

Does Element of Belief (Iman) and Ritual (Ibadah) Determined Leadership Effectiveness among Muslims in Malaysia?

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Abstract

Islamic concept has become more prominent in the development of society. It is no longer an unfamiliar concept among the world communities. In addition, the administration and management based on Islamic concept is also becoming increasingly popular among organizations around the world. Since many scholars believe that there is still lack of study regarding Islamic perspective in management, thus the purpose of this research is to examine the problem regarding this matter and to explore more about the Qur'an way of leadership. A total of 180 civil servants in the public sector in Kuching and Kota Samarahan areas participated in the survey. The result reveals that belief was found to be significant with very strong correlation and positive relationship with leadership effectiveness. Meanwhile for rituals, the result shows that this variable has insignificant with a moderate correlation and positive relationship with leadership effectiveness. Suggestions for future research were also discussed.

Keywords: Spirituality; Belief; Rituals; Leadership effectiveness; Civil servants.



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1. Introduction

Currently, Islamic concept has become more prominent in the development of society. It is no longer unfamiliar concept among the world community. In addition, the administration and management based on Islamic concept is also becoming increasingly popular among organizations around the world. Al-Qardawi (2001) mentioned that among the signs of Islamic reawakening are the growing number of people who pray in the mosque, increasing sales of religious books and spread of hejab among women. In fact, the reason for these reawakening is due to the people's spiritual needs in their lives.

Kouzes and Posner (2012) mentioned the emergence of spirituality, religion and faith in the world of business are due to the leader as well the organization where continuous efforts were made to seek for those meaning and higher purpose. In addition, the management discipline is moving towards developing spirituality and religion into their interest (Kazmi, 2004). Islamic thoughts are very wide. Khraim *et al.* (2011) stated that Islam guides our life completely since its covers and regulates life in every aspect through the socio-economic system. There are two main sources to find this system which are Al-Quran and Al-Hadith.

1.1. Research Problem and Research Objectives

Several studies have been carried out in a way of examining the practices of Islamic principals in Malaysian Public Services. Based on a study conducted by Latif (2007), the practices of applying Islamic Principles in ethics of Civil Sectors has successfully reduced discipline problems. Wan Sabri Wan Hussin (2001) found that the Islamic principles that are being practiced by Islamic and non-Islamic traders in Malaysia have helped them in surviving the uproar of economic downturn. This shows that the Islamic Principles has its own value towards organizations which bring significant changes towards management practices in a positive way. However, these studies are mostly focusing on the practices of Islamic principles in the organization and do not really focus on the impact of Islamic principles on the effectiveness in governing the organization. Hence, this research attempts to investigate the relationship and the strength of relationship between belief and ritual towards leadership effectiveness

2. Literature Review

2.1. Leadership Effectiveness

Since there is no absolute definition of Islamic leadership and leadership in Islam that is found in the literature from relevant Islamic studies references [Senam et al. \(2015\)](#), but the fundamental principles of Islamic leadership that constitute in this research is clearly provided in the literature. Leadership are “Khalifah”, “Imamah”, and “Wilayah”. [Wan Kamal et al. \(2012\)](#) has mentioned that there are a number of terms used in Islam to characterize leadership such as “Al-Khalifah”, Al-Imamah”, “Al-Imarah” or “Amir”, and “Al-Wilayah. [Ali \(2007\)](#), cited by [Senam et al. \(2015\)](#) mentioned that Islamic leadership is to serve the organization members, the community, and as well as the society at large by directing and guiding people to what is good in this world and the Hereafter (Al-Falah). Besides that, according to the western scholar, leaders are authentically transformational when they increase awareness of what is right, good, and important to them, and when they help to raise followers’ need for achievement and self-actualization.

2.2. Spirituality

[Riaz and Normore \(2008\)](#) define spirituality as a heightened awareness of one’s self and the desire to establish a connection with a superior source of meaning. It was supported by previous researchers which stated that workplace spirituality as “*A framework of organization values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of compassion and joy*” ([Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003](#)). Thus, [Ayranci and Semercioz \(2011\)](#) has found that the factors that form spiritual leadership, spirituality, and religiosity have very weak and positive relationship. Besides that, this research will focus on the spirituality determinants based on Islamic perspective which consists of Belief (Iman), Rituals (Ibadat) and Repentance (Tawbah).

2.3. Belief (Iman)

[Ibrahim \(1997\)](#) stated that belief has provides leaders with an advantage to lead successfully as it provides superior values and [Al-Ghazali \(2004\)](#) in his research on characteristics of a Muslim added that Belief serves to function a harness for wrongdoings. *Iman or belief* can be defined as the leader’s awareness to *Tawhid (Tauhid)*, Belief in Allah’s attributes that lead the leader to depend on Him, trust Him, seek His help and observed His commands in relation his work ([Nayal Rashed, 2007](#)). Leaders’ level of spirituality influences the leaders’ effectiveness, where one element of spirituality which is Leader’s Belief was found to be positively and significantly correlated to business leadership effectiveness. [Zandi et al. \(2013b\)](#) Thus, leaders’ belief in day to day practices and decision making in the workplace will creates internal harmony for reaching stability, precision, and satisfaction in the leader’s sentiments, emotions and thinking.

2.4. Rituals (Ibadat)

Guidance and leadership in Islam are not limited only to rituals and religious matters but for all Muslim it is a way of life and it is a responsibility to ensure all activities including works, business, and economics are obeyed to Islamic principles as laid down in the Al-Qur’an and Sunnah ([Senam et al., 2015](#)). Thus, in the Qur’an, Allah S.W.T. clearly mentioned in the following verses in Surah Al-Imran and Surah Al-An’am that our whole life is devoted to Ibadat (Rituals) and to remember Allah S.W.T. “*Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or (lying) on their sides and give thought to the heavens and the earth, (saying), “Our Lord”, You did not create this aimlessly, exalted are You (above such a thing); then protect us from the punishment of the Fire*” (Surah Ali-Imran, 3:191)

3. Research Methodology

Self-administered questionnaire is the research instrument used in this research. The purposive sampling technique of target population is the Muslim leader’s immediate subordinate who is in Grade 44 position and below. G*Power analysis software 3.1.9.2 is used with the effect size of “f square” 0.15, α error prob 0.05, power (1- β err prob) 0.8 with a number of 2 predictors. Thus, the minimum sampling size for this research will be 77 respondents. Hence, 320 questionnaires will be distributed to civil servants in Federal, State, Local and Public University within Kuching and Kota Samarahan areas.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondents’ Demographic Profile

The summary of respondent’s demographic profile based on frequency and the percentage are shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Frequency Table Based on Demographic Characteristic Profile

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	75	41.7
	Female	105	58.3
Age	30 years old and below	62	34.4
	31-40 years old	67	37.2
	41-50 years old	30	16.7
	51-60 years old	21	11.7
Marital Status	Single	47	26.1
	Married	124	68.9
	Divorced	9	5.0
Race	Malay	165	91.7
	Chinese	2	1.1
	Indian	1	6
	Bidayuh	3	1.7
	Melanau	3	1.7
	Others	6	3.3
Education Level	SPM/ MCE/ SPM(V)	79	43.9
	Diploma / STPM	66	36.7
	Bachelor's Degree	31	17.2
	Master's Degree	4	2.2
Government Level	Local Government	45	25.0
	State Government	47	26.1
	Federal Government	44	24.4
	Public University	44	24.4

Research Objective 1: To identify the relationship between belief (*iman*) and leadership effectiveness.

Table-2. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Belief and Leadership Effectiveness

		Leadership Effectiveness
Belief (<i>Iman</i>)	Pearson Correlation	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	180

Notes: ** Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The finding has verified that belief and leadership effectiveness has a very strong and positive correlation with Pearson's Correlation Value of 0.706 ($r= 0.706$) which specifies the relationship between each dimension are very strong and the positive correlation relationship. The influence of belief (*iman*) towards leadership effectiveness has been stated by Al-Ghazali (2004) that Belief serves to function a harness for wrongdoings. In fact, leaders' level of spirituality influences the leaders' effectiveness, where one element of spirituality which is Leader's Belief was found to be positively and significantly correlated to business leadership effectiveness.

Research Objective 2: To identify the relationship between rituals (*ibadat*) and leadership effectiveness.

Table-3. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Rituals (*ibadat*) and Leadership Effectiveness

		Leadership Effectiveness
Rituals	Pearson Correlation	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	180

Notes: ** Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The finding has verified that rituals and leadership effectiveness among Muslim leaders in public sector organization within Kuching and Kota Samarahan has a moderate and positive correlation with Pearson's Correlation Value of 0.541 ($r= 0.541$). The influence of rituals (*ibadat*) towards leadership effectiveness has been stated by Al-Qurtob cited by Zandi *et al.* (2013b) which explained that some people may perform all rituals, but they do not enjoy the benefit of these rituals as their hearts are not present during these rituals

Research Objective 3: To identify the strength of relationship between belief and towards leadership effectiveness.

Table-4. Regression Analysis for Leadership Effectiveness

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.768 ^a	.589	.582	.43583

A. Predictors: (Constant), Mean Belief, Mean Rituals, Mean Repentance

B. Dependent Variable: Mean Leadership Effectiveness

R square of the model is 0.589; this explains that 58.9% of the variance in the leadership effectiveness has been significantly explained by Belief and Rituals in this research. The remaining 41.1% are unable to be explained shows that there are still other factors that influence leadership effectiveness besides belief, rituals and repentance.

Table-5. The Relationship between Variable (Standardized Coefficient Based on Beta Value)

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.035	.215		4.825	.000
	Belief	.418	.063	.445	6.657	.000
	Rituals	.081	.064	.080	1.267	.207

Dependent Variable: Leadership Effectiveness

Rituals are found to be insignificant with leadership effectiveness because the significant value is 0.207 which is more than 0.05. Thus, only *belief* is significant as the variable shows the p-value that is below 0.05. By referring at the findings based on the standardized coefficients, the highest Beta Value is *belief* which is 0.445, followed by *rituals* at 0.080. Hence, this indicates that *belief* is the most influencing or critical factor that leads to leadership effectiveness.

5. Conclusions

There are still lack number of leaders that nurturing spiritual values in their leadership. The leader should be exposed more on the importance of spirituality in carrying out daily tasks, as well leading the organization especially for the Muslim leader. The importance of spirituality value is stated in the Qur'an as stated in the literature review. The Muslims leader should not just only look and practicing the leadership theory based on western theory but also need to consider and adopt other perspective such as religion in order to broaden their view on leadership practice. Even though this recommendation is made only based on the findings from this research, it cannot make the claim that the results are applicable to all organizations. However, the findings may be adapted and may give some ideas towards making the leadership to be more effective especially for Muslims leader in the future. Apart from that, the leader himself also must make some initiative concerning finding the best way in leading the team in organization.

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