



## **EARLY ISLĀM COMPENSATION: PATTERN FROM UMAR'S CALIPHATE AND LEARNING FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

Ihsan Rahmat<sup>a,b\*</sup>, Bayu Mitra A. Kusuma<sup>d</sup>, Ashadi Cahyadi<sup>a,c</sup>, and Anis Handayani<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Da'wah Management Study Program, Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno, Bengkulu 38211, Indonesia. (Email: [ihsanrahmat@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id](mailto:ihsanrahmat@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id), [ashadicahyadi@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id](mailto:ashadicahyadi@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id))*

<sup>d</sup>*The Ph.D. Program in Asia-Pacific Regional Studies, National Dong Hwa University, Hualien 974301, Taiwan, R.O.C. (Email: [81090B006@gms.ndhu.edu.tw](mailto:81090B006@gms.ndhu.edu.tw))*

<sup>e</sup>*Islamic Community Development Study Program, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan, Lampung 35131, Indonesia. (Email: [anishandayani@radenintan.ac.id](mailto:anishandayani@radenintan.ac.id))*

### **ABSTRACT**

One of the methods to reveal the concept of compensation in *Islām* is through historical legitimacy where the compensation narrative transformed along with improvement in Islamic governance. This study focused on uncovering the practices and basis for providing compensation during the time of Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Qualitative methodology was adopted by reviewing four major books as the main readings along with 17 other selected supporting articles. Tabulation was used to record the most significant contents to categorize based on the concept of direct and indirect compensation. This study found a variety of direct compensation practices such as the provision of salaries, benefits, and incentives. Indirect compensation includes provision of facilities, recognition, and prayers. This compensation is based on guidance of the *Qur'ān* and the *ḥadīths* of Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). For an unprecedented condition, Umar took into consideration advice from senior friends either from their personal perspectives or experiences from other regions. The last is based on Umar's *ijtihād* after analyzing the conditions. This study has implications for *Islāmic* human resources management learning in modern organizations.

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\*Corresponding author: [ihsanrahmat@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id](mailto:ihsanrahmat@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id),

Future researchers may examine the empirical significance of Umar's compensation mechanism in modern organizations.

Keywords: Islamic compensation, Early Islam, Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Human resource management.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Various *Islāmic* organizations in the world have applied a compensation system introduced by Western scholars. Ali and Weir (2005) and Hashim (2009) explained that implementation of the Western compensation system often violates the equity principle. Principles such as *al-'adl* (justice), *ifa al-'aqd* (contract), *haquq al-'ibad* (humanity), and *al-amanah* (trust) are often manipulated for large profits for the company (Khan, Farooq, and Hussain, 2010). Western principles practices, however, are implemented because of several considerations and the ready-made concepts they offer. Moreover, they are intensively studied by the majority of *Islāmic* scholars (Branine, and Pollard, 2010). On the other hand, Islam in its practice has a system of salary very clearly regulated in the *Qur'ān*, *Hadīths*, and practices during the reign of the companions (Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abi Talib) and the generations coming after. These days, the lack of attention of *Muslim* scholars, the inability to disclose, unavailable documented references, and the lack of promotion of *Islāmic* mechanisms in *Islāmic* organizations have become problematic. The study explaining concept of compensation in Islam is pivotal and highly demanded by *Islāmic* organization practitioners.

Several studies discussed compensation focusing on several specific areas, such as job satisfaction (Rinny, Purba, and Handiman, 2020; Ramli, 2019; Darma, and Supriyanto, 2017), employee performance (Saman, 2020; Kadir et al., 2019), organizational commitment (Nasution et al., 2019; Jalal, Zaheer, and Sultan, 2017; Kee, Ahmad, and Abdullah, 2016), and organizational performance (Hamid et al. 2017; Rana and Malik 2017). Some of these studies suggested organizations take advantage of compensation as a management tool to improve performance and growth in the short, medium and long term. Compensation has been one of the topics used in many studies; however, much of the research on compensation does not cover past practices. For instance, how compensation was

generally implemented in the early days of *Islāmic* nations. Instead, previous studies only explained compensation from an *Islāmic* perspective (Rahmat, 2018; Rana, and Malik, 2017; Uddin, Iqbal, and Hoque, 2014; Khan, Farooq, and Hussain, 2010; Hashim, 2009).

This article aims at filling the gaps in previous studies on compensation in the early days of Islam by focusing on the caliphate era of Umar ibn Al-Khattab. For the first time, Islam reached its peak of glory during the leadership of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, measured by the Islamization of the region from Syria, Egypt, to Iraq; establishment of an *Islāmic* calendar system; *Islāmic* governance and financial system; and mandatory military service (Numani, 2004). In line with that, this paper reveals the practices of providing compensation and the basis for making decisions of payment to employees working for the caliphate. Furthermore, this research also analyzes the compensation practices impact for the training of human resource management. These three objectives provide direction for the understanding that compensation was practiced earlier in Islam based on revelation, principles, *shura*, and experience, far before Western organizational concepts and traditions were formed.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 COMPENSATION

Compensation is defined as all forms of remuneration awarded by the organization to employees for the work they have performed (Berber et al., 2017; Salisu, Chinyio, and Suresh, 2015; Dessler, 2007). Kreitner and Kinicki (2014) further explained that self and career development opportunities, motivation, recognition, and a comfortable work environment are considered as compensation. Compensation is divided into two: direct and indirect. Direct compensation is generally monetary such as salaries, wages, benefits, and incentives. Indirect compensation is non-monetary such as supporting facilities, insurance, recognition, awards, promotion, furlough, and time off. Compensation is provided based on performance, time and contract. Pearce and Perry (1983) put emphasis on merit pay or pay for performance. Performance-based payment has been proven to increase work motivation and improve faith in the organization (Gabris and Mitchell, 2016).

## 2.2 COMPENSATION FROM ISLĀMIC VIEW

Islam provides a clear insight into the terms and practices of compensation. Khan, Farooq, and Hussain (2010) presented seven ethical principles in Islam for human resources management: brotherhood and benevolence (*ukhuwwah* and *ihsan*), justice and fairness (*al-'adl*), fulfilling the contract (*ifa al-'aqd*), people's rights (*haquq al-'ibad*), fair compensation (*al-ujrah*), cooperation (*al-ta'waan*), trust and honesty (*amanah* and *ikhlas*). Provision of employee salaries must be in accordance with their burden and contribution. In Islamic ethics: the principle of *al-ujrah* (QS al-Mutaffifin: 1-3), *ukhuwwah* and *ihsan* (QS al-Hujurat: 10), *haquq al-'ibad* (QS an-Nisa: 29 and al-Maidah: 8) must underscore compensation policy. Islam pays special attention to workers' rights. The employers' most significant obligations are being responsible to Allah SWT, ensuring prosperity of their workers, and completing the work. The first obligation, however, has practically been omitted in secular utility. It is one of the reasons manipulation or arbitrariness of compensation does not make the employer feel guilty. Allah says in QS al-Mutaffifin 1-3: "Woe to those who cheat. Those are people who, when they receive a weighing scale from someone else, ask for it to be fulfilled. and when they measure or weigh (for others), they reduce." Violation of employee rights to fair wages is considered by Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) a criminal act of enslaving free humans (Ather, Khan, and Hoque, 2011).

## 2.3 UMAR IBN AL-KHATTAB'S CALIPHATE

Umar ibn Al-Khattab ibn Nufail ibn Abdul 'Uzza was the second caliph appointed by Abu Bakr. His reign lasted for 10 years and 6 months, during which he led the progress of the country, such as regional expansion, improvement in people's welfare, and good governance. First, Hasan explained that the regional expansion was divided into eight provinces: Mecca, Medina, Syria, Peninsula, Basrah, Kufa, Palestine, and Egypt (Wahidah, 2011). Second, strengthening the economy through income from zakat, war assets, non-Muslim taxes, land taxes, and trade customs which were stored in the *baitul mal*. The resources were allocated in many aspects, such as state spending, public financial aid, investment, production, personnel spending, and infrastructure development. Economic policy was based on three principles: a) the caliph took the right way; b) the caliph gave

something based on his rights; and c) the caliph would not take part that was unlawful (Personal, Archive, and Kusnadi, 2018; Israil, 2011). Third, governance was created by forming a government advisory team from the early *Muslims* (*Muhajirin* and *Ansar*), building the posts of departments and governors for each expansion region, resolving administrative problems, and following the pattern of good governance applied in Rome and Persia.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper applied content analysis where four main books and 17 articles discussing Umar ibn Al-Khattab were selected. The main books analyzed were: 1) *Umar: Makers of Islamic Civilization* by Shilbi Numani; 2) *Biografi Umar ibn Khattab* by Ali Muhammad Ash-Shallabi; 3) *Umar ibn Khattab* by Muhammad Husein Haikal, and 4) *Kisah Hidup Umar ibn Khattab* by Mustafa Murad. Supporting articles were accessed with the keyword 'Umar ibn Khattab' and 'government' through the Google Scholar page published from the year 2012-2021. Some 102 articles have been linked and fit our purpose. We proceed to the scanning stage with the results of 17 articles containing content about Umar, his government, and compensation. After multiple times of reading, the sections of the books found to be related to compensation practices were marked and tabulated according to two categorizations: direct or indirect compensation.

For the next step, these two categories were examined based on the types of compensation, such as wages, benefits, incentives, awards, facilities, time off, promotions, congratulations, and prayers. The practices sharing similar characteristics along with the supporting data were listed to put into one section of explanation. The discussion was presented to analyze more deeply the basis of compensation decision-making and learning for modern organizations. It was then elaborated with previous concepts and studies. This systematic work answered the two objectives of writing and fill in the gaps of previous studies on compensation practices in early Islam, especially in the era of Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

### 4. RESULTS

In the context of this research, compensation is broadly defined, which refers to all types of rewards given by organizations or employers to their workers in material or non-material form that stimulate happiness, comfort, and motivation to improve working performance. Therefore,

in this study compensation is divided into two types: direct and indirect to examine the compensation practice during the caliphate of Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Direct compensation is remuneration provided by the employer to workers. Indirect compensation is a non-material reward provided by employers to improve worker welfare.

#### 4.1 DIRECT COMPENSATION

##### 4.1.1 WAGES

Umar ibn Al-Khattab paid dirhams to government employees (executive officials, governors, judges, soldiers, teachers, and guards of the Baitul Mal). The sources of their salaries were from *kharaj* (land tax), *ghanimah* (spoils of war), *fai'* (non-war booty), *jizyah* (non-Muslim tax), and *usyur* (excise). The executive officers at advisor and secretary level were given a salary of 100 dinars per month, while several governors, such as Umair ibn Saad and Said ibn Amir in Homs were given 100 dirhams, Abu Hurairah in Bahrain received 200 dirhams, and Amr ibn Ash in Egypt had 200 dinars (Ash-Shalabi, 2017). Some governors were only given a salary, while some received allowances and facilities (Fitmawati 2019). Umar determined additional gifts based on the challenges and the workloads in carrying out their duties. Umar was the first caliph to give salaries to judges. Table 1 shows the salary of judges every month, adjusted to the standard of family needs and sufficiency to avoid bribery (Ash-Shalabi, 2017). Umar prepared the needs of war, including the soldiers' salaries from the Baitul Mal treasury. All the names of soldiers and the number of family members they were financially responsible for were systematically recorded. Each soldier received a different amount of salary depending on their workload. Umar once granted Salman al-Farisi who led 30,000 soldiers with 5,000 dirhams, while the soldiers themselves received varying amounts (Numani, 2015). Fifth, the salaries of teachers who taught Islamic education was 15 dinars per month in Medina, while the amount was greater if they taught *Islām* in newly conquered lands. The keepers or registrars of the Baitul Mal treasures were given a salary as much as Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Uthman ibn Hanif, and Amr ibn Yasir had received (Ash-Shalabi, 2017).

TABLE 1  
Judicial Salary

Sn	Name	Region	Salary
1	Sulaiman ibn Rabi'ah	Kufah	500 dirham
2	Syuraih	Kufah	100 dirham
3	Abdullah ibn Mas'ud	Kufah	100 dirham
4	Utsman ibn Qais	Egypt	200 dirham
5	Qais ibn Abi ash-Sahni	Egypt	200 dirham

#### 4.1.2 COMPENSATION GRANTS

Several types of grants were provided such as allowances for war retirees, martyrdom, family, and consumption. First, Umar was very concerned about the condition of veterans, especially those who participated in Badr war and the members of Hudaibiyah troops. Their struggle in maintaining faith, strengthening *da'wah* of the Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), and continuing *sunnah* were the main considerations for Umar to provide grants with money, food, and shelter. Badr war pensioners of Muhajirin received 5,000 dirhams while Ansar received 4,000 dirhams per year. Hudaibiyah troops were given 4,000 dirhams (Haikal, 2002). Second, allowance was given to family members of soldiers who died in a war, as narrated in the story of four sons of al-Khansa who died in the Qadisiyah war. Umar gave 800 dirhams per month for the family. Third, the family allowance is given directly to the wives and children of the mujahid as much as 100 dirhams. Fourth, food allowance is given specifically to high-ranking officials, for instance, Amr ibn Ash. Apart from salary, those officials received half a lamb, head, skin, legs and half a bucket of food. In another case, Umar paid the salaries of Ammar bin Yasir and Uthman bin Hunaif as land tax administrators and Ibn Mas'ud as judge and *baitul mal* officer equivalent to the price of a goat for each day (Fitmawati, 2019; Haikal, 2002).

#### 4.1.3 INCENTIVE COMPENSATION

Umar gave extra payment to employees or soldiers when financial surplus occurred. Umar once said "The amount of state finances is bountiful. I will give each soldier a ration of 4,000 dirhams. 10,000 dirhams for their travel expenses, 1,000 dirhams for their families at home, and 1,000 dirhams for their vehicles." In another situation, Umar provided different grants to soldiers. At one time, after the spoils of war were handed over at 1/5 to the share of Allah and His

Messenger, war leaders, and soldiers, some was still left. Therefore, Umar decided to give three additional parts to the cavalry and one to soldiers without vehicles (Ash-Shalabi, 2017). Umar provided incentives not only to motivate soldiers but also to give them their rights.

## 4.2 INDIRECT COMPENSATION

### 4.2.1 PROVISION OF FACILITIES

Facilities were provided to support employee work. Caliph Umar was very selective in this case; he paid serious attention to the facilities employees needed. This was done to cope with difficult economic conditions at the beginning of his caliphate and was also attributed to his asceticism. It was narrated that Umar visited one village one night and another the next time to ensure the condition of his people. Instead of using transportation facilities, however, he only walked and used a flame as lighting. He only used transport facility a few times when patrolling the Medina border. Many narrations said several governors, including Umair ibn Sa'ad walked from their assigned region to Medina to report the situation in their respective areas.

### 4.2.2 RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Umar did not frequently give any acknowledgment of employee or soldier work. He believed that a profession is a mandate that must be accounted for before Allah SWT. It was once narrated that as the Governor of Bahrain, Abu Hurairah achieved prosperity by breeding horses. Instead of acknowledgment, Umar confiscated all of his assets outside his salary as a government official (Murad, 2008). Umar's recognition was only for someone fighting for his faith or someone having broad knowledge. In the case of Abdullah ibn Hadzafah who was released from Roman prison for kissing the king's head, Umar ordered all *Muslims* to kiss Abdullah's head as an honor (Haikal 2002). Because of his respect for breadth of experience and knowledge, Umar said "You understand better than Umar" when Khalid ibn Walid proposed to establish a special *diwan* (office) to manage taxes, customs, and other tenancy.

### 4.2.3 PRAYING



Umar frequently prayed for *Muslim* employees and soldiers before and after they carried out their duties. Not only when gaining a victory in battle did Umar pray for someone he intended to, but also during their hardships. From a psychological perspective, the individuals who received prayer from Umar became happier, more motivated, and overcame sorrows. During *Hamdzan* war, a messenger from the *Muslim* army met Umar to deliver the news of victory. Umar prayed "May Allah always bless you all and may Samak and his brother help the Islamic troops." Many narrations stated that every time he went to war, Umar motivated the troops for the reward of martyrs, then every night he prayed for victory and glory of the troops.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Compensation has been practiced in the reign of Umar ibn Khattab by referring to three main guidelines: 1) the rules mentioned in the *Qur'ān* and instructions of Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*); 2) suggestions from senior friends either from their own thoughts or experiences learned from other regions; 3) Umar's *ijtihād* results after evaluating the situations. Using these three bases, two types of compensation were found: 1) direct compensation, such as salaries, benefits, and incentives; and 2) indirect compensation, such as providing facilities, recognition or awards, and prayers. The systems used were listing workers to receive wages, giving salaries based on type of work, the workload, difficulty level, regional considerations, and family responsibilities.

The rules, types, and sources of compensation organized in the era of Umar ibn Al-Khattab have shown good Islamic governance in the past. The limited experience and knowledge in a newly formed Islamic civilization were compensated using various ways, mainly based on revelation. Moreover, the basic principles of *Islām* firmly held by Umar were justice, humanity, and trust, peaceful impact and acceptance among employees. These are most likely the characteristics of Islam that differ from the Western model; in Islam everything must follow the rules of heaven, not human will.

This study has implications for *Islāmic* human resource management (HRM) in theory and practice. In some *Islāmic* higher education institutions, *Islāmic* HRM is a compulsory subject, which includes compensation. The book references, however, cover Western HRM instead of *Islāmic* HRM. This implies that academics are reluctant to initiate deep study of *Islāmic* compensation practices and prefer ready-made concepts. Branine and Pollard (2010) and Rahmat

(2018) noted that various organizations lack *Islāmic* knowledge management. In the organizational context, some *Islāmic* practices are considered as ritual only, where time off is given for prayers. Hence compensation practiced by Umar needs to be internalized from the logic, principles, and promoted values.

Overall, this study supported previous findings that salaries, benefits, incentives, facilities, rewards, and recognition are ideal forms of compensation (Kee, Ahmad, and Abdullah 2016; Kadir et al. 2019; Handoko, 1998). No research has stated that prayer is a non-material form of compensation used since early *Islām*. This is our initial finding that needs further examination. Previous studies have only found that prayer has a good impact on fellow workers (Vasconcelos 2010) and the organizational environment (Vasconcelos 2010; McCarty 2007). In Islam, prayer is the essence and existence of a *Muslim*. There is no peace in life before *Muslims* interact with their God. These interactions have far-reaching implications for life, including high motivation, respect, and responsibility at work. The value of prayer is experienced when what is asked for is granted by Allāh *'azza wa jalla*. Because of this, several verses state that Allāh *'azza wa jalla* commands *Muslims* to pray (see: QS al-A'raf: 55; QS al-Isra': 53) and there is a guarantee for all prayers to be answered (see: QS al-Baqarah; 186; QS al-Mu'min: 60; QS Ghafir: 60).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Most modern compensation models have practically been actualized during the reign of Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Even though he faced difficult financial situations, Umar still managed to implement good compensation methods. The methods applied were: 1) using payroll to minimize errors; 2) basing salary on workload, level of difficulty, regional considerations, and family burden; 3) periodic-based salary provision depending on compensation type, for example, salary given monthly and allowance yearly; and additional grants when the financial situation permitted. *Halal* salary methods were also enforced by 1) following the revelation in the *Qur'ān*; 2) following the *hadīths* of the Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*); 3) asking advice from shura experts from the muhajirin and ansar; and 4) using *ijtihad* for new cases having no existing legal regulation.

The distinctive finding from the compensation practices revealed in this study is prayer. Umar prayed for his employees to create a peaceful work atmosphere and as motivation for the hereafter. The concept of indirect compensation, especially in the West, does not accommodate this. Modern organizations need to consider using

prayer as non-material appreciation. This study also mentioned compensation aspects to be adapted to current organizational contexts. Western concepts long applied are not easily substituted, but organizations may internalize the values and terms of Islamic compensation.

Compensation practice by Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab has directly described the Islamic compensation system. But this paper has not examined the empirical significance of Umar's compensation mechanism in modern organizations. Future studies should consider the design and implementation stages. Second, we suggest that research examine whether prayer can bring workplace peace. The goal is to broaden knowledge of the concept of prayer as non-material compensation. Nonetheless, this research has initiated a study of compensation in early Islam for further exploration.

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