

NUQTAH Journal of Theological Studies

Editor: Dr. Shumaila Majeed

(Bi-Annual)

Languages: Urdu, Arabic and English

pISSN: 2790-5330 eISSN: 2790-5349

<https://nuqtahjts.com/index.php/njts>

Published By:

Resurgence Academic and Research
Institute, Sialkot (51310), Pakistan.

Email: editor@nuqtahjts.com

Leaders' Decision Making and Conflict Management Framework in Light of Islamic Teachings

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Published online: 30th December 2022



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<https://nuqtahjts.com/index.php/njts/publication-ethics>

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Abstract

Decision-making is an essential and very significant part of leadership. Decision-making can be done to solve a problem like conflict resolution or can be done to achieve goals, targets, or tasks. The objectives of this paper are two. The first objective is to explore the Islamic teachings for leaders regarding decision making and conflicts management. The second objective is to develop a framework based on the findings. In this regard, this paper uses the library research method, which also can be called a non-systematic literature review. Since Islam guided every aspect of life, so these important areas of life are not left without guidance. As the process of general decision-making principle, Islamic teachings are *Istikharah* (Prayer to Allah) and *Istisharah* (Consultation with team). It is the best quality of leader that he in consultation with colleague should be there for the work. Similarly, the general teaching for leaders after taking decisions is trust in Allah. There are also specific problem-solving decisions related guidance, for example, conflicts resolutions, beside of the general decision-making teachings. Islam also says avoid unnecessary conflicts and there should be proper confirmations of the information. Similarly, if a conflict occurs in different groups of believers, Islamic teaching is also guided there. So, the overall Islamic teachings guide about decision-making, problem-solving, and conflicts resolutions.

Keywords:

Decision making; Leadership; Islamic teachings; Problem-solving; Conflict resolution.

Introduction

Decision making is a process synonymous with the whole process of management. According to Simon, Decision making comprises three principal phases: finding occasions for making a decision; finding possible courses of action; and choosing among courses of action¹. Decision-making is the basic characteristic of human beings and Jinn. They have the right to obey or decline the commands of the creator. Other creatures, such as angels (Malaikah), do not have the right to decide between obedience and declining². Therefore, decision-making skills have a very important role in every person's life. The importance of decision-making multiplied for the leaders because leadership is all about decision-making. They need to define the vision where their team should be reached in the coming periods. They have to decide the reason for their team's existence by clarifying the mission. They need to decide the goals for significant progress in a defined time. Decision-making can be done to solve a problem like conflict resolution or can be done to achieve goals, targets, or tasks. Islamic teachings support the leaders in this regard. The objectives of this paper are two. The first objective is to explore the Islamic teachings for leaders regarding decision making. The second objective is to develop a framework for decision-making. The research question is, "How can Islamic teachings support leaders in decision making and conflicts management?" In this regard, this paper uses the library research method, which also can be called a non-systematic literature review.

Method and Materials

This study is based on the library research method, also called a non-systematic literature review. It searches and reviews the academic and non-academic literature and content without any specific limitations in contrast to the systematic literature reviews, which have specific limitations. In this regard, it got help from Google scholar and other academic and non-academic research data sources such as Google search engine and Research gate. After the introduction and methods related sections, the coming sections discusses the subtopics.

There are three main leadership style approaches: Situational, Behavioural, and Nature approaches, and these can be understood from different theories, and any organisations' success or failure mostly depends on the leaders³.

Leadership

Allah Almighty has created humanity with guidance and then sent one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets as leaders and imams for Human being. Then, after that, the responsibility was placed on the Muslim Ummah that they are the ones who decide the goals of success in this world and the hereafter, being subject to their leader, under the council system. Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (may Allah have mercy on him) has realized the need for a leader for the Muslim Ummah who, according to him, has the ability to carry out these affairs in a good manner. All ideas should deal with revelations and forces as raw material and build a new and powerful civilization out of it, based on faith, morals, piety, mercy and justice on the one hand, and justice on the other. May his special intelligence, power of invention and innovation shine in it, he should not look at the western civilization from the point of view that it has passed the final stages of completion and development and the final seal has been put on it. There is no room for any modification or addition, and there is no alternative but to accept it as it is and with all its faults, but rather look at it as separate components, reject whatever it wants and adopt whatever he wants, and then create a structure of life from it that is compatible with his goals, his beliefs, his principles, and principles of conduct. Imam and leader and does not recognize himself as his imitator and disciple and admirer, rather he should consider that he is his traveling companion and contemporary, who due to certain circumstances surpassed him in certain material and economic sciences. Yes, he should learn from its experiences, but add to it the light that Prophethood has given him and realize that if he needs to learn a lot from the West, the West has a lot to learn from him. There is a need to get, rather what he can give to the West is better and better than what he can take from the West himself. to create such a highway and such a religion of life which the West is also forced to respect and imitate and to add such a school to the schools of

thought and civilized schools which invite the greatest thinkers of the world to think and study and invite the greatest nations to action⁴.

The main source of strength of every nation is its strong connection with some ideology of life. Based on this connection, it can cope with the rise by developing three types of resources: human resources, developmental resources, material resources⁵.

The reality is that the utilization of all these resources is not possible without righteous leadership. There is no doubt that the Muslim Ummah has all these resources, but the real problem is that there is no one to lead. used to take care of it in such a way that all the dry and wet were illuminated by the light of La ilaha ila Allah.

Leadership and Islamic teachings

According to Almoharby and Neal⁶, the Islamic leadership is not the traditional legal authoritative leadership style, but it is based on the Quran, Sunnah and Ahadees, along with the examples from the Seerah of the prophet (PBUH). Alsarhi et al.⁷ compared the Islamic and western leadership and found that Muslim leaders should follow the holy book and the holy prophet (PBUH). The concept of Leadership of Islam is not the same as the Western concepts of leadership. There are a lot of differences between Islamic and western leadership. Other researchers also mentioned the differences between Islamic and western leadership, for example, Sulaeman⁸ and Ather and Sobhani⁹. According to Gazi¹⁰, the Islamic leadership foundations are based on Iman (Faith on Allah), Islam (code of life), Taqwa (Fear of Allah) and Ahsan (Love of Allah). Similarly, Hayat and Rao¹¹ explored the literature of Ihsan with the context of labour productivity. In this regard, the leading the labour and getting the labour productivity, there should be the implementation of the concept of Ihsan.

This literature shows that the differences are on many points, such as the goal of leadership and methodology of leadership. From the Islamic leadership perspective, the ayah of surah Al-e-Imran (3:159) has good leadership points,

such as being lenient and not being a hard behaviour holder¹². Shura is also an unignorable element of Islamic leadership which is consultation¹³ with the stakeholders. Mohiuddin and Muzahidul¹⁴ study focuses on the concept of Shura, they found that Islamic leadership is more towards consultation (Shura based). So overall, the study found that Islamic leadership must follow divine guidance in all matters, including decision making.

According to overall message of the holy Quran, the right "Deen" is only Islam¹⁵. Islam, as a perfect Deen, is a complete way of life. Islam contains rules and regulations for individual and collective life and guidance in all areas of life. Islam not only teaches the way of worship but also the way of running the state and guiding the Ummah. The Imamate and leadership diagnose the nation's diseases, solve them, and guide them. Imamate and leadership are like a canopy in the desert. Through which not only shade is provided, but also other necessary arrangements are made for its survival. The concept of Ummah is not possible without leadership and leadership. Allah, the Exalted, sent the first man in this universe as Imam and Leader.

The last pearl in this series of leadership and leadership sent by Allah, the Lord of Glory, is the Lord of the Universe. After you, this responsibility is not on the Muslim Ummah. As long as the Muslim Ummah fulfils its leadership responsibilities, its greatness and pride remain. Turning away from this led to the downfall of the Ummah. There is no doubt that the last nail in the decline of the Muslim Ummah is the renunciation and contentment of Imamate and leadership (Khilafah). You know that the nation of Islam has no leader. Undoubtedly, the resurrection of the Muslim Ummah depends on its leadership and leadership because the importance of leadership is like the heart and mind in the human body, which continues to supply blood to the whole body and meditate. In the same way, leadership is the guarantor of the survival of the whole nation.

Consulting Teamwork

Islam guided every aspect of life; these important areas of life are not left without guidance. As the process of general decision-making principle, Islamic

teachings are Istisharah for example, Quran says that "و شاورهم في الامر", i.e., the consultation with companions should be there for the work¹⁶. The importance of forming a good management and teamwork is evident in the story of Queen Bilqis. She was the Queen of kingdom Saba, when she asked her team to let her know about her confrontation with the Prophet Sulaiman (as), She said, 'O eminent ones, advise me in my affair. I would not decide a matter until you witness me'¹⁷.

Similarly, the general teaching for leaders after taking decisions is in the words of Quran is that "فاذا عزمتم فتوكل على الله", so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust¹⁸ when you decide something, trust on Allah. Like the general decision-making teachings¹⁹, Allah Ta'ala says in Surah Kahf "he said, That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer], but assist me with strength²⁰. In this regard, Quran advice to avoid unnecessary conflicts, there should be proper confirmations of the information, "ان جاءكم فاسق"²¹. Similarly, if a conflict occurs in different groups of believers, Islamic teaching is also guided there. So, the overall Islamic teachings guide decision-making, problem-solving, and conflicts resolutions.

Decision making, leadership and Islamic teachings

Decision making is a selection process from alternatives, it is an essential part of everyone's life, and however it is more common to be studied with management and leadership courses²². Since the decision-making is most important aspect of the leadership so the teachings guide the humanity in this regard. According to Mohiuddin and Muzahidul²³ the Islamic leaders' decision making is more towards the Shura (consultation) based. It may take time rather than the command or autocratic style of decision making but this time recovered in the later phases when most of the implementation participant already part of the consultation. According to Nuryanta et al.²⁴ Kowalski and Lasley²⁵ linked the decision making with the problem-solving by giving the decision-making as Evidence Based Practice (EBP). In this evidence-based practice there are mainly three stage process as follows; The first stage is to identify the possible

choices, demands (requirements/expectations) and constraints such as laws. The second stage is valuation of choices/options with considering demand and constraints and third stage is selecting the best alternative²⁶. Muslims not only consider the Islamic teachings related to the decision making in organisational management matters but also consider these teachings in day-to-day individual matters such as purchasing the foods²⁷.

Conflict Management by leaders and Islamic teachings

Under problem-solving, a very significant issue is conflict management. In this regard, Islamic teachings, the leaders very well. In this regard, Abdul Cader²⁸ developed, Islamic conflict management framework based on the concepts of proactive behaviour (Tawun (cooperation), Sabr (patience), Ta'akhi (brotherhood)), the appointment of Muslih and the establishment of Shura. Similarly, Yassien and Yassien²⁹ discussed conflict management with the Islamic perspective, and they developed a diversity management model to evaluate and synergise the conflicts. Helmy et al.³⁰ have studied conflict management and Islamic values, namely Shura (Consultation), Naseeha (Advice), Ta'awun (Cooperation), 'Adl (Justice), Islah (Reconciliation) and Hikmah (Wisdom). The researchers informed that these Islamic values not only support after the conflicts, but these may also prevent the conflicts.

The Framework Development

This section discusses the findings with the help of developing a framework.

Islamic Leadership Decision Making and Conflict Management Framework

Various authors presented the Islamic model and framework of leadership, such as Sulaeman³¹. Figure 1 Islamic Leadership Framework present the output of this research.

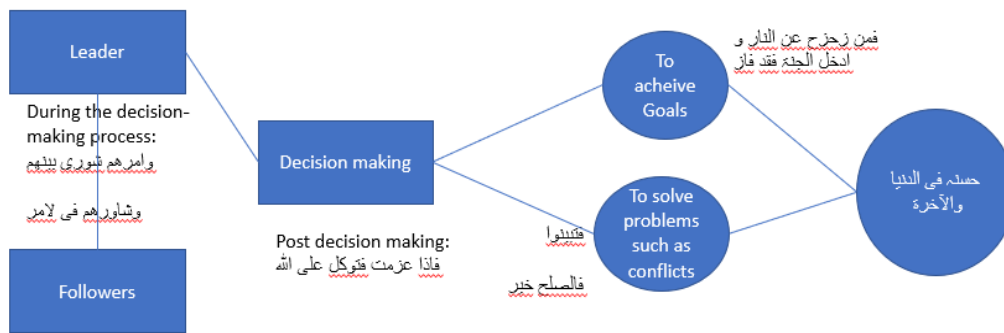


Figure 1 Islamic Leadership Framework

Source: Developed by the principal researcher with the help of the Quran and various literature

According to this framework, there are two main parties: leaders and followers. Islam guides both, but the scope of this paper is limited to the leadership, so for the leaders, there is the instruction from Allah by the Holy Quran that they should do a consultation (Mushawrat) with the companions during the decision-making process. However, when a decision has been made, post-decision-making must be consistent and do Tawakkal on Allah. Further, this framework informs that the decision has mostly been done for two things either to achieve some goals/objectives or to solve some problems such as conflict resolution. In both cases, Islamic teachings support the leaders. At the time of deciding and leading towards the goals or objectives, Islam teaches that the goal should not be limited to this life but must consider the life of the hereafter. Similarly, for the decision-making and leading to solving the problems, such as resolving the conflict, Islamic teachings guide the leaders that they should do sufficient research before making a decision. Overall, Islamic teachings guide the leaders to make decisions for the betterment and improvement of both lives, i.e., this world life and hereafter.

Conclusion

This paper explored the Islamic guidance and developed the framework for the leaders regarding decision-making and conflict management. This research uses mainly the library research method, which also can be called non-systematic

research. Overall, this research got some support from the contemporary western prominent thoughts and mainly explored the literature of Islam's teachings about the decision-making and conflict management guidance for the leaders so that the research can enhance the integration efforts of Islamic and contemporary knowledge and practices. These integrations may improve the Muslim Ummah situations for this world-life and hereafter.

Recommendations

Following are the recommendation points based on this research:

- Leadership has an unignorable role in the progress of any group of people. Ummat e Muslimah is a big group of people, but they cannot ignore the Islamic teachings individually and collectively. There is need of action research on the contemporary leadership and Islamic teachings in multiple dimensions with the help of multiple stakeholders by doing the stakeholders analysis.
- Decision making is a compulsory part of any individual but for the leaders, it is a basic job to take right decision at the right time by the right way with consultation of the right people, by applying the Shura and other Islamic teachings. In this regard, there is need of detailed research of contemporary decision-making techniques and their analysis with Islamic teachings point of view.
- Conflicts are the natural part of any team working and its resolution is another skill which is compulsory for the leaders. Like the above, there is need of detailed research on contemporary conflict resolution techniques and their analysis with Islamic teachings point of view.

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