



Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspectives

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CHAPTER 6

Spirituality in Entrepreneurship from Islamic Perspective

Zulkarnain Kedah and Isa Mohammed Adamu

Abstract

Spirituality in entrepreneurship is an emerging area of interest which has begun to generate attention from management scholars. However, most research carried out in this area is from the western perspective. Until recently, there is dearth of research that gears towards spirituality in Islam and its contribution to the overall development of modern organisations. Very little information is available regarding spirituality in Islam and its effects on entrepreneurial outcomes. This exploratory study presents a conceptual analysis of the effects of spirituality in Islam on entrepreneurial motivation, performance and commitment to social responsibility. It has been suggested that spirituality in Islam has the potential to positively influence the attitudes of entrepreneurs and to serve as a motivational drive for going into business. Also, it has the potential to serve as a catalyst for positive energy, enhanced performance and increased commitment to social responsibility. This chapter presents a conceptual framework based on exhaustive literature reviews to guide future research, which is followed by a discussion on the implications for new theory and for professional practice.

Background of the Study

The concept spirituality is gaining interest and popularity in management literature over the past decade and as observed by Fornaciari and Lund Dean (2004), spirituality in the workplace is more than a passing fad. This is consequent upon paradigm shift being witnessed in organisational sciences, management theory and practice

(Karakas, 2010). According to King and Crowther (2004), this trend is coming after a history of mostly ambivalence and neglect. It may be attributed to the desire to meet individual, organisational and societal needs.

From the employee (individual) side, some of the causes are individuals' search for higher purpose, personal meaning, and transcendent values. There appears to be a fundamental change in the nature of work as many workers are now searching for meaning in work that transcends mere economic exchanges between isolated, autonomous individuals (Barro & McCleary, 2003). People are searching for a way to connect their work lives with their spiritual lives, to work together in community, to be unified in a vision and purpose that goes far beyond making money (Jackson & Konz, 2006). Similarly Douglas, Polley, Vora, & SubbaNarasimha (2005) observed that challenging work conditions could be a driving force behind the current rising interest in spirituality in the work place. They further opined that the trend can be historically traced because workers at the beginning of the twentieth century could look forward to a lifetime career with a stable company but more recently, downsizing, reorganization, frequent job changes, and the use of a temporary workforce have resulted in a great increase in instability for workers. Consequently all these scenarios further echoed worker's desire for more meaning and quality of life at work (Walsh, Weber, & Margolis, 2003).

From the employer and society sides, an increasing number of employers have begun to recognise the importance of spirituality in the workplace in an effort to increase workers satisfaction, creativity, and productivity (Fry, 2003; Henricks, 2005; Mitroff, 2003; Garcia-Zamor, 2003). Furthermore, recent scandals involving ethical lapses at major corporations and institutions in the United States of America have generated a profound lack of trust in corporate leadership and have served to reinforce the need for organisations to acknowledge employees' thirst for meaning, community, and connection with a higher purpose and/or power. In addition, organizations are now renewing their commitments to social responsibility and the common good. As a consequent of this development, the call for values and spirituality is currently echoing in organisations in order to provide the required level of inspiration (Harris, 2010).

Drawing from the benefits of workplace spirituality and the consequences of ignoring it, Mohammed, Wisnieski, Askar, and Syed (2004), remarked that management field and organisations may pay a heavy price for its oversight of spirituality. In the first instance, there would be an increase in the frustration of spiritually deprived employees with their non spiritual or anti spiritual workplace. Secondly, management theories and models that ignore spiritual dimension will remain incomplete or incorrect. Consequently, it can be deduced from the above and as observed by Karakas (2010), organisations these days make room for spiritual dimensions which has to do with meaning, purpose and sense of community. Furthermore, from the foregoing discussion and as observed by Tischler, Biberman, and Mckeage (2002), it seems increasingly clear from spirituality literatures that people with higher level of spirituality have a healthier, happier and more productive lives at work. It also seems possible from the literature that people can grow from less to more spirituality over time.

Considering the contributions of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) to the overall development of nation economies, it is imperative to look at the potential benefits entrepreneurs could derive from spirituality. One area of concern to both policy makers and scholars is to dwell more on how to stimulate the volume and intensity of entrepreneurial activity by concentrating on the question of why some people choose an entrepreneurial career (and prosper in it) and why others don't (Turker & Selcuk, 2009). As observed by Drost (2010), the study of what predicts entrepreneurship as a career remains an important research issue. Providing answer to what triggers entrepreneurship in some people not others is up to today an area of interest to policy makers and scholars. One reason for the interest is that the status and direction of a country's entrepreneurship can be explained by studying the personal motives of entrepreneurs for starting business. Another reason is the belief that the performance and conduct of entrepreneurs depends to some extent on their motives for starting business (Kayed & Hassan (2010).

However, despite the phenomenal growth of workplace spirituality within the management discipline, and claims by Gibbons (2000) that greater pluralism is a feature of the post modern spirituality, all major workplace spirituality models have been developed in the United States of America and most of the few empirical studies testing these

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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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