



SPIRITUALITY AND LEADER'S EFFECTIVENESS: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Gholamreza Zandi^{1†} --- Mohamed Sulaiman² --- Nayal Rashed³

¹Graduate School of Business, SEGi University, Malaysia

²Graduate School of Management, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

³School of Management, University Sains Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to bring to light leadership concepts from the Qur'an. Religious elements, especially from the Qur'an have been ignored as a source of knowledge despite decades of ongoing inquiry and increasing interest. Based on the characteristics of the Motaqeen according to the Qur'an, the concept of Taqwa has been operationalized as having two distinct components, Spirituality and Responsibility. This study attempts to examine the relationship between the first instance spirituality, and leader's effectiveness. The research utilized a cross-sectional field study in which spirituality was a self-constructed measurement while leadership effectiveness was constructed based on already established scales in the literature. Multiple regression and hierarchal regression techniques using SPSS were used to test the hypotheses. More than 200 companies were sampled. The results show that the leaders' effectiveness is influenced by the leaders' level of spirituality where one element of Spirituality, Belief, was found to predicate business leadership effectiveness. In light of the findings of the present research several recommendations are made to improve the Spirituality of leaders within organizational culture.

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Keywords: Belief, Leadership effectiveness, Motaqeen, Spirituality, Taqwa, Qur'an, Responsibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

A religious reawakening is being experienced by more and more people these days. This reawakening has increased the prominence of religion in sharing attitudes, values and behaviors.. Al-Qaradawi (2001) mentions that Islamic reawakening is a real phenomenon that can be recognized through three signs; first, the increasing number of people who pray in the Mosque,

† Corresponding author
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especially young people, second the spread of hijab among women and third the increase of sales of religious books. Additionally, he suggests that the motive behind this happening is people's desire to return to Allah by complying with the Islamic teachings. Therefore, it can be assumed that they want to learn more about the religion. People have shown their willingness to be governed by Islamic rules by voting for Islamic parties such as in Turkey and Morocco. Also this trend is apparent in business environments as concepts and issues of spirituality and religiosity in the workplace are being brought to light more often.

Organizations and those who lead them, which are looking for meaning and higher purpose, have brought spirituality, religion and faith to the world of business [Kouzes and Posner \(2012\)](#). [Kazmi \(2004\)](#) remarked that an increasing interest in spirituality and religion has been taken by those in the management discipline. Islam is an all-inclusive way of life by means of covering and ordering all aspects of life through a complete socio-economic system ([Khraim et al., 2011](#)). This system is instituted in the two main sources of its teachings, the Qur'an and the hadith (the everyday deeds and sayings of the Prophet).

According to [Ushama \(1998\)](#), "The Qur'an is the miraculous, inimitable, indestructible, preserved and infallible word of Allah (S.W.T); revealed to Muhammad (S.A.W), the last of the prophets and the messengers". He mentioned that "Ulama and theologians of course, have unanimously agreed to this definition of Qur'an (p.18)". It is established in natural science that Qur'an is a source of knowledge. Facts and explanations provided by the Qur'an some fourteen centuries ago have only been discovered in modern times. For example, since Islam comprises a whole way of life; the same principle is true for the other areas such as economics and commerce. Additionally, the Qur'an contains several verses that provide guidance and rules for business such as commercial transactions, relationship toward debtors, writing of contracts, mortgaging and trading (such as An-Nisa, 4:29 and Al-Baqarah, 2:282). Despite all of the valuable knowledge which exists in the Qur'an, the literature on leadership is lacking research from an Islamic perspective. [Ali and Weir \(2005\)](#) noting this scarcity in research from an Islamic perspective, emphasized that much of the current research on the issue from an Islamic perspective is in a state of immaturity. Oppositely, [Shirazi et al. \(1996\)](#) stressed that in adopting western principles of leadership and management, the principles of the management as championed by the Prophet Muhammad and the methods of his leadership should not be disregarded. [Kazmi \(2004\)](#) reiterated the same opinion by recognizing the shortage of research into Islamic perspectives in management study. Kazmi also calls for an Islamic approach to investigating management issues so new approaches could be offered.

Due to the gap in the existing literature, this study attempts to investigate the Islamic management aspects to reveal and highlight the concepts of leadership in Qur'an. In addition this research attempts to contribute to the literature by assessing the relationship between the components of Taqwa and leadership from an Islamic point of view.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of spiritual factors such as relationship with Allah shapes human behavior and this is recognized by Allah. (Ragab, 1993). From a universally devout approach, spiritual values cannot be isolated from daily activities. (Hassan, 2001). From the Islamic understanding management is thought to be that Islamic principles can provide guidance for. In addition, the management of organizations is looked at as an act of worship (Atari, 2000). Practicing Muslims believe that religion is the impetus behind a balanced character and civilization (Hassan, 2001). For example, as part of their human development endeavors Syariah Mandiri Bank (BSM) in Indonesia stress the linkage between business achievement and spiritual strength (Bank Syariah Mandiri, 2004). Ibeahim (1997) denotes that in Islamic philosophy, leadership prerequisites are of two types: the materialistic, related to body and the non-materialistic, related to the spirit. The spiritual type consists of three dimensions namely Iman (Belief), Ibadat (Rituals) and Tawbah (Repentance). Ibn Alqaem (1999) states that Taqwa of Allah brings Allah's blessing, and good character brings subordinates' allegiance. The Taqwa of Allah and good character are related whereas the stronger one's character is, the higher the level of Taqwa (Ibeahim, 1997).

A religious person is considered to be a person who has Taqwa. Khraim *et al.* (2011) studied Islamic devoutness in Malaysia and found that there is a relationship between devotion and consumer behavior. Dawood (2000) found a connection between Muslim service-sector workers and Islamic spiritual behavior in Malaysia. Although these two studies used concepts other than Taqwa, they still address some theories related to Taqwa.

Neal and Biberman (2004) give emphasis to the significance of doing research on spirituality in organizations. Neal and Biberman (2004) state that in organizational research, despite being some of the most powerful variables related to the effectiveness of a person, team or organization aspects of spirituality, such as practices and values have been markedly lacking as variables. The integration of spirituality into one's work life produces positive changes in leadership efficacy by adding joy, peace of mind, tranquility and job satisfaction (Fry, 2003). (Fry, 2003) writes that there is an intersection between spirituality and motivation. Tischler *et al.* (2002) suggest people who are healthier, more content, and more productive in their work lives, are people who have higher levels of spirituality (Neck and Milliman, 1994).

Strack (2001) after empirical investigation found a positive correlation between health care managers' self-perceived effective leadership and their level of spirituality. From interviews conducted amongst various senior administrators in Silicon Valley, California, Delbecq (1999) discovered that many of them found the courage, meaning, wisdom, discipline and compassion needed for managing challenging situations anchored in the their own spirituality. Delbecq (1999) and McCormick (1994) affirm that the differences in devout managers' spiritual beliefs or particular religions do not stop them from sharing similar concerns.

McCormick (1994) proposes that managers' behavior in the workplace is affected by their religion and spirituality. Spirituality is crucial to the human experience according to Mitroff *et al.* (1999). Its necessity to the human experience is the reason why spirituality should be included in

organizational culture. Chapman (2002) suggests that organizational development is affected by personal development; therefore complete engagement of heart, mind and soul by employees at all levels is necessary for organizations. Garcia-Zamor (2003) argued that spiritual values influence productivity.

Strack *et al.* (2002) believe researchers have been studying the wrong variables. They believe that the crux of effectual leadership is in the spiritual aspect of the individual leader. The values and beliefs of religious and spiritual traditions have been practiced throughout history. Qualities such as trustworthiness, honesty, humbleness, tolerance, empathy, gratitude and assistance to others are derived from religious traditions. They are attached to various religious and holy traditions from around the world, but they can be acquired from sources other than religiousness as well. As a result of this vastness, it is imperative that consistency amongst these beliefs and behavior be established in order to create effective leadership. Butts (1999) success is a result of improved personal well-being and creativity driven by one’s spirituality. Organizational theories and models that do not consider spirituality as one of their dimensions appear incomplete (Oliveira, 2004). In an interview conducted by Kouzes and Posner (2012), where they spoke to John Robbins, they asked his advice for how to develop leaders. He emphasized the importance of daily religious practices, such as prayer, that are performed habitually. He acknowledged the value in giving financial support to good causes, but he emphasized the importance of providing time for spiritual development. In this research, under the concept of Taqwa the traits of Motaqeen will be investigated and their relationship with leadership efficacy will be studied.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

With reference to the literature review, a theoretical framework has been developed to illustrate the relationships between various factors of spirituality and leadership (Figure 1). Although several factors may influence leadership effectiveness, Taqwa and particularly spirituality has been chosen for three reasons. First, the other factors affecting leader's effectiveness have been studied at length previously and parallel outcomes are predictable. Second, Taqwa is what separates the Qur’anic leadership from the other leadership models. Third, there is a lack of empirical studies that look at the relationship between leadership and spirituality, chiefly from an Islamic perspective.

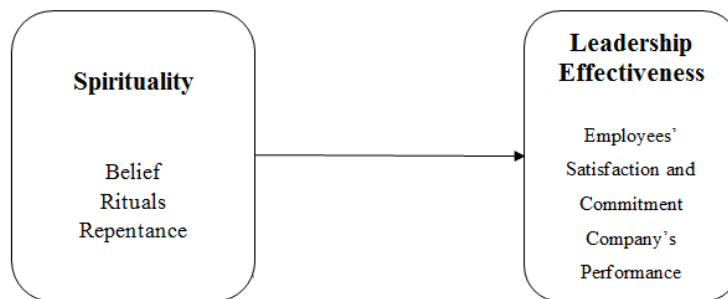


Figure-1. Research Theoretical Framework

Based on this theoretical rationale the following hypotheses are developed:

H1: The higher the level of spirituality the greater is the leader's effectiveness

H2: The stronger the belief in Allah (Iman), the greater is the leader's effectiveness

H3: The more Rituals (Ibadat) performed by the leader the greater is the leader's effectiveness

H4: The more Repentance by the leader the greater is the leader's effectiveness

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey method, which concentrates on surveys done to progress scientific knowledge was the research method employed by this study.

This method is in accordance with the objectives of the research which is meant to clarify, hypothesize and test the relationship amongst the research constructs. This research attempts to ascertain and confirm hypothesized relationships between a leader's level of religiousness and professional leadership efficacy in a management framework. Thus, the business unit leader is the unit of analysis for this research. First, this study established the aspects of spirituality according to the Qur'an. Measurements of Taqwa manifestations were then developed. Next, a cross-sectional method was used. This method choice obliged that data be gathered from a population sample.

4.1. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study is comprised of all of the companies registered with the Chamber of Commerce in the capital of Yemen, Sana'a, and Taiz. This list is accepted to be the most suitable source, because the Chamber of Commerce is the only authorized association that represents business in the country. According to [Hair et al. \(2006\)](#) guidelines, the sample size of this study is 135 companies.

Due to the unavailability of the complete addresses of the firms, a non- probability sampling method was used to complete the data gathering. Consequently, with consideration to the address ambiguity, and the obtainability of ready contact persons, only businesses with clear and identified addresses as wells as working telephone numbers were made contact with either by phone or in person to request their participation. Questionnaires were distributed to all 380 companies that agreed to participate. Of these 380 companies, 278 of them partook in the survey which is a response rate of 73 percent.

4.2. Questionnaire Design

Islamic instruments are very limited because most of the available tools to measure religiousness are designed for Christian surveys. The questionnaire used in this study is partially adapted from a tool called the Islamic Religious Behavior Questionnaire (IRBQ) developed by [Dawood \(2000\)](#). Some portions of this questionnaire were changed in order to align with the context of this study more accurately. The adapted questionnaire entails 28 questions that are meant measure spirituality. A five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) was utilized. The survey was given to the heads of the chosen companies.

4.3. Measurement of Leadership Effectiveness

As reviewed in the previous chapter, leadership effectiveness is theorized to relate to employees' fulfillment and commitment in addition to a company's performance. Since Beh (2003) used the same concept, the Business Leadership Effectiveness measurement was taken on and modified from Beh (2003). The questionnaire was developed according to key indicators of leadership effectiveness as discussed in Yukl *et al.* (2002). The limitations measured are achievement of the organization's goals, organizational commitment, cooperation, members' growth and job satisfaction. These parameters were sorted into two aspects, specifically Employees' Satisfaction and Commitment and Company Performance. The questionnaire, was comprised of thirteen items with a five point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaires were distributed to the leaders' direct subordinates, who then evaluated their effectiveness. The Cronbach's alpha values for Beh's study were 0.82 and .84 respectively. This tool was chosen for two reasons. The first reason it was chosen is because it provides a measurement of the end-results of the leaders' efforts rather than their attitude or behavior. The second reason is because it's easy to be administered to individuals due to its simple design.

4.4. Cronbach's Alpha

The Cronbach's alpha is the most broadly used indicator of reliability and internal consistency is (Salkind, 2010). Internal consistency is the degree to which individual items compare with one another or with the test total (Brown *et al.*, 2011). The alpha coefficients for each subscale are shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Number of Items	Alpha Cronbach's
Belief	11	.62
Rituals	12	.60
Repentance	5	.77
Total	28	.65

As shown in the above table all Alpha values are above .60 which is a satisfactory lower limit. Therefore all of the items are preserved.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The selection of appropriate method of analysis is determined by the hypotheses and characteristics of the data. The current study seeks to assess the correlation between spirituality and leadership effectiveness from a Qur'anic perspective. This type of analysis requires apt statistical tools. By using formidable and prevailing computer software programs for performing such analyses, this analysis has been made reasonably convenient for many researchers. To test the research hypotheses of this study, a multivariate analysis was utilized.

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Adopting the view that the Likert scale should be treated as an interval scale (Salkind, 2010), this study uses the mean to assess the central tendency, while the dispersion is assessed by standard deviation. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of respondents' ratings on spirituality and leadership effectiveness.

Table-2. Descriptive statistics for research variables

Variable	Mean	STD
Belief	4.66	.46
Rituals	3.38	.86
Repentance	3.76	.86
Leadership effectiveness	3.80	.54

All variables were measured on a five point scale; the mean scores of all variables were between 4.66 and 3.38. The range of standard deviation is moderately low .46 - .86. Belief has the highest mean score 4.66 with the lowest standard deviation .46 which indicates that Yemeni business leaders think of themselves as ardent believers. The other two variables of Spirituality have moderately high means 3.38 and 3.76 which highlights that Yemeni business leaders consider themselves as spiritual Muslim managers.

5.2. Correlation Analysis

To supplement the limitations of the coefficient alpha, correlation analysis is used to further examine the internal consistency of the research apparatus. Table 3 shows the correlation results for research variables.

Table-3. Variables' bivariate correlation

Variable	BE	RI	RE	EF
Belief	1.00			
Rituals	0.37**	1.00		
Repentance	0.28**	0.38**	1.00	
Leadership effectiveness	0.24**	0.25**	0.13	1.00

**significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From table 3 all Spirituality dimensions were found to be positively correlated with Business Leadership Effectiveness, two of which are meaningfully correlated with EF namely Belief and Rituals with correlation coefficients of, $r = 0.24$ and 0.25 ($p < .01$) respectively.

5.3. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was conducted to summarize correlation patterns among the variables so that a smaller number of items could represent the variables (Hair *et al.*, 2006). A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to examine the factor structure of all variables. As the

sample size is 206 which puts it in agreement with Hair *et al.* (2006) each item ought to load .50 or greater on one factor and .39 or less on the other factors. The results of factor analysis are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 shows the factor analysis results after omitting the items that have cross loading or low loading (less than 0.5). After the deletion, KMO value is 0.82 and three factors emerged with eigenvalue greater than 1.0, explaining 57.75% of the variance with all items loaded in the range of 0.77 to 0.64. All of items included in the extracted factors were derivative from the same hypothesized dimensions. Consequently they would be awarded the same names i.e. Rituals, Belief and Repentance respectively.

Table-4. Factor analysis results for spirituality

Items	Factors		
	1	2	3
I stop my work or meeting when I hear the call for prayer	.78		
I encourage my subordinates to pray together at work	.73		
I encourage my subordinates to fast and break fasting together	.71		
I practice voluntary fasting	.69		
I do my best to perform all five prayers regardless how busy I am	.66		
I depend on Allah's help to carry out my duties at work		.76	
I direct my dedication to Allah alone		.76	
I do my duties in the best way I could and I leave the outcomes to be determined by Allah		.74	
I supplicate to Allah whenever I face difficulty in my work		.67	
I observe Allah's orders in dealing with my subordinates		.64	
I do apologize for my mistakes when I realize them at work			.79
I ask forgiveness from subordinates if I have wronged them			.78
I seek feedback to evaluate my behavior from my subordinates			.72
Eigenvalue	2.75	2.70	2.05
% of Variance	21.2	20.8	15.8
KMO MSA	.82		

5.4. Hypotheses Testing and Results

The first hypothesis stated that leader's level of Spirituality links positively and significantly to the leader's effectiveness. Therefore, multiple regressions were completed to observe the affiliations among the Spirituality dimensions; Belief, Rituals and Repentance and Business Leadership Effectiveness. Table 5 summarizes the results.

Table-5. Result of multiple regression

Variable	Standardized β	t-value	p-value
Belief	.11	2.069	.04
Rituals	.04	0.749	.46
Repentance	-.04	-0.810	.42
F-value	20.71		
R^2	0.56		
Adjusted R^2	0.54		

The overall model estimation which represent the leader's level of spirituality accounted for 54% of the variance in Business Leadership Effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.54$, $p < .05$) therefore *H1* is accepted suggesting that generally spirituality is significantly related to leadership effectiveness. The use of Adj. R^2 is founded in the idea that it explains the number of independent variables and sample size (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, it offers a more representative account of the connections because it corrects possible overestimation.

Only the leader's Belief was found to be positively and significantly related to Business Leadership Effectiveness. Consequently, hypothesis *H2* is accepted ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < .05$). This suggests that the higher the Iman of the leader, the greater the Business leadership Effectiveness.

Rituals were found to be positively but not significantly predicting of Business Leadership Effectiveness ($\beta = .04$, $p > .05$). Therefore hypothesis *H3* is excluded. The third dimension is Repentance. Repentance was found to be negatively and non-significantly related to Business Leadership Effectiveness ($\beta = -.04$, $p > .05$). Hence, hypothesis *H4* is rejected.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to expose the notions of leadership as decreed in the Qur'an. It intended to empirically explore the relationship between Spirituality and Business Leadership Effectiveness. The outcomes of this study exposed that Spirituality is a construct with three discrete dimensions, specifically, Belief, Rituals and Repentance. The hypotheses were established in this study to survey connections between leadership effectiveness and spirituality and its facets. Firstly factor analysis was conducted to gauge the construct validity. Subsequently in order to test the hypotheses, multiple regression analyses were carried out.

The regression analysis results show that spirituality was significantly related to Business Leadership Effectiveness. This positive relationship between Spirituality and Business Leadership Effectiveness has been highlighted by Ibeahim (1997), Delbecq (1999), McCormick (1994), Strack (2001), Fry (2003), Garcia-Zamor (2003) and Strack *et al.* (2002).

The leader's Belief was found to be positively and significantly related to Business Leadership Effectiveness. This is consistent with the findings of several researchers such as Ibeahim (1997), Swaidan and Basharhabil (2003), Abu-Alainain (1984) and Ali and Weir (2005).

The argument that Belief offers leaders a benefit in leading effectively because it offers higher values (Ibeahim, 1997) and aids in acting as a harness for wrongdoings has been made (Al-Ghazali, 2004). In other words, Belief guides the devotee towards correct behavior and choices. In the case of business, it influences him to treat juniors in a proper way, which helps to improve their satisfaction and commitment.

The relationship between Rituals (prayers, fasting) and Business Leadership Effectiveness was positive but non-significant. The insignificant effects of Rituals on Leadership Effectiveness may be explained as indicated by Al-Qurtob in his interpretation of Qur'an (Al-Ankabut: 45). He expressed that although some people may complete all of the Rituals, they do not experience the advantages of these Rituals because their hearts are not present during these Rituals. Thus it can be

surmised that if business leaders are not able to align their hearts with their minds during their prayers, these Rituals will have no effect on their performance.

Repentance was discovered to have a negative and non-significant relationship with Leadership Effectiveness rejecting the hypothesis. One of the recognized orders of adequate Repentance is genuineness in not repeating misbehavior as Allah only rewards those who are sincere with His blessings and Barakah. Therefore, lacking authenticity from the leader when he repents could be a reason for the insignificant effects of Repentance Business leadership Effectiveness.

7. CONTRIBUTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study show that the leader's level of Iman affects his leadership effectiveness. Iman denotes full obedience of Allah's orders at the mosque and in the workplace. This study gives an outline that incorporates Iman and business leadership in a single model. It recommends that leaders can be elective (achieving growth and making profit) while following Allah's commands. Another way to say it is that a match amongst the leaders' habits and internal values, such that no conflict exists between the day-to-day practices and decisions in the workplace and behavior extolled by the leaders' belief generates internal accord. Having this congruence is advantageous for achieving steadiness, simplicity and fulfillment in the leaders' emotions and thinking. These suggest that business organizations have a duty to respect employees' beliefs and spiritual practices as well as provide them the time and space to nurture their beliefs. Firms could also give recurring incentives in the form of paid Umrah and Haj trips for Muslim employees. Business organizations should exploit the opportunities of spiritual events and occasions such as lectures and seminars in the month of Ramadan to strengthen leaders' and employees beliefs.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation is related to the fact that the language in the study and the questionnaires were developed in English and then applied in Arabic. Despite having translation done by an official translator, it does not guarantee the accuracy of maintaining the original meaning. The second limitation is related to the geographical constraint. The survey was only applied in two cities in Yemen. Conducting similar studies in different Islamic countries might yield a better understanding of the variables studied and more generalization might be understood, especially if the results were compared across these countries.

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