

The Efficacy of Leadership According to the Contemporary Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of individuals and groups, directing those activities towards achieving a specific goal, and coordinating their efforts to ensure high productivity efficiency. It is the act of guiding a group of people in a determined and planned direction by motivating them to work of their own volition. The significance of this research lies in the fact that modern administrative leadership is a positive activity exercised by a specific person in the field of administrative supervision over others, aimed at achieving a particular purpose through influence and persuasion or by employing formal authority when necessary. The research indicates the existence of common denominators in leadership, including leading people, guiding them, persuading them, and motivating them to achieve goals through persuasion and satisfaction. The research addresses the issue of empowering the essence of the leadership process, which lies in the individual's innate abilities that enable them to influence the behavior and emotions of a group of others, where the individual possesses the ability to impact others through leadership. The importance of leadership lies in achieving happiness for people in this world and the hereafter, and guiding them to the satisfaction of Allah Almighty through the application of divine laws and Islamic systems. The research concludes that human interactions are rich with various forms of interaction between an individual and others, where the influence of one individual on the feelings and behavior of others manifests in different ways, influenced by many variables, sometimes personal and at other times social.

Keywords: Leadership, effectiveness, efficacy, contemporary, Islamic perspective.

1. Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the noblest of prophets and messengers, Abu al-Qasim Muhammad, and upon his pure and virtuous family, his honored companions, and those who follow them with goodness until the Day of Judgment.

Human beings vary among themselves in terms of the abilities and innate talents that Allah bestows upon whom He wills of His servants. No matter the obstacles facing any administration or institution, leadership remains the heartbeat and discerning mind in solving problems and overcoming barriers, ensuring that work proceeds with utmost precision under the guidance of a competent leader who motivates spirits, instills enthusiasm in the hearts of workers to achieve

goals, and develops success strategies, along with the ability to plan, supervise, and make wise use of human resources before material ones.

An individual may stand out among their peers with intellectual and physical capabilities that qualify them to undertake significant roles and gain a prestigious position among people, becoming the focus of the society in which they live.

Islamic law has given special attention to moral qualities in selecting the leader of the Muslims (such as being capable of enforcing the law, knowledgeable in warfare, able to ensure people comply with the law, while having sound senses like hearing, sight, and speech, so they can directly perform duties and comprehend what is required, with their physical faculties intact in a way that does not impair judgment, intellect, or hinder swift action, among other qualities).

One of the unique aspects of leadership in Islamic political thought is its role in achieving political stability through intellectual, cultural, and ideological harmony among political and social forces within the state, promoting peaceful dialogue based on serving the public interest and embodying social justice.

Given the importance of security in Islam and its direct connection to the lives, safety, and stability of people on both personal and societal levels, and since security is only achieved when everyone participates according to their capacity, it is essential to prepare every individual in society to contribute, based on Islam's guidance for the Muslim to be a source of goodness and righteousness within the community. This requires preparing the individual not only to ensure their own security but also to contribute to the security of others with whom they live and interact in society, according to the principles and firm foundations of Islam.

The research plan necessitated dividing it into an introduction, three sections, and a conclusion. In the introduction, we discussed the reason for choosing the research title, the first section was dedicated to explaining the concept of leadership, the second section focused on the importance of leadership, and the third section discussed the role of leadership according to the Islamic perspective. The conclusion summarized the most important findings of the research. Finally, we ask Allah to grant us success in outlining a clear and well-defined image of this research, which may be viewed from multiple perspectives, and we pray that none of those perspectives are superficial judgments. Our last prayer is praise to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the one sent as a mercy to the worlds.

Section One: The Concept of Leadership

Leadership in Language: The term "leadership" is derived from "leadership," which refers to the rope used to guide an animal and others. The "leader" among camels is the one that leads and gathers the herd. The term "al-Aqwad" refers to someone with a long neck.

"Al-Qoud" denotes leading, as in the phrase "so-and-so leads the animal," meaning he walks in front of it. "Al-Aqwad" among men refers to someone with a strong neck, so called because of his rare turning back; among people, it is someone who, once he sets his mind to something, scarcely diverts from it.

Leadership in Terminology: Leadership has numerous and varied definitions, reflecting the diverse perspectives of social scientists and psychologists. Each group has defined leadership in a way that serves their particular study of human behavior. Nevertheless, there is a general similarity among them. Some define it as "the ability to persuade others to pursue specific goals with enthusiasm."

Others describe it as "the process of influencing the activities of individuals and groups, directing those activities towards achieving a specific goal, and coordinating their efforts to ensure high productivity efficiency."

Another definition describes it as "the process of moving a group of people in a specified, planned direction by motivating them to work voluntarily."

One of the prominent definitions of modern administrative leadership is "the positive activity exercised by a particular person in the field of administrative supervision over others, aimed at achieving a specific purpose through influence and persuasion, or by employing formal authority when necessary."

From the definitions of leadership, both linguistically and terminologically, it is evident that there are common elements among all these definitions, including leading people, guiding them, persuading them, and motivating them to achieve goals through persuasion and satisfaction.

Section Two: The Importance of Leadership

Leadership in Islam holds great significance, to the extent that it ranks among doctrinal teachings and Islamic foundations. It is also linked to several fields and levels, where Islam's view of leadership fundamentally differs from that of materialists and atheists, who consider it merely a matter of managing worldly affairs.

In the context of worldly life, society indeed needs leadership, and worldly matters require management. This is the limited scope of materialists' perspective, which Islam also considers important, but Islam does not restrict its view to this alone. It also encompasses a range of other matters. Islam's attention to managing worldly affairs can be seen in its emphasis on achieving justice and eliminating oppression. Several verses command justice, such as Allah's saying: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing." And His saying: "O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow your desires, as they will lead you astray from the path of Allah. Indeed, those who go astray from the path of Allah will have a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Account."

Islam views worldly life as a prelude to the Hereafter, which it considers greater, more significant, and broader than worldly life. Allah has ordained rules and laws to be followed in this world to ensure human happiness in the Hereafter. This is what the materialists overlooked, as they confined their focus to worldly life. Many Quranic verses emphasize the importance of working in this world to achieve happiness in the Hereafter, including Allah's saying: "And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]." And His saying: "And this worldly life is not but

diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter is the [true] life, if only they knew."

It is clear from these Quranic verses the importance of leadership in the context of the Hereafter, which Islam emphasized, while the materialists neglected this aspect, believing that society could lead itself through the election of individuals to manage people's affairs. Even if they could achieve this, they could never produce leadership that would guide people to happiness in the Hereafter.

Islam underscores the importance of spiritual elevation and perfection, considering it more significant than both this world and the Hereafter. A leader should possess a high level of spiritual perfection to elevate the spiritual state of the people and guide them towards the ultimate perfection, which is the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Materialists, however, have dismissed this as a matter of illusion.

The Quranic verses emphasize this important aspect, such as Allah's promise to believing men and women: "Allah has promised the believers, men and women, gardens beneath which rivers flow [i.e., paradise] to abide therein forever, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater." For those with knowledge and perfection, the pleasure of Allah Almighty is considered far greater than a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth.

Thus, Islam is a religion that includes laws and systems, and the leader is supposed to work towards communicating and applying divine laws on earth. This level of leadership impacts all previous levels, as the application of these laws is what brings about welfare for society in this world, ensures happiness for society in the Hereafter, and leads society toward spiritual perfection and the pleasure of Allah Almighty.

This perspective on the importance of leadership across four levels stems from Islam's view of humans as eternal beings who do not perish with death but continue to exist in other worlds where they will witness the consequences of their good and bad deeds, and where they will find their true lives.

Given this eternal perspective, it is natural for leadership to hold significant importance due to its profound impact on guiding people's lives and interests. People tend to follow the religion and example of their leaders. If we observe a cohesive society where individuals understand their value, receive their rights, and fulfill their duties, it is a sign that their leadership is conscious and wise. Conversely, a society that is disordered and lost reflects poor leadership. Changing the reality of any group, state, or nation and elevating it from a state of decline to one of progress requires a set of factors, foremost among them being effective leadership. If such a group, state, or nation is blessed with enlightened leadership with exceptional leadership qualities, it can rise to levels of excellence, soar in the skies of development, and move forward with confidence and determination to achieve its goals and aspirations.

This is why Allah sent prophets and messengers, from Adam (peace be upon him) to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), to be leaders and role models for humanity. Whenever time

passed and a messenger was no longer present, and humanity strayed, Allah sent another messenger to renew the principles, awaken consciences, rekindle ambitions, and serve as a leader and example. Allah says: "Indeed, We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good tidings and a warner. And there was no nation but that there had passed within it a warner"

Leadership is, therefore, one of the crucial factors with a significant impact on the dynamics of a group, the activity of an organization, and the creation of the necessary human interaction to achieve the goals of both individuals and organizations alike. Human interactions are rich with various forms of interaction between an individual and others, manifesting in ways that influence the emotions and behavior of others, affected by numerous personal and social variables. These aspects often take on particular importance in the workplace, where they play a critical role in influencing work performance, employee attitudes, and job satisfaction. The essence of the leadership process lies in an individual's innate abilities to exert influence on the behavior and emotions of a group of others. Through this leadership effect, the individual possesses the ability to influence others.

In our modern era, individuals are the most valuable and important resource because of their role and impact on the process of economic, social, and cultural development. Consequently, there is no responsibility or role more significant and crucial than leading individuals to achieve desired goals. The progress and development of nations do not rely solely on their human and material resources but also on the efficiency and effectiveness of their leaders in utilizing these resources to ensure the achievement of economic, social, and cultural objectives that society seeks in an effective and efficient manner. Good leadership is, therefore, a fundamental element for the success of any organization in reaching its goals.

In conclusion, the significance of leadership in Islam lies in its role in ensuring the happiness of people in both this world and the Hereafter by guiding them toward God's satisfaction through the application of divine laws and Islamic principles.

Section Three: The Role of Leadership in Islam

The Quran portrays the guidance of the perfect human being for the nation and his leadership through the "Covenant of God." This is evident in Surah Al-Baqarah, where Allah says: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.' [Abraham] said, 'And of my descendants?' [Allah] said, 'My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.'"

The Quran considers Imamate (leadership) as a divine covenant, one that a person cannot attain without complete commitment to it. The only person capable of being entrusted with divine leadership is one who is safeguarded from injustice throughout his life. Sayyid Qutb, in his interpretation of this verse, explains that the Imam is someone the people follow, leading them to God, guiding them to goodness, and having leadership over them in all aspects—whether in prophethood, governance, or worship. Leadership is, therefore, reserved for those who deserve it through their actions, feelings, righteousness, and faith, not by mere inheritance or lineage.

Further emphasis is found in Surah Al-Furqan, where Allah says: “Say, [O Muhammad], ‘I do not ask you for it any payment—only that whoever wills might take to his Lord a way.’”. Here, the Quran identifies certain individuals from the Prophet’s family as guides on the path to God, which is the path of human perfection. The Muslims are strongly urged to maintain a bond of love with them, for the benefit of both their individual and collective well-being. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sought no worldly reward, nor any material gain from those who were guided to Islam; his only recompense was that people find their way to God and draw closer to Him.

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) quotes the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) saying: “Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance.” When questioned by Al-Fudhayl in astonishment, the Imam affirmed the profound importance of this concept by reiterating, “Yes, indeed.”

Divine leadership is a condition for the acceptance of deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: ***“Hold fast to our love, the Ahlul Bayt, for whoever meets Allah loving us shall enter Paradise through our intercession. By the One in whose hand is my soul, no deed will benefit a servant unless he recognizes our right.”

This statement underscores that adherence to divine leadership is a guaranteed condition for the acceptance of righteous deeds; without it, no action is accepted by Allah. In other words, good deeds have no impact on the perfection of the individual or society unless there is a commitment to divine leadership.

In light of the aforementioned narration by Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), where Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) emphasizes the essential nature of knowing the Imam of one's time, we observe a profound connection between divine leadership and the ultimate purpose of human creation. Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) clearly states that Allah created mankind to know Him, and that true knowledge of God is manifested through recognizing and obeying the Imam of each era. This implies that God's guidance is always present through a divinely appointed Imam, and worship devoid of acknowledgment of this guidance equates to the worship of something other than Allah.

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) further elaborates that all forms of goodness stem from the Ahlul Bayt, and all virtuous acts—such as monotheism, prayer, fasting, patience, forgiveness, mercy towards the poor, and neighborly care—are branches of their guidance. Conversely, all forms of evil and corruption are rooted in following false leaders. He asserts that it is impossible for someone to genuinely claim to be with the Ahlul Bayt while being attached to the branches of false leadership.

2. Conclusion:

After this enlightening journey, it is essential to reflect on the objectives achieved and the conclusions drawn from the research:

1. Leadership is a process of influencing the activities of individuals and groups, guiding them toward achieving a specific goal, and coordinating their efforts to ensure high productivity.
2. Leadership involves mobilizing a group of people toward a defined, planned direction by motivating them to work willingly.
3. Modern administrative leadership is an active process undertaken by a designated person in the field of administrative supervision over others, aiming to achieve a specific purpose through influence and persuasion, or through the use of official authority when necessary.
4. Common elements of leadership include advancing people, guiding them, attracting them, and motivating them to achieve goals through persuasion and consent.
5. The essence of leadership lies in the individual's intrinsic abilities, which allow them to influence the behavior and emotions of others, enabling them to affect others meaningfully.
6. The importance of leadership in Islam is evident in its role in ensuring the happiness of people in both this world and the Hereafter by leading them to God's pleasure through the implementation of divine laws and Islamic systems.
7. Islam views worldly life as a precursor to the Hereafter, considering it greater and more expansive. God has imposed rules and laws to be followed in this life to guarantee happiness in the Hereafter.
8. Leadership is a crucial factor that significantly impacts the dynamics of a group and the activity of an organization, creating the necessary human interaction to achieve the goals of both the individual and the organization.
9. Human interactions encompass various forms of engagement between individuals, with influence emerging in different ways, shaped by personal and social variables.

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