INVITED ARTICLE

PROPOSED RESEARCH AGENDA IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGEMENT STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a modest attempt to delineate some directions for research in the emerging field of Islamic perspectives to management studies. A case is built up initially by establishing that such research is scanty and then the reasons for scholarly disinterest and the measures possible to deal it with are discussed. The central theme of the paper is built on a typology of approaches. These four approaches have been expressed in colloquial terms as the "dig the gold", "chinks in the armor", "delve deeper", and the "hands-on" approaches. Simultaneously, four directions of research are identified in terms of the environment, organization, relationship of the organization to the environment, and the effective management of organizations. A research framework is evolved on the basis of these four directions. When the research framework is meshed with the research approaches, a broad canvas for research emerges which then leads to the identification of research issues. The paper proceeds to propose certain other aspects for research agenda in terms of the levels of analyses, choice of research design, research methods and time frame.

JEL classification: M10, Z12

Key words: Islamic perspective; Research in management studies, Islamization of knowledge.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic perspectives on management studies are an emerging field of enquiry in academia. A review of the existing literature on the subject indicates that it is a neglected and relatively unexplored area for research work. A significant departure from the conventional research in management studies takes place when Islamic perspectives are described and discussed on the basis of the revealed sources of Islamic knowledge considering them as valid for the purpose of research. Besides these, there is potential for applying conventional research methodology to generate significant and meaningful perspectives from Islamic sources.

This paper looks at the significant developments taking place in research on issues related to Islamic perspectives on management studies and attempts to identify some specific challenges in this emerging field of inquiry. I have tried to organize my ideas around significant research themes and incorporate them into a broad research agenda in the field of Islamic perspectives on management studies. The paper, therefore, is an account not only of a proposed agenda incorporating research themes but also suggests the choice of research design, levels of analyses, methodologies and the time frame for research.

The purpose of this paper is to crystallize my own thinking on the issue and to share it with, and motivate fellow academicians to focus their research energies, coupled with their religious and spiritual fervor, into time-bound purposeful research activities that may provide them the satisfaction of venturing into a field of inquiry the time for which seems to have arrived.

I start with a critical glance at the existing literature aimed at identifying the tenor of efforts at present. By way of a prologue to the paper, the question of why research in the area has not attracted the attention of academicians and what the probable causes could be is followed by a brief section on what measures could be undertaken to deal with this lack of interest. The core of the paper, related to the contours of a research agenda, follows this prologue.

The proposed research agenda is built around ten sub-themes as below.

- Statement of a research mission
- Research objectives

- Research priorities
- Research framework
- Fusion of research priorities and research framework
- Research issues
- Levels of analyses
- Choice of research design
- Research methods
- Time frame

2. A CRITICAL GLANCE AT THE EXISTING LITERATURE

Annexure 1 provides a glance at some works conducted in the area of Islamic perspectives on management studies. My criticism is limited to the publications available in English; therefore, it is quite likely that it ignores some important contributions that have been made in languages other than English. But here there is some consolation: first, that it can safely be assumed that since management studies are widely taught and practiced in the English language around the world, the research would also be done in the same language and secondly, the research contributions reported in English draw from sources in other languages, mainly Arabic, thereby incorporating the essence of what there is in non-English sources.

Geographical spread: The publishers of books and edited books on Islamic perspectives on management studies are mostly in the Middle East, South Asia, South-East Asia and the UK. The journals publishing in the area are American, British, Indian, Pakistani, and Saudi Arabian. The scholars contributing to the area mainly come from India, Malaysia, Middle Eastern countries, North Africa, Pakistan, the UK and the US.

Chronological development: It is noted that the decade of the 1980s is the starting point of works in the area of Islamic perspectives on management studies except for a very few studies reported in the 1970s. Not many works are reported during the decade of 1980s either. Among them we have Ayatollah Nasir Makarim Shirazi's (1980) article on the management and leadership in the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abul-Fazl Ezzati's (1982) work on the concept of leadership in Islam.

The appearance of works in the 1980s is significant from the point of view of its timing. The decade of 1980s saw a significant movement in the Islamization of knowledge project around the world. There were

conferences and seminars organized on the Islamization of management and business administration subject and occasionally one observes some articles and papers appearing in journals related to this issue. Another observation I can make is that the attempt to Islamize management studies is a part of a trend that is observed elsewhere in management studies. The 1980s is also the decade in which initial skepticism begins to appear with American perspectives on management studies. This is also the time when Americans themselves start taking a critical look at their own perspectives. Possibly this is catalyzed by the stiff competition posed by the Japanese manufacturers to the US firms. Americans start taking an interest and a whole genre of studies later to be termed as 'Japanese management' style or concepts appear. On the other hand, there is increasing awareness in non-Western cultures of their own heritage. Finding that American management perspectives are not invincible in terms of their practical applicability and are liable to fail or to address inadequately the issues in managing, scholars in Chinese and Indian-Hindu cultures, for instance, too started a search for knowledge and wisdom in their own backyard. Chinese mine the Buddhist and Confucian sources while Indians are involved in searching for management perspectives drawn from the Hindu psycho-philosophical thought. Islamic perspectives on management studies could, therefore, be seen as a part of a worldwide trend of these cultures going back to their roots which began with the disenchantment with the Western perspectives.

The 1990s see increasing appearances of the reported works. The publication, in 1995, of the *Islamic Principles of Business Organisation and Management* edited by F. R. Faridi is the reported proceedings of a Conference in India on the subject. This follows a seminar on contemporary business towards the development of Islamic Business Management held in September 1987 in Malaysia the proceedings of which are also available. The conferences of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) also feature occasionally a contribution in the area. For instance, the AMSS Seminar on Organizational Behavior in 1988 is a precursor to several others. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* that started appearing in 1984, later – in the 1990s – carried papers and research notes on the subject of Islamic perspectives on management issues more frequently.

The decade of 2000 is disappointing as compared to the 1990s, as the works are less frequently reported. But some of the papers published

and research at the Ph.D. level appear to be focusing increasingly on the hard issues in management. This is a welcome development and could be a sign of early maturity at research level. A fine attempt is the work of Azaddin Salem Khalifa (2001) that is pioneering in nature and could be characterized as the first-of-a-kind where the subject of management is treated from the perspective of the fundamentals of Islamic revealed knowledge rather than taking conventional management studies as the starting point.

On the nature of issues dealt with in the publications during the two decades, 1980-2000, the subjects of ethics and values, organizational behavior, and human resource management dominate the scene. The hard issues are dealt with; for instance, by S. Shaukat Ali's (1996) work on the foundation for communication in the *Qur'Ɛn* and *Sunnah* and Syed Abdul Hamid al-Junaid and Syed Aziz Anwar's (2000) exploration into the behavioral science foundations for Organization Development. Earlier, Mawddur Rahman and Muhammad al-Buraey (1992) make a significant contribution with their work on organizational controls and performance evaluation. Later works show a movement towards the quantitative aspects of management, an example of which could be the work of Abul Hasan Muhamad Sadeq and A. Khaliq bin Mohd Israil, which is in the area of contemporary interest of quality management.

As one can observe, the emphasis during the two decades 1980-2000 is overwhelmingly on the soft side of management studies with fewer contributions coming to the hard issues. This is understandable as the contemplation on soft issues leads naturally to their application in the area of hard issues in managing.

The emphasis on the soft side of management means focusing on matters related to human issues in the management of organization as contrasted to issues related to manufacturing, technology and systems that are termed the hard side of management. Here again, I observe the focus on the soft side as part of a global trend. The emphasis on the soft side in management emerges quite early during the post-Taylorism period with the impact of the Hawthorne studies of the 1930s. However, it takes about half a century to emerge as a significant trend distracted, as it is, by the emergence of the management science, operations research, and the general systems theory during the post-World-War-II period. The business environment during the 1980s is sufficiently chastened by the 1973-oil-shock and the emergence of Japan as a

formidable competitor in the global economy. Later, the breakup of the Soviet Union, the re-emergence of old Europe in the form of the European Union, and the re-unification of Germany are significant milestones in shaping the global business environment during the 1980s and 1990s. American management seems to have been shaken by the collective impact and responds by increasingly absorbing the softer issues in its academic endeavors in management studies. No wonder, if one takes even a casual glance at management studies texts during the 1960s and compares them with the present texts one can easily spot the trend of an increasing focus on the cultural and social issues entering the management lexicon. Globalization and liberalization aid further, during the 1990s and beyond, in making American management perspectives less chauvinistic and more outward looking than in the past. This is, in part, motivated by the understanding that the American managers in the multinational corporations (MNCs) can now ill afford to ignore the cultural context of the countries in which their subsidiaries operate. For instance, texts in international business and management rarely fail to advise the MNC manager to be sensitive to the culture and society of the country they operate in.

Recapitulating my observations, I can say with a reasonable degree of confidence that:

- American management has been demonstrated to have feet of clay to some extent;
- American managers see some sense in being sensitive to other cultures;
- People in other cultures start getting disenchanted with American hegemony over management studies; and
- Simultaneously, they feel the need to find some nuggets of wisdom in their own backyard.

All these collectively are the trends that I observe in the present scenario related to management studies. These observations motivate me to conclude that the time for looking more intensely at management studies from the Islamic perspective has arrived.

Methodologies adopted: The most common methodology followed in a majority of embryonic works is something like this:

- A subject is chosen, for instance, ethics and values.

- Contributions of conventional scholars are quoted.
- Some relevant *āyāt* and *aḥādīth* from the revealed knowledge base are identified.
- These *āyāt* and *aḥādīth* are discussed in the light of the conventional disciplines.
- Conclusions are drawn that the Islamic principles can be applied in the conventional context.
- Suggestions are made to imbibe the Islamic principles. Less effort seems to be taken to demonstrate the way they should be applied in the organizations.

Some works, like those of Naim Nusair (1985), Ibn Omer Mohamed Sharfuddin (1987) and Fayaz Ahmad (1995), concentrate on an informed criticism of the contemporary theories. Here a sensible approach of relating the differences to the context is ascribed as the reason for the theories being not relevant to the context prevailing in Muslim countries. One notices a similarity here with the approach that scholars in developing countries are adopting to identify those existing theories, or parts of them, that are not relevant to the context. In fact, this trend is seen in some of the works of the Western scholars too where, for instance, in the subjects of international management and business, they have attempted to describe the differing contexts and exhorted Anglo-Saxon managers to be sensitive to conditions prevailing in developing countries when they work there.

A meaningful genre of work is exemplified by the work of Muzaffar A. Shaikh (1988) in which a comparison of the ethics of decision-making is made in the Islamic and Western environments offering the possibility of conducting comparative appraisals. I believe that this could be a meaningful approach to work with and, therefore, I incorporate it as one of the approaches I suggest later in this paper.

Doctoral dissertations are reported during the decades of the 1980s as well as the 1990s. While there are very few doctoral research works that could be considered as directly related to Islamic perspectives on management studies such as that of Ibnomar Mohamed Sharafeldin (1987) on Islamic perspectives on human resource management, there are works that explore managerial issues in Islamic countries and Islamic organizations. An example of the former is the study on marketing strategies in Egypt by Mohammed Mohammed Gahein (1986) while the latter is illustrated by a study such as the one by Abdul Rahim

Abdul Rahman (1998) of the accounting practices in Malaysian Islamic organizations. There are other works in areas such as Islamic economics and Islamic banking that are of indirect or peripheral significance to Islamic perspectives on management studies. An illustrative list of the doctoral dissertations that, in my opinion, have relevance to Islamic perspectives on management studies appears at the end of this paper.

A popular trend appeared in some works earlier where existing theories or postulates in conventional management are taken and then the revealed Islamic knowledge is applied to them. The end result is to prove that the conventional theory or postulate is nothing new and it was already there in the Islamic realm. I am of the opinion that while such approaches are justifiable, they do not really contribute much that is meaningful. The reason is that these studies hardly add to an understanding of Islamic perspectives except to provide satisfaction and reassurance to Muslims that the Islamic principles of nearly 1500-years ago are as contemporary as the conventional theories of a hundred or less years. If this satisfaction could lead to urgency for intellectual inquiry into the applicability of Islamic perspectives then this approach could have some use, otherwise it could be just a diversion from what should actually be done.

What actually needs to be done is to move deeper and wider into the terrain of managerial issues. Deeper introspection would require a more philosophic and intellectual approach to analyzing the basic premises and paradigms. Wider movement would require covering a larger number of varied issues particularly related to the operational aspects of management. In this manner, a dual approach of writing philosophical essays delving deeper into the significance of the Islamic revealed knowledge as well as addressing the gaps and inadequacies in the conventional management literature should be a healthy trend. A wider sweep of research in Islamic perspectives on management studies should serve to demonstrate the practical applicability of the approaches that deeper retrospection unravels.

3. PROBABLE CAUSES OF DISINTEREST AMONG SCHOLARS

The survey of the existing literature points to apathy among scholars for research into the Islamic perspectives on management studies. There might be several probable causes. I can think of these at present:

- Management is a discipline of study and research that has been promoted and researched largely by the Americans and to some extent by the Europeans. The issues in research leading to theory building have come from a cultural context that is mainly Anglo-Saxon and Judeo-Christian.

- Almost all work in Islamic studies done in the US, UK and other European countries are in the area of religion and not conventional university subjects. For instance, several universities in the Western countries have departments and centers of specialized work in Islamic studies.

- Orientalism has made a valuable, and often a critical, contribution to the understanding of Islam in non-Islamic contexts but there is no evidence of an orientalist being interested in management studies. Just as Orientalism came as a response to the need of Western scholars to understand Islam, orientalists could be interested in Islamic perspectives on management studies provided Muslim scholars take the lead.

- Quite a few academicians in developing countries are educated and trained in the US, UK, Australia or New Zealand. These countries do not have research priorities in Islamic disciplines. Consequently, the Muslim students who visit the developed countries for education, research, and training pursue their work in conventional disciplines not different from what management scholars are doing elsewhere.

- On the other hand, Muslim countries such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia do not possess adequate attraction for faculty in developing nations to conduct research in Islamic studies except in religion-related subjects. Developing Muslim countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia have not, as yet, developed a strong foundation in Islamic perspectives on conventional subjects.

- Lack of research in Islamic perspectives on management studies leads to the viscous circle of the paucity of the media for publication such as journals and conferences through which academicians could have an opportunity to share their research findings. Since they

are not able to communicate and share research findings, scholars do not find much attraction in doing research work in Islamic perspectives on management studies.

- Research work in Islamic perspectives on management studies is scarce. The work available does not serve to propagate further research work, as it is mostly descriptive and not analytical. Purposeful qualitative work could become a fountainhead of meaningful quantitative research but it is largely missing presently.

- The few scholars who have conducted research work in this area do not come from the mainstream academia known for its research capabilities. As a consequence, these contributions are not seen as worthwhile. I have a feeling that even Muslim scholars would only be impressed or motivated when first an endorsement of the efforts comes from the established non-Muslim scholars.

- The common perception of Islamic scholars is that they are mostly limited to the area of religion. Muslim scholarship is not associated with conventional subjects like management studies. For instance, it is difficult to imagine an *ᶜᴂlim* (religious scholar) in management studies. Common perception has it that *ᶜulamᴂ'* (plural of *ᶜᴂlim*) are supposed to confine themselves to commenting on religious and not temporal matters. On the other hand, there is a feeling that Muslim scholars in conventional disciplines are not sufficiently qualified in religious matters to comment authoritatively on the Islamic perspectives and so should not meddle in them and keep a safe distance. *ᶜUlamᴂ'* in religious matters, on the other hand, are not considered suitable to comment on conventional subjects. This hiatus makes it difficult for scholars on either side to cross boundaries. Normally, a scholar would only like to be seen as commenting on matters in which he or she is supposed to be an expert.

- Research work carries with it an incentive for growth in an academic career. An academician does research work to be recognized and rewarded in terms of promotions and other benefits, apart from deriving personal satisfaction. Since most conventional academicians work in traditional universities and educational

institutions, they prefer to work in areas that are considered to be the 'in-thing' – the areas of research that are contemporary and are in demand for theory-building, publications, and conference themes. Since Islamic perspectives on conventional subjects are not the 'in-thing' – at least, as yet – they tend to be neglected.

4. MEASURES NECESSARY TO REKINDLE INTEREST IN RESEARCH

Granted that there is a lack of interest among scholars in research on Islamic perspectives on management studies and that the existing literature on the subject presents a disappointing scenario, one needs to be clear about what measures are necessary to rekindle interest in such research. Since this matter is only peripherally related to the theme of this paper, I offer the following broad suggestions:

- First of all, one has to be convinced of the need for research on Islamic perspectives.

- One has to realize that conventional management has reached a stage where even the conventional scholars are now realizing its limits. These are observed specially in the areas of paradigms related to management studies and the values and ethics governing management of organizations.

- Institutional mechanisms need to provide financial and administrative support for research. Some institutions like the International Islamic University Malaysia do provide such mechanisms but the question is how many other institutions do?

- Media for publishing research findings and sharing them with colleagues through conferences and seminars is necessary. The move of the Department of Business Administration at the International Islamic University Malaysia to organize a conference on the subject of Islamic perspectives on management studies in 2004, *inshÉ' AllÉh* (God willing), is welcome. More of such efforts need to be made.

- A research agenda is needed to guide research efforts in this area.

This paper is a modest contribution in that direction.

5. CONTOURS OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA

An agenda is a list of programs or things to be done. A research agenda is a framework to guide research activities; a broad consensus on research priorities reflecting current and future needs. The research agenda addresses questions such as these: How do we figure out what to do? How will our research activity be guided? In practice, a research agenda also means getting research funds so that research that is to be done gets done.

In this part of this paper, I suggest the broad contours of the research agenda. Broad, as the area of research on the Islamic perspectives on management studies is too wide and too deep to be captured in a single paper. Contours, as this agenda does not, and possibly cannot, delve too far into the details as could be expected from a research project proposal.

The outline of the research agenda is as follows:

- Statement of a research mission
- Research objectives
- Research priorities
- Research framework
- Fusion of research priorities and research framework
- Research issues
- Levels of analyses
- Choice of research design
- Research methods
- Time frame

5.1 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH MISSION

The research mission is stated as follows:

"To develop and disseminate research findings for the effective management of organizations according to the divine laws enunciated in the Islamic revealed knowledge sources."

By using the phrase "To develop and disseminate research findings" is meant the effort made to implement the research agenda that I will

shortly propose.

By the term "effective management of organizations" is meant management of organizations seen as leading to the achievement of objectives that are set in accordance with the divine laws.

By "divine laws" is meant the infallible and immutable set of provisions enunciated on the basis of the wisdom contained in the Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

By "Islamic revealed knowledge sources" is meant the Holy *Qur'Œn*, *Sunnah* and *AúŒd¥th*, *Shar¥ah*, *Fiqh*, and the sayings of the *KhulafŒ' al-RŒshid¥n* (the four pious Caliphs).

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are proposed as follows:

a. To develop a set of paradigms to guide the study and application of effective management of organizations.

b. To conduct a critical evaluation of conventional management concepts, constructs, theories, principles and laws with a view to enunciating them in the light of Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

c. To develop concepts and constructs facilitating the development of theory-building based on Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

d. To design propositions and hypotheses to be tested for the purpose of theory-building based on Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

e. To construct models explaining the relationships among the variables in a situation or explain phenomena as an object reality from the perspective of Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

f. To conduct empirical research on issues based on the propositions and hypotheses designed for the purpose of the validation and refinement of theory building based on Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

g. To lead and support theory-building based on Islamic revealed knowledge to guide the effective management of organizations.

h. To highlight the pros and cons of superimposing theories developed from the Islamic revealed knowledge sources on to conventional organizations.

i. To compare and contrast the paradigms governing conventional management with those available in the Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

j. To develop linkages and networks to facilitate the exchange of research findings.

5.3 RESEARCH PRIORITIES

In defining the research priorities I use a typology of the type of studies or approaches used by scholars or could be used in future. A brief explanation, in Exhibit 1, of this typology would be in order before I state the research priorities.

The research priorities are as suggested below.

- To continue the "dig the gold approach" by deriving management principles based on Islamic revealed knowledge sources.
- To pursue the "chinks in the armor approach" to conventional management concepts, constructs, theories, principles, and law to identify the shortcomings.
- To explore the "delve deeper approach" by uncovering historical phenomena in Islamic organizations and institutions and offering an objective assessment of their working and effectiveness in the light of contemporary needs.
- To adopt the "hands-on approach" by applying the theories and principles derived from Islamic revealed knowledge sources to real organizations and develop an empirical database to further refine and test the theories.

5.4 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research framework envisaged for the implementation of the research agenda is built around the reality of organizations. The organization is perceived as a complex configuration of resources,

EXHIBIT 1
Typology of Studies or Approaches in Islamic Perspectives on Management Studies

- The "Dig the gold" approach – By this approach is meant a straightforward manner of looking into the Islamic revealed knowledge sources for nuggets of wisdom to be brought to light through interpretation based on individual or group *ijtihād*. These nuggets should be valuable and convincing enough to appeal to the rational mind that should be able to appreciate their worth to practically apply them to enhance the effectiveness of organizations.

- The "Chinks in the armor" approach – This approach starts with the conventional management sources and makes a healthy criticism of their weaknesses, flaws, inconsistency or inadequacy in addressing the realities of the organization. This approach should not end with criticism but be carried on, possibly, through the "dig the gold" approach to suggest alternative models or systems drawn from Islamic revealed knowledge sources as being more relevant.

- The "Delve deeper" approach – This approach is based on historical analysis of organizations created and managed by Muslims in the past and also contemporary analysis of those Muslim organizations that offer scope for analyzing either failure or success stories in creating effectiveness that could be objectively attributed to their being Muslim organizations.

- The "Hands-on" approach – This approach is the familiar empirical approach that most conventional scholars are familiar with and may be comfortable about applying. The essential requirement of this approach would be to delineate clearly the variables that can be analytically proven as related to the organizations being Islamic in character. Done in this manner, this approach could prove to be convincing and aid in uncovering principles that help to enhance the effectiveness of organizations. Additionally, this approach could be helpful in letting the research findings stand up to critical scrutiny by secular scholars leading to these principles being accepted as a part of mainstream management studies.

knowledge, skills, and competences. It exists in an external environment that consists of a bewildering variety of influences arising from myriad sources. The research framework needs to grasp both the external and internal realities of organizations in order to propose effective

management theories based on Islamic revealed knowledge sources.

In the light of the above statement, it is proposed that the research framework focuses on these four directions:

1. Environment
2. Organization
3. Relationship of the organization to the environment
4. Effective management of organizations

Certain areas could be proposed in each of these four directions as follows.

Research direction 1: Environment

Research area 1A - Economy
a. Economic systems or structures
b. Economic institutions
c. Economic policies
d. Economic planning
e. Economic indicators and measures of economic performance

Research area 1B – Socio-cultural
a. Society and its foundations
b. Societal ethics and values
c. Socio-cultural attitudes
d. Socio-cultural concerns
e. Social and cultural institutions

Research area 1C – Politico-legal
a. Politico-legal systems and structures
b. Politico-legal institutions
c. Politico-legal regulation of organizations

Research area 1D – Techno-managerial
a. Technology as a means for effective management of organizations
b. Management as a means for harnessing technology
c. Communication and infrastructure technology in management
d. Provision of the factors of production

Research direction 2: Organization

Research area 2A - Resources
a. Procurement of resources
b. Management of resources
c. Use of resources

Research area 2B – Skills and competences
a. Procurement of skills and competences
b. Development of skills and competences
c. Utilization of skills and competences

Research area 2C – Management
a. Managerial functions
b. Managerial roles
c. Functional areas of management

Research direction 3: Relationship of the organization to the environment

Research area 3A – Organization – environment relationship
a. Defining organization – environment relationship
b. Managing organization-environment relationship

Research area 3B - External stakeholders
a. Responsibility and role of external stakeholders in organizations
b. Responsibility of organization to external stakeholders

*Research area 3C- Strategic management of organization*s
a. Role and responsibilities of top management
b. Formulation and implementation of strategies
c. Evaluation of strategies

Research direction 4 – Effective management of organizations

Research area 4A - Models of effectiveness
a. Effectiveness based on divine laws
b. Effectiveness based on organizational priorities and interests
c. Effectiveness based on professional excellence

Research area 4B - Measures of effectiveness
a.   Financial and non-financial measures of effectiveness
b.   Objective and subjective measurements of effectiveness

Research area 4C - Priority of the measures of effectiveness
a.   Financial versus non-financial measures
b.   Objective versus subjective measures

5.5 FUSION OF RESEARCH PRIORITIES AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The four research priorities, in terms of the approaches to be adopted, and the four research directions in my proposed framework lead to the matrix as shown in Exhibit 2.

EXHIBIT 2
Research Priorities and Research Directions

Research priority / Research direction	"Dig the gold" approach	"Chinks in the armor" approach	"Delve deeper" approach	"Hands-on" approach
Research direction				
Environment				
Organization				
Relationship of environment to organization				
Effective management of organization				

RESEARCH CANVAS

5.6 RESEARCH ISSUES

The research issues are the by-product of the fusion of the research directions and research priorities as discussed in the previous section. Exhibit 2 depicts the research canvas open to researchers in Islamic perspectives on management studies. The 4 X 4 matrix presents sixteen

possibilities for research to take place. Cross-fertilization of the research directions with the research priorities throws up several research issues. These research issues can lead to the formulation of research topics, research problems, and research questions.

Taking the first quadrant where the research direction of 'environment' is meshed with the 'delve deeper' approach in research priority provides an illustration. The possibilities that emerge are as shown in Exhibit 3.

EXHIBIT 3
Meshing the Research Direction of 'Environment' with the
Research Priority of the 'Delve Deeper' Approach

Research direction 1: Environment	'Delve deeper' approach – Examples of possible research issues

Research area 1A - Economy
Economic systems or
    structures
Economic institutions
Economic policies
Economic planning
Economic indicators and
    measures of economic
    performance
	Implications for management of organization from the point of view of: Alternative economic systems; Systems and structures based on Islamic principles; Economic institutions in Islamic history; Economic planning during the early Caliphate period; *Dinᾱr* as the alternative means of currency management; Alternative measures of economic performance.

Research area 1B – Socio-cultural Society and its foundations Societal ethics and values Socio-cultural attitudes Socio-cultural concerns Social and cultural institutions	Implications for management of organization from the point of view of: Islamic societies in the past; Ethics and values derived from the Islamic revealed sources; Ethics and values governing Islamic institutions; Socio-cultural attitudes of Muslims during early Caliphate period; Islamic social and cultural institutions.

Research area 1C – Politico-legal
Politico-legal systems and
    structures
Politico-legal institutions
Politico-legal regulation of
    organizations
	Implications for management of organization from the point of view of: Deriving organizational principles from the *Sharῑʿah*; Islamic jurisprudence systems and implications for management of organizations; Politico-legal regulation of organization during early Caliphate period.

Another illustration is presented in Exhibit 4 where the research direction of 'organization' is meshed with the research priority based on the 'chinks in the armor' approach.

EXHIBIT 4

Meshing the Research Direction of 'Organization' with the Research Priority of the 'Chinks in the Armor' Approach

Research direction 2: Organization	'Chinks in the armor' approach – Examples of possible research issues
Research area 2A – Resources Procurement of resources Management of resources Use of resources	Informed criticism of conventional management studies from the point of view of: The concept of resources in Islam; Exploitation of resources versus management and utilization of resources.
Research area 2B – Skills and competences Procurement of skills and competences Development of skills and competences Utilization of skills and competences	Informed criticism of conventional management studies from the point of view of: The concept of skills and competences in Islam; Developing skills and competences the Islamic way; Management perception based on skills and competences as bestowed by Allah.
Research area 2C – Management Managerial functions Managerial roles Functional areas of management	Informed criticism of conventional management studies from the point of view of: Planning, organizing, leading, and controlling as viewed from the Islamic perspective; Role of managers as decision-makers from the Islamic perspective; Marketing, operations, finance, and human resource management from the Islamic perspective.

5.7 LEVELS OF ANALYSES

The research issues identified lead to defined areas of research and specific research topics. Rather than follow a single approach, it is clear that scholars would have to adopt a multi-pronged approach. One way to look at this need is to consider the different levels of analyses

that might have to be considered. I suggest a way of defining the levels of analyses based on our conventional understanding of organizations.

The levels of analyses could be:

- Macro (Environment)
    - International
    - National/Culture
    - Industry

- Micro (Organization)
    - Managerial functions based
    - Functional based
    - Resource-based view
    - Value-chain based view

The choice of the level of analysis could be related to the typology of research approaches that I suggest in Exhibit 1.

5.8 CHOICE OF RESEARCH DESIGN

For the sake of simplicity, I adopt a two-way classification of research design to demonstrate the method of choice for research design in the proposed research agenda. This two-way classification would limit our discussion to the exploratory and conclusive research designs. The conclusive research design would be sub-divided into descriptive and causal research designs. With this in hand, I could provide indications of the appropriate research design based on my typology of the research approaches.

The situation appears somewhat like this: Four research approaches cross-tabulated with two basic research designs indicate the probable appropriate research design. Exhibit 5 presents the probable research designs in a nutshell.

5.9 RESEARCH METHODS

Conventional research offers a rich repertoire of research methods in quantitative and qualitative research like observation, interview, survey, case study, experiment, psychometric, and the like. In line with other

EXHIBIT 5
Suggested Research Design with Respect to the Four Research
Approaches

Research approach	Suggested research design
"Dig the gold"	Exploratory followed by conclusive-descriptive type.
"Chinks in the armor"	Exploratory followed by conclusive-descriptive type rounded off with conclusive-causal type.
"Delve deeper"	Exploratory, conclusive-descriptive type with liberal use of historiographical surveys and analysis.
"Hands-on"	Exploratory, conclusive-descriptive and causal simultaneously.

branches of human inquiry, the area of management studies too has been making extensive use of the quantitative methods of research. So we find a preponderance of increasingly sophisticated tools of analysis being made. But just like in other areas, the area of management studies has also been veering round to a gradual acceptance of the qualitative research methods and mixed-methods or composite-methods of research.

The explanation of the four research approaches in this section of the paper gives some indications of the type of research methods that could possibly be used.

- The "Dig the gold" approach could make effective use of the qualitative methods based on the philosophical and discursive approaches.
- The "Chinks in the armor" approach could make use of the qualitative and quantitative methods.
- The "Delve deeper" approach could emulate research methods in the subject of history such as archival investigations and contribute to the existing area of business history.
- The "Hands-on" approach could selectively use the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches.

All disciplines that have contributed to the building up of the subject

of management studies have had a strong tradition of research. Economics, commerce, psychology, sociology, political science, history, communication, mathematics and engineering and technology have an established science of research. The four approaches could make liberal use of the expertise of the scholars working in these areas.

I feel that besides the application of conventional research methods the tradition of writing philosophical essays also needs to be revived in the area of Islamic perspectives on management studies. I say, revived, as the writing of such essays was a strong tradition among Muslim scholars and later Western scholars in the past. This method has the benefit of providing an avenue to thinkers, without being bogged down by the bondage of the rites and rituals of research, to postulate on a particular subject, build up a thesis, apply argumentation and offer directions for the usual research work to take place.

5.10 TIME FRAME

The decision related to the time frame is a matter of detail. Some guidelines could, however, be suggested.

- Studies based on the "dig the gold" approach could be confined to a limited set of issues in a defined framework of a specific research project. For instance, a research project on the evidence in the Islamic revealed knowledge sources related to quality management could be done in a period of six months to one year.

- Studies based on the "chinks in the armor" approach could be confined to a criticism of a conventional management concept or technique or a set of concepts and techniques. Again, limitations would have to be imposed on the breadth of the coverage chosen so that it could be completed within a set time frame of six months to one year.

- Studies based on the "delve deeper" approach are likely to be of the historiographical type with the philosophical/discursive methods of research designs being adopted. Depending on the limitations placed on the breadth of coverage of the issues being probed into, the time frame could be of one to three years.

- Studies based on the "hands-on approach" are likely to be empirical work using either the case study or the survey methods. Drawing from experience of conventional management research, it could be said that the time frame would depend on the scope of research. While specific organization-focused studies could be conducted in a period of six months to a year, wider surveys and longitudinal studies would take a longer period of time.

The writings of philosophical essays on Islamic perspectives on management studies could be a revived tradition, as referred to in the previous section, and could be an on-going process to sustain the usual research work being done by scholars.

6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The contours of the research agenda described in this working paper present an ambitious scheme of research work to be planned, implemented, and evaluated in the area of Islamic perspectives on management studies. To some, the agenda may not only seem to be ambitious but audacious. This is understandable. A probable reason is that conventional management studies have made rapid strides during more than a century of its existence. Attention to working on Islamic perspectives is a later development and as yet remains a relatively unexplored field of research work. Studies done till now are more of a tentative, descriptive type and do not yield much scope for future directions for research. So, in a way, what I am trying to say is that a start has yet to be made in the real sense.

Documentation of the existing works, especially in fields like Islamic economics, Islamic finance, and Islamic banking, and alternate systems like *Takaful* (Islamic insurance) need to be done systematically *from the point of view of management studies*. I am italicizing the later part of the previous sentence to emphasize the point that though substantial work in these fields has been done under projects led by the idea of Islamization of knowledge, one does not find it being related to management of organizations. Conventional management has witnessed a successful marrying of the macro with the micro aspect of managing. But fields emerging from Islamization of knowledge seem to be operating in isolation. For instance, there is much to be read in Islamic economics

but I doubt if there is much to be found in the area of Islamic managerial economics.

Similar to the focused approaches in economics and related disciplines is the state of affairs related to other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, political science, etc. Much work is being done in these areas to realize the purposes of Islamization of knowledge. It is time to converge the results of research done in these areas and bring them in a manner so as to benefit the enrichment of the core of management studies. Just as conventional management developed tremendously, during the first half of the twentieth century, by borrowing liberally from these disciplines and incorporating the knowledge into a core of management studies, Islamic perspectives on management studies similarly need to adapt the knowledge in other areas of Islamization of knowledge to build and strengthen their own core structure.

The research agenda proposes to do away with this neglect for, after all, we think of managing the macro-environment only because it affects the effectiveness of managing organizations. Economies do not produce goods and services, as the economists would very much like us to believe. It is the organizations consisting of individuals that do.

ANNEXURE 1
An Illustrative List of Works with Islamic Perspectives on Management Studies

Books

A. A. Hanafy, and H. Sallam. *Business Ethics: An Islamic Perspective, Proceedings of the Seminar on Islamic Principles of Organizational Behavior.* Herndon, USA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1988.

Abul Hasan Muhamad Sadeq, and A. Khaliq bin Mohd Israil. Eds. *Quality Management: Islamic Perspective.* Kuala Lumpur: Leed Publications, n.d.

Ahmed Abu Hebeish. *The Practical Application of Islamic Rules in*

Enterprise Business Administration. Unpublished manuscript, quoted in Ibn Omer Mohamed.

Ahmed Ebrahim Abu Sin. *Islamic Administration.* Dubai: The Contemporary Press, 1981.

Azaddin Salem Khalifa. *Towards an Islamic Foundation of Strategic Business Management.* Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia, 2001.

F. R. Faridi. Ed.. *Islamic Principles of Business Organisation and Management.* New Delhi: Qazi Publishers and Distributors, 1995. (Published again in 1997 by S. Abdul Majeed & Co., Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) The following articles appear in this book:

  Fayaz Ahmad. "Work Motivation in Organizational Setting: An Islamic Perspective."

  Ghouse A. Shareef. "Islamic Principles of Organizational Behavior: A Conceptual Outline."

  Hamed Mohamed Sallam, and Abdalla A. Hanafy. "Employee and Employer: Islamic Perception."

  Ibn Omer Sharfuddin. "Motivation the Cornerstone of Human Performance: An Islamic and Comparative Perspective."

  Mahmood A. Moursi. "Some Principles of Management in Islam."

  Sayyid Fayyaz Ahmad. "The Ethical Responsibility of Business: Islamic Principles and Implications."

  Taha Jabir al-Alwani. "Towards Islamization of Organizational Behavior."

Hakim Mohammaed Said. *Employer-Employee Islamic Concept.* Karachi: Dar al-Fikr al-Islami, 1972.

Mohammad A. al-Buraey. *Administrative Development – An Islamic Perspective.* London: Kegan Paul International, 1985.

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Muhammad Abdul Mannan. *Islamic Socio-Economic Institutions: Their Management Principles, Practices and Issues in Contemporary Muslim Society.* (Seminar Proceedings), n.d.

Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi. *The Economic Enterprise in Islam.* 2nd Edition. Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Publication Ltd., 1979.

Mushtaq Ahmad. *Business Ethics in Islam.* Herndon, Virginia, US: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1996.

Nik Mustapha Nik Hassan. Ed. *Values-based Management: The Way Forward for the Next Millennium.* Kuala Lumpur: IKIM, n.d.

Naceur Jabnoun. *Islam and Management.* Kuala Lumpur: Institut Kajian Dasar (IKD), 1994.

Rafik Issa Beekun. *Islamic Business Ethic.* Herndon, Virginia, USA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1997.

Rafik Beekun, and Jamal Badawi. *Leadership: An Islamic Perspective.* Kuala Lumpur: Amana Publications. Also "The Leadership Process in Islam" (A working paper), 1999.

Syed Othman al-Habshi, and Aidit Ghazali. Eds. *Islamic Values and Management*. Kuala Lumpur: IKIM, 1994.

Syed Othman al-Habshi, and Nik Mustapha Nik Hassan. Eds. *Islamic Knowledge and Ethics: A Pertinent Culture for Managing Organization.* Kuala Lumpur: IKIM, n.d.

T. Gambling, and R. Karim. *Business and Accounting Ethics in Islam.*

London: Mansell, 1991.

Theses/Dissertations

Abdel-Fatah Diab Ali. "Toward an Islamic Managerial Alternative: An Analysis of Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt." Ph.D. Dissertation. The Claremont Graduate University, 1986.

Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman. "An Interpretive Inquiry into Accounting Practices in Islamic Organisations in Malaysia". Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Southampton, United Kingdom, 1998.

Adnan Abdulbadie Yafi. "Management of Some Large-scale Logistical Problems of Hajj (The Muslim Pilgrimage to Makkah and the Holy Areas)." Ph.D. Dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin, 1983.

Ahmed A. Mohamed al-Suwaidi. "The Finance of International Trade in the Gulf Arab States: A Comparative Study between the Conventional and Islamic Banking Systems with Special Emphasis on the United Arab Emirates." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Exeter, United Kingdom, 1991.

Awad Ahmed Mohammed Eljazz. "Managerial Motivation for Organization Effectiveness in the Sudan." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Southern California, 1982.
Bashir A. Attwergy. "The Islamic Banking Practices: Possible Acceptance in the U.S.A. as perceived by Islamic and U.S./Western Bankers (United States)." Ph.D. Dissertation. Nova University, 1988.

Gholamhossein Mahdavi. "The Structure of Financial Control, Accountability and Accounting in the Islamic Republic of Iran with an Examination of the Relevance to Iran of Recent Accounting Reforms in the Australian Government." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Wollongong, Australia, 1996.

Hamid El-Tag H. El-Safy. "Job Satisfaction and Job Performance among the Middle Management Personnel of the Sudanese Public Service." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Southern California, 1985.

Ibnomer Mohamed Sharafeldin. "Human Resource Management: An Islamic Perspective, A Study of the Islamic Academic Institutions in the United States." Ph.D. Dissertation. The Claremont Graduate University, 1987.

Burkett, Llyod A. "An Examination of Business Ethics and the Origins of Commerce Using Procurement as a Strategic Tool." Ph.D. Dissertation. Walden University, 1998.

Mohammed Mohammed Gahein. "Marketing Strategies of Small Companies with Particular Reference to the Textile Industry in Egypt as an Islamic Developing Country." Volumes 1 and 2. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom, 1986.

Mohd Ghazali Md. Noor. "Values and Expectations of Public Executives in Malaysia: An Exploratory Study." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Southern California, 1990.

Osman Albadri Abdalla. "An Islamic Alternative for Management and Development: An Analysis of the Gezira Scheme." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Southern California, 1982.

Rachid Wahabi. "Values of Arab Executives: Case Study of Morocco." Ph.D. Dissertation. The Union Institute, 1993.
Ramadan Abdullah Shallah. "Islamic Banking in an Interest-based Economy: A Case Study of Jordan." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Durham, United Kingdom, 1989.

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Abdel-Hameed M. Bashir, and Ali E. Darrat. "Equity Participation Contracts and Investment: Some Theoretical and Empirical Results." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (Summer, 1992).

Abdel Rahman Ahmad Abdel Rahman. "An Islamic Perspective on Organizational Motivation." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 12, no. 2 (Summer, 1995).

———. "Administrative Responsibility: An Islamic Perspective." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 13, no. 4 (Spring, 1996).

Abul-Fazl Ezzati. "The Concept of Leadership in Islam." *Al-Nahdah* 2, no. 2 (April-June, 1982): 24-9.

Ayatollah Nasir Makarim Shirazi. "Management and Leadership in the Life of the Prophet." *Al-Tawhid* 5, no. 2 (1980): 157-65.

Di1nawaz A. Siddiqui. "Human Resource Development: A Muslim World Perspective." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (December, 1987).

Felix Pmeranz. "Business Ethics: The Perspective of Islam." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 12, no. 3 (Fall, 1995).

Ibn Omer Mohamed Sharfuddin. "Towards an Islamic Administrative Theory." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1987): 229-44.

Louay Safi. "Leadership and Subordination: An Islamic Perspective." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 12, no. 2 (Summer, 1995).
M. Ramzan Akhtar. "An Islamic Framework for Employer-Employee Relationships." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (Summer, 1992).

M. Sami Kassem, and M. A. al-Buraey. "Prophet Muhammad as a Change Agent." *18th Conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists*. Brackfort, New York, 1989.

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