

The Universal Endeavour of Leadership: Principles, Styles, and the Islamic Transformational Paradigm

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Abstract

Leadership is a fundamental and universal human task, necessary for collective organisation, innovation, and achievement in all cultures. This research explores the multidimensional nature of leadership, beginning with its broad definition as a crucial component in human growth. It presents the concept of value-driven leadership and emphasises its profound relationship to the human capacity for excellence through principles such as self-reflection, balanced perspective, true self-confidence, and authentic humility. The study also investigates how different leadership styles influence organisational output and performance, highlighting the nuanced efficacy of approaches such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. This is qualitative research using grounded theory. The report analyses Islamic transformational leadership, demonstrating its unique but highly applicable paradigm. This method, founded on holistic, ethically grounded values such as fairness, trust, and deliberation, and drawing directly from the Quran and Hadith, has profoundly affected society's evolution throughout history, providing a compelling paradigm for current concerns. This expanded section goes into further detail about the essential traits of Islamic transformational leadership, which are supported by Islamic scriptural guidance and include creativity, appreciation, teaching, responsibility, recognition, kindness, generosity, respect, perseverance, compassion, empathy, consultation, ethical behaviour, active listening, and empowerment.

Key Words: Leadership, Value-Driven Leadership, Transformational Leadership



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Introduction

Basic to all human activity, leadership is the activity of organising, promoting, and advancing any collective or societal enterprise. It is a part of the structure of all organised groups, whether they be tribal units or postmodern bodies. Leadership, the capacity to inspire, influence and direct others to a common objective, has been at the forefront of human progress from the first basic societies to today's grassroots and global institutions. The leadership is not, therefore, only an administrative leadership, but a moral one based on values affirming human dignity and civilizational advance.

This study considers leadership from a multidimensional and civilizational perspective. Part 1 begins with leadership as an inherently human pursuit, before developing the moral and psychological dimensions of effective leadership. At its most fundamental, this is a conversation about value-based leadership – about self-awareness, integrity, humility and principled confidence. Another objective of the experiment is to empirically study whether different leadership styles—transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire- lead to different impacts of ethical conduct and organisational performance.

The main purpose is to present a cross-analysis of the universal principles of leadership and to provide a focused review of the Islamic transformational leadership model based on the ethics, values and morals established by the Qur'an and the Hadith. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) embodies the caliphate model who maintains five fundamental qualities as described by Wan Husain (2020), which are (1) custodian of Allah, (2) enjoin good and forbid evil, (3) preventing harm, (4) to account, and (5) to honour the pledge from Allah. These are the attributes that can give birth to Godly governance. His justice and shura- (consultation-) orientated leadership was not driven by self-interest, but was entirely based on revelation, providing an eternal role model that is also rooted in psychology (Wan Husain et al., 2023).

Wan Husain (2020) also pointed out that the ethics of world-class good governance concepts are the moral values of faith, responsibility, leadership interference, good attitude, responsibilities, consultative decision making and work to achieve justice. These comprehensive leadership qualities are not only an embodiment of the civilizational enigma of Islam but are practicable solutions to the current challenges of leadership in the present time (Wan Husain, 2020). Thus, it describes the implication of authority on a ruler, governor, leader or head of any body, either a religious or a continuum perspective (Husain, 2017)

This is qualitative research using grounded theory. Methodologically, it is built on a conceptual approach that includes a textual analysis of Islamic scriptural sources and a critique of modern leadership theory. This integrative approach provides a unitary framework that relates traditional Islamic thought to modern discourse, presenting leadership as ethical, effective, and culture consistent.

Leadership is traditionally characterised as an influence process focused on guiding or directing a group of people to achieve a task, objective, or broader purpose. It is the art of engaging others in what matters most to them, where both parties share common goals and

perform at their best because they want to, not because they are coerced. Leadership goes beyond mere directive power to inspire shared visions, embody values, and create conditions that foster collective success. It is generally understood as a close moral relationship based on trust, mutual obligation, commitment, and the perceived public good. It is a universal human activity essential for organisation and achievement, motivating communal effort and change across diverse social, organisational, and historical contexts (Lemoine et al., 2019; Pulakos et al., 2015). This development reveals that leadership extends beyond the domain of authority, in which we have cultivated a voluntary commitment and mutual trust.

This central core implies that regardless of culture or time, there are some common fundamental leadership principles that would likely include strong communication capability, articulate vision, inspiration and ability to foster commitment by others. By singling out "moral relationship" and "shared vision of the good," the overt attention to the moral dimension provides the link to later discussions on the value-based leadership, suggesting that the ethical dimension is not so much an optional add-on as an ever more recognized hallmark of successful leadership in complex modern societies where trust and legitimation are key to sustained collective action.

The selection and implementation of different leadership styles have a critical and quantitative effect on the organisation's results and efficiency. So far, empirical evidence suggests that transformational leadership, and in particular idealised influence and intellectual stimulation, are consistently and positively related to employees' performance (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2013). The data shows that vision/inspiration, intellectual worker and the sparking of new VOBSEVs are potent stimulators of individual and group efficiency. On the other hand, certain research has revealed no significant relationship between transactional leadership, which is mainly based on a set of contingent rewards and management by exception and employee performance (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2013; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). This suggests that a transactional approach will deliver satisfactory compliance in the low to moderate range, but not necessarily the discretionary effort, innovation, or higher order commitment needed to achieve optimal organisational levels. Interestingly, Laissez-Faire leadership has been positively correlated with employee performance in certain situations, even though it is treated with scepticism because of its noninterventional approach (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2013; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002).

This surprising result highlights the complex and highly situational nature of leadership effectiveness by suggesting that high autonomy can be empowering for some employees or tasks. The study presents specific findings for different leadership styles: TL does not have a significant positive relationship with employee performance, whereas TL shows a negative relationship. The most surprising discovery is that LF exhibits a positive association with high performance in the study's context. This pattern of varying effectiveness provides strong indirect evidence that no single "best" style of leadership suits all situations. Instead, the suitability of a particular style depends on many factors, including the specific organisational setting, the type of work, and the maturity, experience and independence of subordinates. The

consistently positive contributions of transformational leadership dimensions, especially idealised influence and intellectual stimulation, highlight the empowering potential of inspirational appeals, a meaningful purpose and intellectual engagement as influences on performance that often extend beyond traditional reward-based motivation (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2013; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). Ironically, the limitation of transactional leadership is that extrinsic rewards alone are usually insufficient to sustain long-term high performance, particularly for tasks and environments where intrinsic motivation, creativity and problem-solving are crucial. The positive aspect of laissez-faire leadership, despite its volatile and situation-dependent nature, aligns with the fact that in contexts requiring high levels of autonomy and self-determination (e.g., among highly skilled employees or creative environments), a hands-off approach can indeed promote job empowerment and lead to superior job performance.

This finding substantially challenges the conventional, pejorative stereotype of the laissez-faire leader. This data clearly indicates that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership, nor are all approaches equally successful. There is no best type of leadership. The positive laissez-faire result is consistent with the idea that too much supervision or micro-management can be a detriment to performance in some situations, while transformational leadership tends to be beneficial overall because it focuses on intrinsic motivation, development and organisational commitment (Marques & Dhiman, 2016). This suggests that effective leaders need to develop a flexible and adaptive repertoire of styles that are sensitive to the demands of a situation, to the maturity and developmental needs of their followers and their current organisational culture. The known redeeming features of laissez-faire leadership in healthcare provide some indication that a highly skilled, self-motivated team may perform well with increased independence, which would then probably require a less experienced or reactive team in more routine roles to require greater structure, perhaps from a transformational or a more directive transactional leader. This undertaking is an explicit counterpoint to a prescriptive, simplified notion of leadership. The paradox of laissez-faire—an ethic closely tied to integrity-based leadership notions—tacitly underscores the giving of psychological safety and trust in a team (Pinder, 2014). It happens when people are trusted and empowered enough to excel without constant management.

The Principles of Value-Driven Leadership

Value-based leadership is a framework rooted in a leader's authentic self and core values. (Sibiya, 2023) It is highly structured, guided by four core principles: introspectiveness, the development of a balanced self-perception, genuine self-assuredness, and true humility (Sibiya, 2023; Paro, 2023). By consistently aligning actions with these values, leaders are empowered to “do the right thing and perform with all they have got” in any situation. This alignment between self and ethics helps leaders earn deep respect from themselves and their followers, fostering a holistic, resilient, and highly effective leadership style (Paro, 2023). The link

between values-based leadership and greatness is that, by embodying these four principles, individuals can become their “best self” (Paro, 2023). This personal greatness is the essential foundation necessary to lead others effectively and sustain organisational excellence (Paro, 2023). Kraemer’s four principles are advocated as key characteristics of values-based leadership and are directly connected to the outcomes of “doing the right thing and the best you can,” and most importantly, of gaining and maintaining respect and trust (Buckler & Creech, 2014). This highlights an important point. The fundamental question,

All these characteristics are essential for developing strong, trusting relationships within organisations and communities, as well as for managing the complexities of modern leadership challenges. The clear statement that “values-based leadership may not be a cure-all but is a good place to start” to foster trust strongly suggests that ethical leadership can help rebuild or maintain organisational and societal trust. In today’s world, often described as facing “a crisis of confidence at a grand scale in those who lead” (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003), humanity needs leadership grounded in values — not only as a moral obligation but also as a strategic necessity. Its broad relevance, recognised as extending “from the President of the United States or the Chief Executive Officer of a major corporation to the most junior person in the organisation,” shows that these ideas are applicable across cultural and industry boundaries, offering a resilient and adaptable model for leadership development worldwide. They contend that “[t]he findings reinforce the importance of embedding such intrinsic values into the leaders of organisations and societies that wish to survive, harness their potential and contribute to the greater good of people and the planet.” This is a vital principle. We must remember that regardless of outward achievements, they are meaningless without a foundation of internal integrity and moral values.

Dealing with values-based leadership is not merely an abstract concept but the fundamental framework through which a leader applies their values to guide decisions and actions, either within a moral and ethics-based framework that ensures success is meaningful and rooted, rather than fleeting and baseless. Aristotle, in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, would describe this as success without flourishing or proper growth. A key element of this approach is self-reflection, which distinguishes values-based leadership from self-indulgence. Leaders consistently reflect on their values, recognising their strengths and areas for development (Urrila & Eva, 2024). If I am not self-reflective, can I truly know myself? PHASED Professor Kraemer’s questions: “If I’m not self-reflective, can I know myself? How can I lead myself if I don’t even know myself? If I can’t lead myself, how can I lead someone else?” — demonstrates that self-leadership is essential for effectively leading others (Schweitzer et al., 2016). Leaders find the Self through reflection, using this process to connect their identity with their actions as a leader.

Continuing with self-awareness, value-based leaders understand their own beliefs and form strong opinions, yet they also take time to consider all perspectives and learn to value others’ viewpoints (Schweitzer et al., 2016). This commitment to listening results in better, more transparent decisions (Hosseini, 2023). The aim is “doing the right thing rather than being right,” fostering open and respectful dialogue. Leaders need this balance to make difficult

decisions, manage work and personal life, and bring their whole selves to work as much as possible.

As a complement to this balanced viewpoint, genuine self-confidence is essential. True confidence stems from within, not from putting on a façade. It grants leaders the capacity to admit error and ignorance, prioritising truth over pride. This transparency, rooted in recognising both limitations and expertise, fosters sustained growth and development both personally and professionally, while also enhancing relatability and fostering a culture of mutual learning and problem-solving rather than of the “know-it-all (Sale, 2015).

Furthermore, authentic humility is essential. Leaders must keep their feet on the ground, and even success cannot make them forget where they began. Such humility helps prevent losing perspective, fosters appreciation for every individual's worth, and encourages leaders to be approachable and respectful to all, thereby nurturing trust and teamwork within the organisation (Gómez-Jeria, 2024).

Ultimately, practising and embodying the four principles—self-reflection, balanced perspective, self-confidence, and humility—enables individuals to become their best selves, which is essential for leading others and a vital element in achieving enduring organisational greatness.

Furthermore, values-based leadership is vital for building, maintaining, or restoring trust within organisations, including those in business, government, and education (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). It is universally relevant and addresses essential human needs for authenticity, honesty, and respect, regardless of culture or organisation. During a period when leadership credibility was declining everywhere, these principles became a moral benchmark and an indicator of organisational strength. Developing value-based leadership is an investment in the future that all organisations may find challenging but are essential for long-term success and positive societal impact, as it directly addresses issues like trust, ethics, and responsible governance in today's world.

Table 1: Principles of Value-Driven Leadership

Principle	Core Definition/Meaning	Key Action/Behaviour	Benefit/Link to Excellence
Self-Reflection	Understanding one's values and acting on them, distinct from self-absorption.	Asking "Can I know myself, lead myself, lead others?" to anchor actions to values.	Doing "the right thing and the best you can",; fostering integrity and authenticity.
Balanced Perspective	Comprehending all sides of an issue,	Listening to all team members;	Making informed and transparent

		valuing multiple viewpoints.	prioritising doing what is right over being right; cultivating life balance.	decisions; fostering open dialogue and mutual respect.	
True Confidence	Self-	Authentic conviction, comfortable admitting mistakes and limitations.	inner admitting and	Prioritising doing what's right over being right; openly acknowledging knowledge and limitations.	Being a more relatable and effective team player, fostering continuous growth and collaborative problem-solving.
Genuine Humility		Remembering origins and appreciating the value of every individual.		Treating everyone respectfully, not becoming complacent amidst success.	Fostering loyalty and strong relationships, strengthening organisational cohesion and trust.

Impact of Diverse Leadership Styles on Performance

Leadership effectiveness is not uniform; it varies significantly depending on how leaders lead and the context in which they are leading. Based on this understanding of transformational leadership, it is seen as a dynamic form of leadership that profoundly motivates and appeals to followers by presenting a vision of the organisation worth pursuing (Mathew & Rakesh, 2016). This approach encourages people to act beyond self-interest and towards the greater good. Core elements such as idealised influence and intellectual stimulation foster creativity, innovation, and trust, which have been found to improve employee performance, well-being, and satisfaction. Ultimately, these factors drive productivity growth and create a supportive workplace (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2008).

Building on this, transactional leadership works through explicit transactions through which contingent reward and management by exception influence followers' behaviours (Khairy et al., 2023). The advantage of this method is that it is easy to enforce compliance with rules and procedures; however, research has shown the correlation between this method and total employee performance to be weak. The downside of transactional leadership is that when distortions arise between rewards and/or fairness, employees may become demotivated. Additionally, over-dependence on punishment or regular surveillance may result in higher stress and lower job engagement of employees (Pasricha et al., 2017).

Moreover, this style of leadership is known for its lack of involvement and for granting subordinates a considerable amount of freedom to perform. Although it is met with suspicion due to the potential for vagueness or lack of clarity, some studies have demonstrated a strong positive correlation with worker performance in appropriate circumstances (Pasricha et al., 2017). This beneficial influence may be attributed to the autonomy-supportive characteristics of the style, as it encourages self-determination and allows employees to operate without constant monitoring. However, its effectiveness remains questionable, since other research has indicated potential negative outcomes related to commitment and a high risk of losing motivation due to perceived leader disengagement.

Overall, the findings of empirical studies emphasise that these leadership styles have varying effects on work outcomes. Leadership research consistently shows that transformational leadership is the standard for effective performance, often resulting in only transactional compliance. The detailed findings on laissez-faire leadership highlight the importance of context – a ‘laissez-faire’ approach can enable highly skilled teams but may be a disadvantage in other situations (Chin & Trimble, 2014).

Finally, the evidence in these studies indicates that one leadership style might not be the best for everyone. Efficiency is relative to the organisation, the nature of the tasks, and the characteristics of the followers. Effective leaders need to own a diversified skill range and make a correct assessment of the situational needs and adjust their behaviour according to the situation dynamics, avoiding static and prescriptive models for better performance and engagement (Ntuli, 2023).

Table 2: Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Performance

Leadership Style	Key Characteristics	Impact on Employee Performance	Associated Components/Reasons
Transformational	Vision, Inspiration, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised Consideration	Significantly Positive	Idealized Influence (70% higher chance of high performance) and intellectual Stimulation (60% higher chance of high performance) foster well-being, job satisfaction, and engagement.

Transactional	Contingent Rewards, Management Exception (active/passive)	by	Insignificant Association	Rewards/punishments may only improve compliance in rare cases, can cause stress, and may not motivate if expectations are unmet.
Laissez-Faire	Autonomy, Non-Involvement, Hands-off approach		Significantly Positive in specific contexts (e.g., healthcare)	Autonomy-supportive nature cultivates self-determination; freedom from controlled motivation.

Islamic Transformational Leadership: Principles and Practice

Islamic transformational leadership presents a distinctive model rooted in the rich Islamic tradition, integrated with contemporary leadership theory and core values. Drawing from the Prophet's (PBUH) tradition, this approach aims to inspire and motivate others with a compelling vision, challenging the status quo to foster a collective commitment to do good. The primary goal is to bring about fundamental and positive changes in the attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, and values of followers, thereby encouraging personal and professional growth and fulfilling their needs. Leaders demonstrating this style are often charismatic and influential, guiding society towards shared objectives (Safi, 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2024).

Building on this work, the main elements of transformational leadership—idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration—have been shown to significantly enhance the effectiveness of Islamic management. The combined influence of these factors accounted for 69% of the variation in management performance, with intellectual stimulation emerging as the most significant predictor (Sulaiman et al., 2024). In this context, forgiveness is a fundamental principle, as Muslims are created by Allah with unique capacities and gifts. Forgiveness, as demonstrated among primates, fosters compliance, mutual respect, teamwork, giving everyone a fair chance, and commitment—contributing to the realisation of human potential.

The other factor is sincerity (Ikhlas); it displays an individual's complete submission to Allah's will, humility, and the keeping of promises. Openness fosters an atmosphere of confidence, honesty, genuine partnership, and viewing work as worship (ibadah). This approach ensures dedicated and honest fulfilment of moral duties. The strong connection between the

elements of transformational leadership and Islamic management principles clearly shows that Islamic transformational leadership is not just a peripheral adaptation of Western ideas, but is rooted in the moral and spiritual beliefs of Islam. Forgiveness and sincerity serve as important management tools to build trust, cooperation, and organisational commitment.

The focus on intellectual stimulation highlights the importance of reasoned debate and critical thinking within an Islamic context: a rational spirituality, so to speak. This integrated model suggests that good conduct and spirituality are not separate from good business and high performance. The infusion of spiritual and moral dimensions in Islamic transformational leadership offers an empowering and sustainable human-centred perspective on organisation and societal development. As a result, it carries significant implications for intercultural leadership research and serves as a vehicle for organisational excellence and overall societal well-being (Sulaiman et al., 2024).

Table 3: Components of Islamic Transformational Leadership and Islamic Management Principles

Transformational Leadership Component	Statistical Significance on Islamic Management	Contribution to Forgiveness	Contribution to Sincerity
Idealized Influence	Yes (69% variance explained collectively)	Leaders as ethical role models inspire forgiveness, fostering mutual respect and cooperation.	Leaders demonstrating integrity and trustworthiness promote a culture of sincerity and commitment.
Inspirational Motivation	Yes (69% variance explained collectively)	Inspiring a shared vision encourages empathy and a willingness to overlook minor transgressions for collective good.	Motivating followers to transcend self-interest aligns with sincere devotion to organizational goals.
Intellectual Stimulation	Yes (69% variance explained collectively, most	Encouraging new perspectives and challenging	Fostering critical thinking and rationality supports

	contributing factor)	assumptions can lead to greater understanding and a forgiving attitude towards errors.	truthful assessment and sincere effort.	self-
Individualized Consideration	Yes (69% variance explained collectively)	Attending to individual needs and development can build personal loyalty and a willingness to forgive shortcomings.	Showing genuine care for individuals fosters their sincere commitment and devotion to their roles.	

Legacy of Islamic Transformational Leadership The legacy of Transformational Leadership in Islam is demonstrated by a series of historical figures who have profoundly influenced the world through wisdom, bravery, and strong commitment in accordance with the Islamic way of life (Ijaazah, 2023). Leading them all is Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the figure who transformed a chaotic world through inspiration, motivation, and mental stimulation. His morality, empathy, and fairness establish a standard for leadership across ages.

The Four Rightly Guided Caliphs followed suit and established the Sunnah in Islamic governance. Among other issues, Abu Bakr (R.A) focused on unity, resolute crisis management during the Ridda wars, justice, and negotiated diplomacy to provide a roadmap for resolving internal divisions and preserving community unity (Pinder, 2014). Umar Bin Khattab (R.A) is known for his sense of justice, strong political acumen, and administrative reforms; one of these was the separation of the executive and judiciary. During his rule, the Islamic state expanded significantly, and he promoted democracy and consultative leadership (ibid). Uthman Bin Affan (R.A) centralised power, compiled the Qur'an, and initiated a period of economic growth; he spent the final years of his life embroiled in controversy due to allegations of nepotism. Lessons can be drawn from these leadership complexities (Daniel, nd). Ali bin Abi Talib (R.A) was "firm in justice, stern against the demolishers of the law and the upholders of corruption, and he insisted on accountability, transparency and consultation, offering a moral apparatus for modern reforming behaviour" (Ijaazah, 2023).

More active leaders, alongside these central figures, illustrate other aspects of Islamic leadership. Tariq Bin Ziyad, conqueror of Spain, is celebrated for his tactical skill and unity. The reign of Harun al-Rashid marked a golden age for the Abbasid Caliphate, during which Baghdad became a thriving centre of science and culture (Marques and Dhiman, 2016). Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi is renowned for his military tactics and dedication to justice. Imam Abu Hanifa, the Hanafi Imam, is known for his honesty and care for the community. Sultan

Muhammad Al-Fatih transformed Constantinople into a modern, bustling capital. (The first was Sheikh Uthman “Dan Fodio” and the second was Queen Amina of Zazzau.) Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio was a social reformer and educator in West Africa.

Together, these examples demonstrate that Islamic leadership is not solely a religious matter; it has also influenced political, legal, economic, and social institutions. Key elements — justice, consultation, responsibility, community well-being, and personal ethics — form a consistent and adaptable model of social progress. The legacy of these leaders provides a strong foundation for addressing 21st-century challenges and offering new perspectives on global debates about ethical governance and sustainable leadership (Ijaazah, 2023; Pinder, 2014; Daniel, nd; Marques & Dhiman, 2016).

Table 4: Historical Examples of Islamic Transformational Leaders and Their Contributions

Leader	Era/Context	Key Leadership Characteristics	Transformative Impact/Contributions
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)	7th Century Arabia	Compassionate, Just, Inspirational, Ethical	Societal transformation, ethical example, foundation of Islamic civilization.
Abu Bakr (R.A)	7th Century CE, Rashidun Caliphate	Unity, Crisis Management, Fairness, Consultative	Crisis management (Ridda wars), community unity, foundational Islamic governance.
Umar Bin Khattab (R.A)	7th Century CE, Rashidun Caliphate	Justice, Strong Governance, Administrative Reform, Democratic	Legal/financial systems, judicial independence, significant expansion of the Islamic state, promoted democracy.
Ali bin Abi Talib (R.A)	7th Century CE, Rashidun Caliphate	Accountability, Anti-corruption, Justice, Diplomatic	Ethical governance, conflict resolution, moral framework against corruption.
Tariq Bin Ziyad	7th-8th Century CE,	Strategic Brilliance,	Conquest of Spain

	Umayyad Conquest of Hispania	Unifying, Decisive	(Iberian Peninsula), military unification.
Harun al-Rashid	8th-9th Century CE, Abbasid Caliphate	Effective Governance, Patron of Knowledge, Cultural Prosperity	Golden Age of Baghdad, flourishing in science, religion, and culture.
Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi	12th Century CE, Ayyubid Dynasty	Military Prowess, Commitment to Islam, Ethical Warfare	Reconquest of Jerusalem, ethical conduct warfare, uniting Muslim forces.
Imam Abu Hanifa	8th Century CE, Abbasid Caliphate	Integrity, Intellectual Rigor, Community Welfare	Founder of Hanafi school of jurisprudence, emphasized reasoning and consultation.
Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih	15th Century CE, Ottoman Empire	Military Genius, Visionary Urban Planner, Tolerant	Conquest of Constantinople, urban development, religious coexistence, transformed Istanbul.
Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio	18th-19th Century CE, West Africa	Scholar, Reformer, Advocate for Justice and Education	Led a movement to revive Islamic practices, emphasized justice and women's education.
Queen Amina of Zazzau	16th-17th Century CE, Hausa States (Nigeria)	Military Prowess, Strategic Expansion, Intellect	Shaped trade routes, fortified cities, fostered Islamic governance.

Islamic values and ethics form a comprehensive moral foundation, greatly shaping leadership styles and the operation of organisations. Each week highlights a key pillar, one of which is justice — the principle of treating people regardless of their background. This dedication to justice is not only reflected in individual conduct but also embedded in the

structure of public institutions, such as the separation of judicial and administrative powers. Such a commitment acts as a catalyst for creating a fair society and serves as an effective tool in combating corruption and favouritism, ensuring operations are credible and accountable (Daniel, n.d.; Jupidi, n.d.; Ejournal, n.d.).

Furthermore, trust is another essential element, rooted in the principle of sincerity (Ikhlas). Islamic ethics promotes a culture of authentic collaboration, honesty, and interdependence within organisations. This environment of trust encourages higher job satisfaction and loyalty, with employees feeling valued and secure in their roles. Trust is not just a result of ethical behaviour but is intentionally developed through strategic leadership that demonstrates truthfulness and honesty in all interactions. (Jupidi, n.d.; Ejournal, n.d.).

Deliberation (shura) is a vital element of Islamic leadership and creates a framework for inclusive, participatory decision-making. When staff and stakeholders are involved in decision-making, leaders foster a collaborative culture and collective ownership of the results. This interactive approach leads to better-informed, balanced, and widely supported decisions that promote greater organisational adaptability and reduce bureaucratic rigidity (Ejournal, n.d.). Together, these principles inspire leaders to act with compassion, unwavering integrity, and a deep sense of responsibility. The ethical virtues of justice, trust, and deliberation foster positive attitudes among followers and enhance overall organisational effectiveness. In sectors like educational management, these principles have driven significant change. When leadership is regarded as amanah – a sacred trust from God – responsibility shifts from the mundane to the spiritual and ethical levels.

The emphasis on deliberation also suggests that the consensus-based development of trajectories reflects a community-based approach to making principles locally owned and sustainable. This structure offers a distinctive way to respond to universal challenges in ethical leadership and governance. Leadership founded on spiritual and moral values can enhance resilience, justice, and peace within organisations. “The emphasis on purposes beyond profitability signifies a commitment to the welfare of mankind and positions Islamic leadership as a role model for sustainable capitalism and community-driven growth. This focus aligns directly with current discussions about Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria, which could be rooted in faith-based perspectives on sustainability and ethical business.

Islamic transformational leadership is deeply rooted in the Quran and Hadith, which provide detailed descriptions of the characteristics of leaders and the ethical framework that underpins their roles and duties. The Quran emphasises that God appoints leaders to guide and perform good deeds (*Amal salih*), making leadership a trust from God (*amanah*). The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) underlined that all men are khalifah and are accountable for those under their responsibility (Ministry of Finance and Economy; Brunei Darussalam, n.d.). Fundamental principles based on these texts include belief (Iman) and mindfulness of God (Taqwa) that serve as the foundation for a leader's faith and deter leaders from infidelity. (50:1). Justice and fairness are demanded, for the leaders are required to rule justly and can have no passions that may turn them aside. Decisions are driven by consultation (Shurá) to ensure

inclusiveness, and collective responsibility and interest in decisions. Guidance (knowledge and wisdom) so that the leaders can make sound decisions (42:377). The example of Prophet Joseph and Prophet Dawood where they were praised for their wisdom and wisdom of the heart. Trust and honesty are key words, and you can find examples of these among leaders like the Prophets Moses and Joseph. Patience and perseverance are also stressed upon-as leadership sometimes means to pass through adversities and stick to its ethical stand (Radiance Weekly, n.d.).

Leadership to Islam generally is serving types and examples. Hadith tells us that a leader is basically a servant to those he leads, and we see Mohammed (PBUH) serving his companions and taking even their pain emotionally in all its glory. This process of servant leadership builds a sense of loyalty and respect in the community (IRFI, n.d.).

In addition to these basic principles, other specific traits and values, central to the leadership role, are emphasised in Islamic teachings. Leaders need to provide an ethical model by being credible with values like justice, mercy, and integrity; credibility is also a source of trust and pride for followers. They share a distinct ideology that is rooted in divine mission, encourage their followers to rise above the self and work for the common good and consider everyday work as an act of worship thus generating strong commitment (Sulaiman et al., 2024; Radiance Weekly, n.d.).

Intellectual awakening is developed when leaders support creative and innovation practices, and demand that followers disrupt current beliefs rooted in an Islamic context. Intellectual stimulation is demonstrated through genuine concern for the development of each follower and inspiration to be creative and think out of box is from the Quran and Sunnah. So, gratitude and appreciation are important,” Reardon says, with leaders who repay that kindness and commit to enhancing the welfare of the people they lead. Islamic leaders, too, are teachers and examples who lead by word and deed and are perceived to be guardians responsible for those whom they lead.

Leadership is a great trust (*amanah*) from Allah; therefore, it brings with it a heavy burden of responsibility and accountability. Meritocratic values and recognition of abilities are important; leaders are expected to make appointments based on integrity and fortitude. There must be a foundation of kindness, tenderness and trust and leadership must be guided by trust and integrity with some consistency. Generosity, esteem, patience, constancy are virtues, by which a ruler may triumph over difficulties, and create a good influence. Personal reflexes of sympathy and imagination, that support and encouragement of others, especially of the poor, are engraved in us. Shura continues to be a strong factor – and it helps for sound decision-making – in the sense of inclusion and engagement of people. The base of the society is built on ethical behaviour, justice and honesty, with rulers following Islamic commands and Shariah. Active listening and empowerment, of youth and women are advocated through giving them responsibilities and opportunities for development (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Sulaiman et al., 2024).

Conclusion

These foundational ethical principles, which include faith (Iman) and God Consciousness (Taqwa), root a leader's conviction and prevent him from engaging in unethical practices. Justice and equity are emphasised with the supreme command that leaders must rule in justice and should not stray from the path towards their own desires. Shura (consultation)—It is strongly encouraged, making people feel that they own the decision.

Leadership in Islam also involves service and setting an example, with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself leading by example, sharing in the same hardships as his followers, and using emotional intelligence in the most challenging situations. Islamic teachings highlight several desirable qualities and values essential for effective leadership. Leaders are expected to serve as role models, whose behaviour should be guided by principles such as justice, amanah, compassion, and integrity. They should inspire trust and pride among followers. Leaders foster intellectual stimulation by encouraging creativity and innovation, asking questions, and motivating followers to challenge existing beliefs within an Islamic framework. Personalised consideration is demonstrated through genuine concern for the growth and development of everyone, while practical, creative, and critical thinking are nurtured in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah. Two essential qualities are gratitude and appreciation: those who choose paths also practise kindness and strive to improve people's lives through leadership. As alims, they are also scholars and role models, guiding their communities through their words and actions, and are regarded as protectors responsible for those in their care.

In conclusion, Islamic teachings on beliefs and moral values provide a steadfast and comprehensive approach to leadership encompassing spiritual, moral, and practical aspects. This approach enhances both overall organisational performance and resilience, as well as broader societal welfare through the promotion of justice, trust, and responsible governance.

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