



DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL IN STUDENTS USING *SŪRAH YASIN*: A GROWTH- MINDSET PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to build the Islamic leadership potential of groups of students by getting them to watch videos related to *Sūrah Yasin* throughout the semester. Based on the work of Argyris, it is argued that developing leaders requires double-loop learning. Delahaye called this questioning “paradynamic assumptions”. In this study, internalising the paradynamic assumptions of the *Qur’ān* is called *Qur’ānic* thinking. To develop Muslim leaders, it is assumed that by studying *Sūrah Yasin*, one can develop *Qur’ānic* thinking. This will lead to a growth-mindset, new assumptions about the knowledge of leadership and a new behaviour. To test this assumption, an action research approach was used with two groups of students at the International Islamic University Malaysia. Participants were asked to watch videos related to *Sūrah Yasin* throughout the semester. *Sūrah Yasin* was used because it encapsulates *Qur’ānic* thinking. These two experiments seemed successful and the lessons related to the experiments are explored.

JEL Classification: M140

Key words: Qur’an, Leadership, Growth-mindset, Islamic management

1. INTRODUCTION

This study builds on the work of Fontaine, Ahmad and Oziev (2017) in the area of Islamic leadership. They concluded that Muslim leaders must be committed to developing the management skills and the spiritual intelligence of their subordinates. This requires that Muslim leaders have a growth-mindset with regard to religion

(Fontaine et al., 2017). Islamic leadership has been studied previously. For example, Ramli and Osman-Gani (2011) offer a comprehensive review of the literature. They note that the literature has moved from conventional theories of leadership toward transcendental leadership, ethical leadership, servant leadership and spiritual leadership. These new forms of leadership have the capacity to address organisational expectations and needs and to influence all facets of an individual's life (Ramli and Osman-Gani, 2011, 258). Such leadership often requires leaders to sacrifice themselves in the service of their collaborators (Ramil and Osman-Gani, 2011, 258).

Although the discussion on Islamic leadership is quite detailed, there are two gaps in the literature. First, very little is known on how to develop Muslim leaders. Second, the link between growth-mindset and Islamic leadership implied in Fontaine et al. (2017) needs to be clarified. With this in mind, the study attempts to develop the leadership potential of two groups of Muslim students. This approach builds on the Islamic personality project.

2. THE ISLAMIC PERSONALITY PROJECT

Since 2010, this author has developed the Islamic personality of his students by getting them to watch videos. About 2,500 students have been involved in this project and 75% report beneficial results. Generally, participants had developed their spiritual intelligence. They were measured empirically using a questionnaire to measure spiritual intelligence.

Students are required to watch one Islamic video every week throughout the semester. They are free to choose the topic. This freedom of choice is critical to success of the project. Every week, they write a one-page reflection. At the end of the semester, they submit a report. This data has been published and used to argue that it is easy to build an organizational culture that reflects Islamic values. It can be done at minimal cost because the material is freely available on the Internet (Fontaine et al., 2017). Nonetheless, there are three possible issues.

First, it requires individuals to work from home. For students, this is not a problem. They expect to complete assignments after class. However, this is more problematic for employees. Fontaine (2014) noted that the Islamic personality assignment would have to be linked to promotion¹. Second, studying an Islamic topic

alone means that an individual's learning might be distorted by cognitive biases (Fontaine et al., 2017). Third, the literature suggests that a healthy learning environment requires an open system to avoid religious extremism (Fontaine et al., 2017).

Thus, the Islamic personality project (which is individual and based on working from home) was adapted by turning it into a group project (which would be collective and completed at the workplace). This change is based on the following assumptions:

- a. Rather than linking the employees' spiritual development to a promotion, it could become part of subordinates' development activities. It could be a weekly event. Heads of department (HODs) would use their authority to gather their subordinates in a meeting room. Together, they would watch one Islamic video and then engage in a group discussion about the content. This has two benefits. Over time, individuals would better understand the *Qur'ān* and the group would develop a shared understanding of the *Qur'ān*.
- b. The incentive for the subordinates is that this activity becomes a break from their routine. The initial motivation would therefore be extrinsic. As they learn more about Islam, they would become interested in the content and the motivation would become intrinsic.
- c. The incentive for HODs is that, as leaders, they are responsible for developing the spiritual capital of their subordinates (Fontaine et al., 2017). Fontaine et al. (2017) highlighted that the motivation behind these efforts must be based on sincerity.

Such an approach could be used to develop the thinking required for Islamic leadership.

3. DEVELOPING LEADERS

There are two approaches to developing leaders. One option is to focus on behaviour. The second option is to focus on cognition. In particular, Argyris (2004) has criticized many approaches to developing leaders because the effort was on changing behaviour without changing the thinking behind the behaviour. Some researchers have reached a similar conclusion. Real leadership is

about changing the thinking of subordinates (Busche and Kassam, 2005).

Changes in superficial ways of thinking are of no real consequence. Real change requires a change in “paradynamic assumptions” (Delahaye, 2000). This is possible in two ways: 1) a person experiences a traumatic event – such as losing a loved one, having a car crash, or being fired; 2) a person deliberately thinks about his or her belief system and questions it. Certain tools – such as keeping a diary – can help someone establish and reflect on “causal and prescriptive assumptions” (Delahaye, 2000).

According to the Qur’an, there are only two paradynamic assumptions. Allah distinguishes between those who seek the worldly life and those who prefer the Hereafter (87:16-17). One could be Muslim and still seek this worldly life. Those Muslims who seek the Hereafter would be more likely to be willing to sacrifice themselves for others (i.e. one of the key characteristics of transcendental leadership). In an authentic narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

If anyone relieves a Muslim believer from one of the hardships of this worldly life, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. If anyone makes it easy for the one who is indebted to him (while finding it difficult to repay), Allah will make it easy for him in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, and if anyone conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah helps His slave as long as he helps his brother (Muslim).

For convenience, the term “*Qur’ānic* thinking” will be used for someone who adopts the paradynamic assumptions in the *Qur’ān*. It assumes that a careful study of the *Qur’ān* will lead to a growth-mindset.

4. GROWTH-MINDSET

Dweck (2008) found that individuals have either a fixed-mindset or a growth-mindset. Individuals with a fixed-mindset believe that their

intelligence and talent is fixed. They do not value effort and they see failure as a sign of their inadequacy. Individuals with a growth-mindset believe that intelligence and talent can be developed through hard work. They value effort and they learn from failure. Dweck (2008) looked at how the mindset of leaders affects the way they view their subordinates and determines their leadership style; she found that leaders with a growth-mindset will invest resources in talent development whether through training, coaching or mentoring. Leaders with a fixed-mindset will refuse to invest in such activities because they see it as a waste of resources. Table 1 summarises the difference between fixed-mindsets and growth-mindsets.

TABLE 1
Fixed-mindset versus Growth-mindset

	Fixed-mindset	Growth-mindset
Belief	People are born smart	People must work hard to become smart
Focus	Protecting your image by looking cool. Focusing on the result only	Progressing, focusing on the process
Effort	Effort is not necessary	Effort is critical
Challenge	No need to challenge oneself. Failure is always possible	Challenging oneself is essential to progress
Failure	Failure is a sign that you are not smart.	Failure is part of the learning process
Feedback	Feedback is ignored. It is seen as a threat.	Feedback allows you to grow

Source: Adapted from Dweck (2008)

Dweck (2008) reports that people with a fixed-mindsets feel entitled, get angry easily, are more susceptible to depression, are more susceptible to labels (positive or negative) and often seek revenge. For example, Dweck (2008, 38) explains the differences between how fixed-mindset students and growth-mindset students deal with depression. Students with a fixed-mindset had higher levels of depression because they would always think about their problems. They labelled themselves negatively and felt hopeless. By contrast, growth-mindset students also experienced depression. However, the more depressed they were, the more they took action to confront their problem. The worse they felt, the more determined they became

(Dweck, 2008, 38). Referring to leadership, Dweck (2008, 112) writes,

“Fixed-mindset leaders live in a world where some people are superior and some are inferior. They must repeatedly affirm that they are superior, and the company is simply a platform for that. They had a “gargantuan ego” that either hastened the demise of their company or kept it second-rate.”

Dweck (2008, 112) notes that fixed-mindset leaders want to be the “great genius” in their company. They want to be the only big fish so that when they compare themselves to those around them, they can feel a cut above the rest (Dweck, 2008, 112).

Individuals are not born with a fixed-mindset or a growth-mindset. They develop these mindsets through socialization and feedback. In numerous experiments, researchers prime participants to develop a fixed-mindset or a growth-mindset. From an Islamic perspective, the *Qur’ān* provides examples of people with a growth mindset with regard to religion and people with a fixed mindset with regard to religion (see Table 2).

The case of people like such as Abu Sufyan and Khalid Ibn Walid are interesting. One presumes that they started with a fixed-mindset. They then concluded that the Prophet (peace be upon him) could only be a real prophet. When one reads the *Qur’ān*, one finds vocabulary that links faith to making effort. For example, when describing the people entering Paradise, Allah says,

With their effort [they are] satisfied (88:09)

[And it will be said], "Indeed, this is for you a reward, and your effort has been appreciated." (76:22)

Indeed, the Hour is coming - I almost conceal it - so that every soul may be recompensed according to that for which it strives. (20:15)

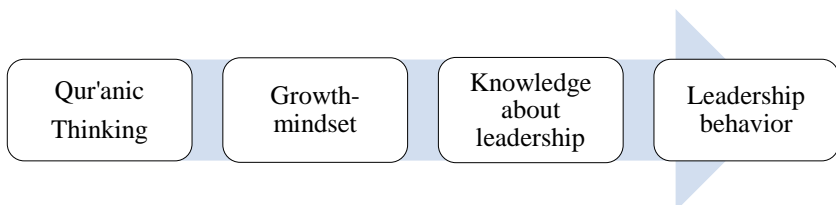
And [mention] when Moses said to his servant, "I will not cease [traveling] until I reach the junction of the two seas or continue for a long period. (18:60)

TABLE 2
Mindsets in the *Qur'ān*

Leaders	Mindset	Description
Iblis	Fixed	Knows a lot about Allah but refused to learn out of arrogance. Blame others for his mistakes
Fir'awn	Fixed	Ignorant about Allah and refuses to learn out of arrogance. Blames others for his mistakes
Qarun	Fixed	Refuses to listen to the advice of the wiser people among Bani Israel
Abu Lahab	Fixed	Secretly believed in the Messenger but refused to learn. Blame others for their mistakes
Abu Sufyan	Fixed and then growth	Started with a fixed mindset. Like Abu Lahab, he refused to accept the Prophet (peace be upon him). But as the truth of the Prophet's message became evident, he changed his mind in the 8 th year.
Followers entering Hell	Fixed	Blame their leaders for misleading them.
The prophets	Growth	Learn Islam and teach it to their followers. Improve their <i>taqwa</i> by reflecting on existing social problems
Righteous believers	Growth	Sincere in wanting to learn. Some knew little. Others knew a lot. Improve their <i>taqwa</i> by reflecting on existing social problems

One notices how prophets and believers make effort, overcome challenges, and experience failure repeatedly. For example, the word *sa'a* (the letters sin 'ayn ya) means striving, making effort, or running. It is generally used to describe believers in this life and the next. When one ponders over the *Qur'ān*, one cannot but develop a growth-mindset. Thus, Figure 1 is derived.

FIGURE 1
Qur'anic thinking, Growth-Mindset and Leadership



5. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was used. The aim is to get students to develop their *Qur'ānic* thinking in order to enhance their thinking about Islamic leadership. To obtain the essence of *Qur'ānic* thinking, students were asked to reflect on *Sūrah Yasin* in some depth. *Sūrah Yasin* was used because most Muslims are familiar with this *sūrah*, and most of the key concepts in the *Qur'ān* can be found in it. The advantage of this *Sūrah* is that much of the information is summarised. Some of these *āyat* have an intellectual appeal while others have a spiritual appeal. The following procedure was used:

- a. Students were informed of the goals of the class. In particular, the aim was to develop their leadership skills. This was operationally defined as “the ability to develop subordinates.” These skills would be developed in class using project-based learning (PBL). During the PBL sessions, students would watch a series of videos about *Sūrah Yasin* with their instructor. They would then discuss the content in small groups and produce a mind-map that reflects the group’s shared understanding. The mind-map serves two purposes. It helps participants become active learners (i.e. they must watch the video, take notes, and then discuss in groups).
- b. Using the principle of action research, the author repeated the simulation twice. The lessons learned during the first cycle would be transferred to the second cycle.
- c. Nouman Ali Khan’s series of 12 videos on *Sūrah Yasin* was used (see Appendix).

6. DESCRIPTION OF *SŪRAH YASIN*

Table 3 shows the broad ideas in the *sūrah*. They encapsulate *Qur'ānic* thinking which includes two fundamental points: why does one believe and what does one believe.

With regard to why one believes, Allah proposes three possibilities. One can reflect on the *Qur'ān* itself, one can reflect about history or one can reflect about the creation around us. These three ways of coming to the truth are repeated throughout the *Qur'ān*. For example, Allah says,

“Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.” (4:82)

Many *sūrah*s are dedicated to reviewing the history of previous nations. With regard to the creation, many *sūrah*s are dedicated to describing the miracles of creation, whether at the macro-level (the creation of heaven and earth) or at the micro-level (the creation of human beings).

Sūrah Yasin's main themes are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Main Themes in *Sūrah Ya-Sin* According to Khan (2015)

Part	Name	Āyat	Main Ideas
1	Lessons from Revelation	1 to 12	No human being could have revealed such a perfect book. It is wise, relevant, and perfectly organized. This man is on a mission, sent by someone else. His perfect character testifies that he is on a straight path. His mission is to guide a nation that is asleep (<i>ghafilon</i>). There are three ways to find the truth about the purpose of life: observing creation, thinking about history and thinking about revelation.
2	Lesson from history	13 to 32	Three messengers are sent to the town. They are rejected because people do not like people of authority (root-cause of disbelief). The messengers' only role is to deliver clear and effective communication that appeals to the heart and the intellect. Disbelievers respond with superstition, threats and violence. A man comes running from the far end of the city saying “My people, follow the messengers”. Allah wants to see effort and sincerity. Calling to Islam is based on love and concern for all. It is about inviting the people to follow the prophets and to say the truth even though it will get you into trouble. Sincerity towards his people. Love of one's people is a sign of the people of Paradise. It is a tragedy that people do not learn from history.

TABLE 3 (continued)

Part	Name	Āyat	Main Ideas
3	Lessons from creation	33 to 44	Analogy of the dead earth, rain falls and fruits grow. Every physical reality in the <i>Qur'ān</i> is connected to a spiritual reality. Everything created points to a Creator. Everything needs someone else. Only Allah is in need of no one. The Prophet is compared to the sun and the companions are compared to the moon. They complement one another. Switch to reflecting on people who send their children on ships. If Allah had wanted, He would have drowned them. Human beings are insignificant to Allah.
4	People who refuse to think	45 to 48	They are asked why they do not protect themselves and spend from what Allah has given them. They give an obnoxious answer and ask, “when is this promise coming?”
5	Paradise and Hell	49 to 68	Three stages of destruction: 1) destruction of a nation, 2) Judgment Day and 3) Hellfire. One single explosion. People will get out from their graves. They ask, “Who woke us up?”. They will say, “It is ar-Rahman” – they heard the message and remembered it on the Day of Judgment. Nobody will be dealt with unjustly. Switch to the people of Paradise. They will be busy in happy activities. Switch back to the Day of Judgment. Final speech from Allah to the disbelievers, “Did I not order you not to worship Satan?” Satan’s job is to stop people from thinking about their purpose in life.
6	Concluding	69 to 83	Review of all previous concepts. In conclusion, everything has been created in complementary groups (<i>azwaj</i>). Only Allah is unique.

The Quraish still refused the truth. They became a “people who refused to think”. Allah says, “And he already led astray from among you much of creation, so did you not use your reason” (36:62). In this *āyah*, Allah criticises them for not using their reason. The word reason (*‘aqal*) indicates people who control their emotions. People with *‘aqal* think about their purpose in life by reflecting on revelation, history and the world. Individuals without *‘aqal* are emotional so they cannot think clearly about their purpose in life. In another *āyah*, Allah says,

And they will say, "If only we had been listening or reasoning, we would not be among the companions of the Blaze. (67:10)

Allah explains why they refused to think in this *sūrah*. The Quraish are described as *ghafil* (heedless, asleep). This word indicates people who are unsure of their purpose in life. Elsewhere Allah says, "They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they, of the Hereafter, are unaware" (30:7). The Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged Muslims to think about death to prepare themselves for meeting Allah in the Hereafter. In a good narration, Ibn Umar said:

I was with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and a man from among the Ansar came to him and greeted the Prophet (peace be upon him) with Salam. Then he said: 'O Messenger of Allah, which of the believers is best?' He said: 'He who has the best manners among them.' He said: 'Which of them is wisest?' He said: 'The one who remembers death the most and is best in preparing for it. Those are the wisest (Ibn Majah).

Having explained how people can come to the truth and why they should think, Allah then explains the ultimate target – Paradise and Hell. Anyone who forgets Paradise and Hell is *ghafil*. Believing in it is not enough. With regard to the Hereafter, certainty (*yaqin*) is necessary. Allah says:

And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith]. (2:04)

Anyone that knows about growth-mindset and fixed-mindset will notice that the believers are described with a growth-mindset while disbelievers are described with a fixed-mindset.

As a summary, this *sūrah* is a good example of *Qur'anic* thinking. Its logical progression – think about revelation, think about history, think about creation, people who refuse to think enter Hell; the description of Paradise and Hell makes it easy to understand and remember. *Qur'anic* thinking should naturally lead readers to

develop a growth-mindset. Table 4 maps *Sūrah Yasin* with the main theories of leadership.

TABLE 4
Leadership Theories and Resurrection

Theories of Leadership	Leaders who are unaware of Resurrection	Leaders who are aware of Resurrection
Trait Theories	Leaders generally use their knowledge and skills to further their personal or corporate agenda only.	Leaders use their knowledge and skills to further an organisational agenda that is aligned to a social agenda. They are driven by their awareness of the Day of Judgment.
Behavioural theories	Leaders use behavioural strategies to increase profitability	Leaders use behavioural strategies to encourage employees to do good for the organisation and for the community. They are driven by their awareness of the Day of Judgment.
Power-Influence Theories	Leaders use their influence to promote their agenda or that of their friends	Leaders use their influence to promote a commercial agenda and a social agenda that will please Allah on the Day of Judgment.
Contingency Theories	Leaders use contingency theories to get the most out of existing resources	Leaders use contingency theories to achieve their overall vision of leaving a legacy for the Day of Judgment.
Integrative Theories (include transaction, charismatic and trans-formational theories)	Leaders use appropriate strategies (i.e. transaction, charismatic or trans-formational) to pursue the organization's goals	Leaders use appropriate strategies (i.e. transaction, charismatic or transformational) to pursue the organisation's commercial and social goals. They are driven by their awareness of the Day of Judgment.

Table 4 highlights the importance of believing in Resurrection. It is a belief that has very profound repercussions in the

life of Muslims and how they prepare themselves for the next life (al-Ashqar, 2003). According to www.corpusquran.com, the word “hereafter” (*akhira*) is repeated 155 times in the Qur’an. The expression “the last Day” (*al yaum al akhir*) is repeated 69 times. The word “the Standing” (*qiyamah*) is repeated 70 times. Without a sound appreciation for the Hereafter, Muslims will be *ghafil*. A key aspect of *Qur’anic* thinking is to develop absolute certainty in the Day of Judgment.

7. THE FIRST ROUND OF DATA COLLECTION

This first round of data collection lasted from September 2016 to December 2016 and 60 students took part. They were informed of the research. Participants spent 6 weeks watching the 12 videos. In each session, a video was shown (about 20 to 30 minutes) and the participants would work in small groups to discuss and develop a mind-map of each video. These discussions lasted about 30 to 40 minutes. The instructor would visit each of the small groups to stimulate critical thinking. A research assistant collected data on the group and used the results in her master thesis (Parvin, 2017). The results were that,

- a. Participants developed a good understanding of each video. They developed a shared understanding that is critical for leaders wanting to develop their subordinates.
- b. This shared understanding led to a significant increase in the level of trust between team members.
- c. This shared understanding helped them better understand the management and leadership concepts discussed in the second half of the course based on Fontaine (2016).
- d. There was less increase in the individual level of spirituality that this author is used to with the Islamic personality project mentioned above.

The experiment demonstrates that this approach could be used in the workplace as long as the head of department was committed to gathering his subordinates in a meeting room once a week for one hour. At the same time, the changes observed seemed less significant compared to the changes during the Islamic personality project.

8. LEARNING FROM THE FIRST ROUND

In January 2017, this author attended a workshop organised by Akademi Sinergi Ikhlas. The workshop was based on the *āyah*, “This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.” (38:29). In this *āyah*, reflecting (*yaddabburu*) is plural but being reminded (*layatazakkara*) is singular. The training emphasized that this *āyah* encourages Muslims to learn about the *Qur’ān* collectively and encourages them to internalise its lessons individually.

To promote reflection, Fontaine (2015) found that diaries enable learners to get past cognitive biases. Without a diary, individuals simply forget what happens to them. Once they keep a diary, they are collecting data on themselves and they can identify patterns of dysfunctional thoughts and behaviour. Fontaine (2015) had students use diaries to keep track of how many people break promises at work. After several weeks, one student reported that she had become aware that she was the one breaking most of the promises. She became more careful in making promises and she worked harder at keeping them. By the end of the semester, she reported a significant improvement in her relationships with her co-workers. Without a diary, such insights would be impossible (Fontaine, 2015). The procedure was modified slightly so that participants had to watch the videos in class and then reflect about the lessons at home by completing a diary.

9. THE SECOND ROUND OF DATA COLLECTION

In the second round, from February 2017 to May 2017, 25 students took part in the experiment. The normal procedure was followed. Additionally, they kept a weekly diary of their reflections; hence, the output was both collective (mind-maps in class) and personal (diary at home).

After two weeks, they started watching the first and second videos. At the end of the second video, Khan touched upon the concept of being unaware. Wanting to emphasise this point, a video from Hamza Yusuf that explains the concept of spiritual and psychological death was shown (Yusuf, 2011) highlighting that this

happens when individuals live a routine life in which they are not fully engaged. After watching the video, one student said, “our prayers become like routine.” Most students agreed with that statement. It is probable that when they thought more about the deeper meaning of the *Qur’ān*, religious life would no longer seem routine.

To help the students with their diaries, an extra class was scheduled in week five just to identify the questions that would help them with their reflections. Prior to this session, they focused on learning. They were asking questions such as “what did this scholar say about this āyah?” These are the kinds of questions that are necessary to do well in exams. After the session, they were encouraged to ask questions like, “how is this relevant to me?” These are the sort of questions to develop oneself. This session seemed to help them tremendously.

In the first five weeks, the classes progressed well but students were generally passive as they adjusted to a new way of learning. By the sixth week, the class became more active. Rather than passively watching the videos, the students expressed some personal and insightful questions. In this author’s notes after one session, he wrote “Good insightful questions from Safuwan and the gang. They are getting to the heart of the matter.” Safuwan (one of the students) emerged as the informal leader of the class. Once he started asking insightful questions, other students followed. Apart from the interaction in class, students sometimes gave their feedback outside of class.

One student approached the author when he was having lunch. She told him that she had often read that the Companions would study 10 *āyat* and they would not move on until they had implemented them. She tried doing this and found it was virtually impossible. She felt guilty about it. She said that her favourite video was the 10th video. In it, Khan explains that the purpose of the *Qur’ān* is not to implement every *āyah* but to change our attitude and our thinking. There are many *āyat* in the *Qur’ān* that cannot be implemented but all of them can change our attitude. She felt incredibly relieved to know this. Her comment echoes the work of Benslama (2016), a psychiatrist working in France. He specialises in helping Muslims accused of committing acts of terrorism. He writes that many young Muslims believe that they must be perfect to enter Paradise. Extremist groups take advantage of this and use the argument, “You have to be perfect to enter Paradise and yet you are

very weak. Unless you commit yourself to jihad, you are bound to go to Hell". Benslama (2016) warns parents and educators of the dangers of expecting perfection in religion. This student's comment echoed a key lesson from the Islamic Personality project, namely that every learner has different concerns and one cannot predict who will benefit from which video and in what manner. Freedom of choice is necessary to make the exercise of watching videos relevant to the learner.

Reviewing his notes, the author wants to stress that *Qur'ānic* thinking is linked intimately with a reflection on the reality of death. The video from Hamza Yusuf is a great resource for anyone wanting to develop *Qur'ānic* thinking among his or her students.

10. LEARNING FROM THE SECOND ROUND

After completing the second round of data collection, three main lessons were learned. First, there is a need to prime students to open their minds before watching videos about *Sūrah Yasin*. This can be done in a variety of ways such as watching videos introducing the linguistic miracles of the *Qur'ān*. Second, students should be introduced to the distinction between growth-mindset and fixed-mindset so that identifying mindsets can become part of the group discussions and individual reflections. Lastly, it is very beneficial to link any discussion about the *Qur'ān* with an in-depth discussion about death. Since these experiments were conducted, the author regularly asks his students to read Kübler-Ross's "Death and Dying".

11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In previous studies, a questionnaire measuring spiritual intelligence was distributed at the beginning of the semester and then at the end of the semester (Fontaine and Ahmad, 2013). Such empirical data is a better approach to measuring the effectiveness of the intervention than relying on qualitative data. Such an approach might be used in future research.

12. DISCUSSION

The discussion will focus on four points.

First, there is still a discussion in the literature as to what constitutes Islamic leadership. It is a delicate point because, as

scholars are not exactly sure what it is, it is difficult to claim that one has developed it among students. Generally, Islamic leadership requires integrity, ethics, and a concern for others that goes beyond the narrow scope of work. Muslim leaders should want to develop the spiritual intelligence of their subordinates. As Fontaine et al. (2017) have argued, watching Islamic videos on a weekly basis is an efficient and cost-effective way to develop subordinates. This study confirms that view.

Second, the links established in Figure 1 (*Qur'ānic* thinking leads to growth-mindset, which in turn leads to knowledge of leadership) is critical but needs to be tested empirically. Certainly, Figure 1 implies that Muslims who have a fixed-mindset cannot become good Islamic leaders. However, if one has a growth-mindset but has not been exposed to *Qur'ānic* thinking, one is probably not going to become a good Islamic leader.

Third, changing paradynamic assumptions (Delayahe, 2000) takes time. In this study, the groups of students were artificially constrained by the semester system. In a working environment, heads of departments have more time to develop their leaders.

TABLE 5
Meccan and Madinan Revelation

	Meccan Revelation	Madinan Revelation
Quantity	2/3 of the <i>Qur'ān</i>	1/3 of the <i>Qur'ān</i>
Unit of analysis	Individual	Collective
Social change	Bottom-up	Top-down
Law	Moral rules	Islamic law
Main themes	Individuals must be decent. They must fight for social justice. No Islamic law revealed yet. Emphasis on <i>tawhid</i> in general and the Day of Judgment in particular. They must think for themselves and break away from their group. Prepare the Muslims for migration.	Decent individuals must form a community of believers. They must adhere to ethics of Islam. Emphasis on <i>tawhid</i> in general and the need to follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) in particular. Once they have internalised Islamic ethics, they must follow Islamic law.
Typical <i>sūrah</i>	<i>Sūrah Yasin</i>	<i>Sūrah al-Baqarah</i>

Lastly, the argument was made that *Sūrah Yasin* is a good proxy for *Qur'anic* thinking. Yet, one must remember that it is part of Meccan revelation (which accounts for about two-thirds of the *Qur'an*). However, it is not necessarily representative of Madinan revelation. As Table 5 shows, Meccan revelation focuses on moral rules. These are personal rules that cannot be enforced in a court of law (e.g. be kind to parents, do not be arrogant, respect other people, et cetera). Madinan revelation emphasises Islamic law that can be enforced in a court of law.

Sūrah Yasin is an excellent foundation for developing *Qur'anic* thinking, a growth-mindset, and Islamic leaders. It is however necessary for other researchers to replicate this study and share their findings.

13. CONCLUSION

This section will be divided into two parts: a review of the logic of the study and a review of the contribution of the study.

The leadership literature is vast so that making sense of it can be quite difficult. Argyris (2004) says that two generic approaches are possible. One is to change behaviour without trying to change thinking. The second approach is to change thinking. This is, in fact, the entire purpose of the *Qur'an*. The *Qur'an* helps people to think about revelation, history, the creation around them, and their purpose in life. When they do so, they should realize that they have been created for a noble purpose and they should obey Allah – not just inside the mosque, but also at the workplace. When Muslims develop *Qur'anic* thinking, they would naturally want to contribute to society and take on positions of leadership.

The contribution of this study is two-fold. First it demonstrates that watching Islamic videos in small groups and getting students to keep diaries can be a good way of developing the leadership potential of Muslim students. It is not a guarantee, but it does get them thinking about the logic in the *Qur'an* and the purpose of their creation. It also makes them think about the reality of death and Resurrection. In addition, it should develop their growth-mindset. The beauty of *Sūrah Yasin* is that the flow of ideas is so logical that the conclusion is almost self-evident. The second contribution is to introduce the idea of growth-mindsets into the discussion on Islamic leadership. Although numerous studies have looked at Islamic leadership, this is the first study that links *Qur'anic*

thinking to growth- mindset and then to Islamic leadership. Table 2 sought to justify this claim by comparing different characters in the *Qur'ān*. A number of *āyat* were quoted to reinforce this claim. However, this link has to be confirmed by other researchers but it is potentially very important. The importance of this finding is two-fold. First, it provides a better understanding of Islamic leadership by linking it to the work of Dweck and her colleagues. Second, it suggests that a discussion on mindsets could help Muslims gain new insights into the *Qur'ān*.

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ENDNOTES

1. In January 2018, the author met Mr. Alec Tan, the manager responsible for developing human capital at Guardian Malaysia. We discussed this problem and he reported that Guardian uses on-line material to develop their staff. Completing certain modules are a pre-requisite for promotion.

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APPENDIX 1

List of Videos

The list of videos that were shown in class is presented below.

No	Title	Link
1	The Qur'an is Hakeem	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-vDB94Axwg
2	A Perfect Messenger	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oc3nhOD5los
3	The Truth Has Come	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Uadr3C5k9Q
4	The Messengers	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB-dWt1aW0E
5	Clear and effective Speech	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmOitxcLhBA
6	The Story of a Man	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJW55LhDWJQ
7	A True Believer	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKUiZQkdiS0
8	Allah is Self-Sufficient	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwTd1PErmNc
9	Future Generations	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zPr2QcN0xQ
10	People Who Refuse to Think	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybgPBs pm594
11	People of Jannah	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBm_3FsOCiQ
12	The Conclusion	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7h_GggvGaCk