



# Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspectives

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# **Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspectives**

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## CHAPTER 9

### Management Models from an Islamic Perspective

*Rodrigue Fontaine*

#### Abstract

*This chapter explores the Islamic perspective on management models. A literature review identified three main streams in the MIP literature. These are the emphasis on paradigms, the emphasis on justice and the desire to extend conventional management theories. These three points are then applied to how managers use management models. Generally, Muslim managers use conventional management models and modify them to deal with Islamic concerns. At the same time, they use purely Islamic models to guide their thinking. Unfortunately, the number of potential management models is virtually unlimited. Based on the principle of the aims of the Islamic legal system and the principle of Evidence Based Management, not all management models are suitable for Muslim managers. Further research is needed to deal with the issue of the right method to be used in MIP and a detailed study of the usefulness of modified management models.*

#### Introduction

Numerous books have already been written about management from an Islamic perspective (MIP). In many ways, this author will thus cover familiar ground for readers conversant with MIP. Nonetheless, this author hopes to provide additional insight on a topic that has been ignored in previous MIP works. In particular, this author intends to focus on the use of management models. Management models allow managers to reduce the complexity inherent in their everyday life and are necessary to make decisions. Yet, to date, the use of management models by Muslim managers has not been explored.

This author intends to briefly review the MIP literature. After which this author will briefly review the use of management models in conventional management. Then, this author will explore how management models taken from conventional management needs to be modified to incorporate a spiritual dimension. Lastly, this author will focus on models that are unique to Muslim managers.

### Management from an Islamic Perspective

In the early 1980s, Dr. Ismail al Faruqi proposed a programme which he called the 'Islamization of Knowledge' (IOK) (Safi, 1996). IOK proponents argue that social science is essentially the product of Western culture and that its foundation is secular in nature. IOK scholars argue that Muslims scholars need to re-write textbooks to reflect the Islamic belief system and practices. This IOK agenda has spread to management so that today, an increasing number of Muslim management scholars believe that management should be viewed from an Islamic perspective (henceforth abbreviated as MIP). Many Muslim scholars of management can identify with the following quotation

*"Management science as developed in the West is based on their culture and their environment, which addresses itself to the organisational and managerial problems faced by them. Like all other sciences, we are blindly teaching the concepts and techniques of management developed in the West, using their textbooks and literature, without making any attempt even to adapt them to our own condition."* (Kausar Niazi, 1996, p.4)

This author proposes to classify the MIP literature into three separate but inter-related streams. The first stream (obviously influenced by the IOK agenda) focuses on Western management paradigms and MIP paradigms. The second stream encompasses a series of articles and books that propose that an Islamic perspective on management would allow managers to establish a management system based on justice. The third stream assumes that existing theories of management are incomplete and that an Islamic perspective improves existing theories of management. This author proposes to take a brief look at these three streams.

The first stream of MIP literature is an offshoot of the IOK project that was launched by Dr. Ismail al Faruqi. Dr. Ismail al Faruqi

published a monograph in 1982 in which he identified two root causes that affected the Muslim world, namely the secular-religious duality of the education system and the lack of a clear vision to guide and direct Muslim action (Safi, 1996, p.6). Needless to say, not all Muslim scholars agree with IOK argument and not all scholars who agree with IOK in principle necessarily agree with Dr. Ismail al Faruqi. Nonetheless, proponents of IOK generally argue that both modern Western methods and classical Muslim methods are inadequate for solving the problems of Muslims today (Safi, 1996). Indeed, the main criticism of classical Muslims science is its over-reliance on "*linguistic and legalistic patterns of thinking ..... (and the) jurist who is trained to handle legal/moral problems continues to be perceived as an all-round, universal intellectual, capable of resolving all problems of modern society*" (Safi, 1996, p.13). Haneef (2005) did a critical survey of the IOK literature, listing and comparing the major works published in the IOK arena since 1982. In particular, he provides an excellent comparison of the IOK frameworks proposed by Ismail al Faruqi, the IIT revised version of Ismail al Faruqi's initial ideas, the framework proposed by Louay Safi, Taha Jahir al Alwani, Ibrahim A. Ragah and S.M. Naqib al Attas (Haneef, 2005). In practice, the points raised by IOK scholars indicate that MIP scholars have always shown a particular interest in the paradigms underlying conventional management and proposed an alternative Islamic paradigm. Table 1 is an example of such an analysis.

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**Rodrigue Fontaine** is British. He worked in a number of multinationals in Great Britain and France throughout the 1990s. He immigrated to Malaysia in 1999 and started teaching management in a private university. He completed his PhD in cross-cultural management in 2004 and continued working in private universities until 2009. In 2010, he joined the International Islamic University Malaysia. His specialization is Management from an Islamic perspective (MIP), which

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# Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspectives

Organisations are continually searching for methods to improve work environments and workplace relationships. Both academic scholars and employers have recognized that employees are now looking for soul enriching fulfillment at work. Management scholars are taking urgent steps to include spirituality studies in responding to this trend, particularly after the recent episodes of ethical and moral violations through many financial scandals in the corporate world. Spirituality in workplace is now gaining prevalence as a mainstream topic in management theory. Although Spirituality has been studied from several religious perspectives, very little research has been done from Islamic perspectives, and no book or major publication is available that covered the Islamic religious issues which are closely related to spirituality studies. This book, *Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspective* attempts to fill this gap, and presents the functions, roles, and purposes of spirituality studies based on the learning from the Islamic religious scripture (Holy Qur'an), and teachings of the prophet (Ahadiths). The book covered several major areas of organizational management (e.g., Human Resource Management, Organisational Behavior, Quality Management, Entrepreneurship, Business Ethics, Leadership, Human Capital Development), and discussed the implications of spirituality from Islamic perspectives on these areas. The various chapters of the book presented several conceptual models, which were developed based on extensive reviews of relevant literature. Those conceptual frameworks would help future researchers in designing new research agenda for studying the effects of several independent variables on relevant dependent variables of individual and organizational performance. The conceptual frameworks may also help managers and policy makers to understand the potential impacts that spirituality might have on employee performance, and thereby management could be inspired to nurture and develop employees' spirituality at workplace for enhancing ethical standards, integrity, and commitment to work. Hopefully this book will trigger substantial research interests among the readers for conducting empirical research in future, results from which would provide significant contributions to the contemporary Management literature.

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