles" by "Khaliq Ahmad Ogunsola" (2011)

This study investigates the basic principles of Islam leadership and management. It further attempts to provide the empirical evidence to support the premise by investigating the leadership styles of administrators in IIU (International Islamic University), Malaysia. It also defines an excellent leadership while looking at the Islamic teachings of leadership and management. It uses two main sources of defining and investigating leadership from Islamic perspective, where at first instance it uses the teachings of Quran and Sunnah to draw the premises of Islamic leadership, and at second instance it uses a questionnaire based survey to find the existing status about Islamic leadership. The findings of the study revealed that servant leadership was the most widely used leadership style, and Islamic values were given the preferable importance.

"Islamic perspectives on leadership: a model" by "Abbas J. Ali" (2009)

This study covers the significance of culture in determining the leadership style in Muslim world. It concludes that the culture influences the adoption of leadership style which may fall under Prophetic or Caliphate leadership (using the life spans of Prophet S.A.W.W. and Caliphs). It investigates political and socio-economic forces that facilitate the emergence of Islamic leadership style and moves further towards development of Islamic leadership model. This study adds value by making a good realization of the ideal and real states in nurturing the leadership styles. This study offers a genuine reflection of leadership from Islamic perspective and highlights the significance of culture which has largely been overlooked in past. It argues that culture shapes personality which influences the contextual and relational aspects of leadership.

Conclusion & Future Directions

A short literature survey on the studies of Islamic leadership published in prestigious databases proves that Islamic leadership is largely uninvestigated by the researchers on leadership and management discipline. But the lack of investigation do not make it an unimportant or area that may still be ignored for years. Islamic being one of the most widely accepted and practiced religion requires broader level of understanding of its followers about various aspects of their lives. Business is one of the most important perspectives covers the economic realms of a Muslim country. So an understanding of its management and leadership is the area which requires great attention.

While aiming at the gap left unmet, by the previous researchers, this study highlights that Islami leadership is the concept which is still at its infancy stage as no proper definition has emerged, it is not backed by a strong model to implement, it is not justified in the changing era of today and it is still in its development phase. But one promising thing offered by this theory is to cater all forms of needs while ignoring none of its stakeholders. It also offers edge over all other leadership considerations as it focuses, solely, on the welfare of all and ignoring none of the parties involved. Additionally, it has universal implications as it is followed, understood, accepted and useful for all cultures, societies, nations and is at the nature of human beings. It also adds value to the ordinary person by adding the value of spiritual and material goals and aligning them to direct to the righteous path and success.

But it still requires a lot to do while looking at the number of studies published at prestigious databases. The first and foremost consideration could be the development of model using the teachings of Islam (Quran & Sunnah) and using the history of Islam to develop the basic parameters of this study. Furthermore, the developed model should be assessed for its applicability and accuracy by experiencing it at various cultures and countries. This, in return, will increase the abilities of a model and ensure its universal application. Empirical evidences from various organizations may also work well to improve the working of such model.

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