

Relationship Between Spirituality and Academic Leader Effectiveness

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Abstract *This paper is part of a doctoral research that intends to explore and extricate the key competencies necessary for university to select academic leaders, who will be appointed to lead the institution. Academicians are trained in focused field of discipline and slack in managerial competency. These are leaders who will serve in varying hierarchy such as at course, programme, faculty and academic administrative levels. This research is conducted to help ensure organizational effectiveness of the institution by promoting competent and efficient leaders. Hence, apart from exploring the competencies required, this research intends to find out if there is relationship between spiritual capability and competency of academic leaders to ensure their effective leadership. However, this presentation explores the literature on spirituality that contributes as a variable in the relationship. This paper presents the various models found in the literature which will further strengthen the items in the instrument to be constructed and subsequently administered. The research outcome may contribute to the process of selection with the proposal to utilize the results that have been conceptualized based on the findings. In conclusion, this research hopes to indicate relationship between competencies identified and spirituality with regards to leadership effectiveness that promotes continuous improvement both for the leaders as well as the institutions.*

Keywords: *spirituality, competency, effective leadership, relationship, institution*

Introduction

This research is conducted to help ensure organizational effectiveness of the institution by promoting competent and efficient leaders. Hence, apart from exploring the competencies required, this research intends to find out if there is relationship between spiritual capability and competency of academic leaders to ensure their effective leadership. Nevertheless, for this presentation the researchers wish to expand on the literature on spirituality that contributes as the crucial element in the study. Zohar and Marshall (2004) may have claimed that spiritual capital is a new paradigm which requires a radical change in the mind-set of the philosophical foundations and the practice of business. However, it is not anti-capitalist, although it does require the addition of moral and social dimensions to capitalism. Furthermore, they also suggest that spiritual capital itself is not monetary wealth. Yet, it argues more in the possibility of making profits by conducting business in a wider context of meaning with value, ethics, moral and piety to the Divine Creator. Much ado about the concern vis-a-vis this paper presents the various spirituality-based models found in the literature which will further strengthen the items in the instrument to be constructed and subsequently administered for the current research.

Spiritual Capability

The beginning of the 21st Century sees new realities in the world of leadership studies that leads to organisational effectiveness. A decade before its entrance, Davis and Davidson (1991) mentioned that the future tends to shift from movement on arms race to a commercial technology rivalry. The term 'shift' carries the impetus of dynamic movement in the form of changes that of glory-seeking to goodness-sharing (Marques et al., 2007). The changes have become so rapid that in a decade there have been new terms like information economy, k-economy, economic globalization, green technology and green economy. Thereafter, the shift moved on from that of wealth creation to creating and generating the human resource that are productive and creative. In this development, a major transformation sees the organisation making room for spiritual dimension that embodies the search for meaning, purpose and interconnectedness (Ary, 2009; Karakas 2010) within its realm.

Additionally, it is only very recently that literature on spirituality is in much discussion. This has been due to the rise of moral consciousness that has effects on business and organisational sustainability (Aburdeen, 2010). In the management field there used to be only three kinds of capital of which are financial capital, intellectual capital, and social capital. Hence, with the rise in such consciousness, spiritual capital is a crucial element to sustain both for the human capital and the organisation (Ary, 2009, Zohar, 2004). Ashar and Lane-Maher (2004) reiterated that spirituality and the notion of success are linked together in the business and suggested that this relationship be explored further.

From Karakas (2010) there are more than 70 definitions of spirituality coming from work of several authors like Markow and Klenke (2005), Guillory (2000), Barnett et al., (2000) and Laabs (1995). Although Karakas has distinctly separated spirituality from religion, for this current study, the researchers have included the comprehensive Islamic spirituality encompassing the same notion proposed by Karakas, but in more specific terms namely of Islam, Iman and Ehsan (Ary, 2005 and Salahuddin, 2010).

Scientific explanation of spiritual quotient (SQ) as the element of spirituality came during the late 1990s, when neurological research suggested that the brain has a whole third kind of intelligence. This is the intelligence with which we have access to deep meaning, fundamental values, and a sense of abiding purpose in our lives, and the role that this meaning, values, and purpose play in our lives. Moreover, spiritual quotient is believed to contribute to the level of motivation. This is because inside the core of spiritual quotient lays an issue about self-awareness such as: Why was I born? What is the meaning of my life? Why am I devoting my life to this job? What am I really trying to achieve with this project or with my life? Although these questions may not have any relationship with employee's motivation in work, the performance level of the employee may be boosted up beyond expectation, if he or she has positive answers to the questions as stated by Zohar and Marshall (2004).

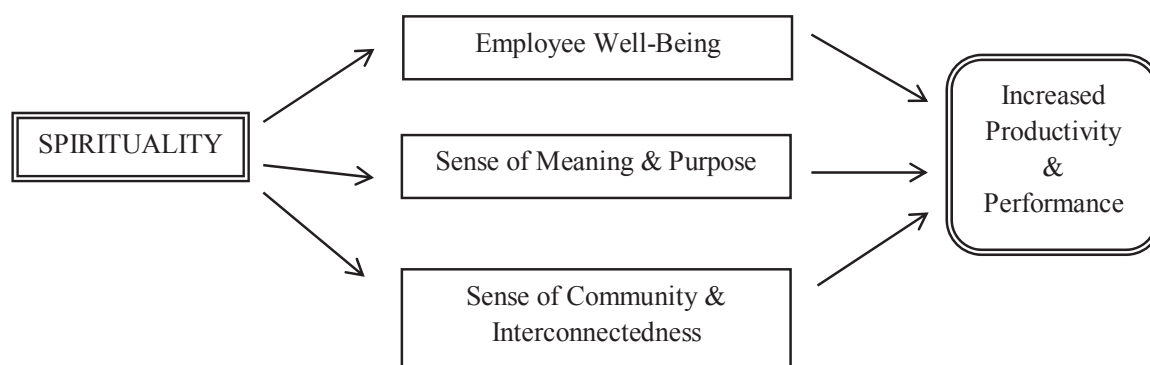
Spirituality and institutional effectiveness

In recent years too, application of religious awareness, knowledge, and commitment has begun to find its place in organisation that strives to sustain, remain excellent, build committed leaders and enhance effective human capital. Therefore, with the updated emphasis of human resource development terms like knowledge worker aims to improve performance, productivity, competitive edge and product quality level. This is reiterated by Ary (2009) that the critical factor for success has its foundation in spirituality. Hence, spiritual capability is an ability to lend meaning to one's way of thinking and behaving, as a way of performing God's characteristics and the service to God (Ary, 2009). He then further emphasised the significance of spirituality at work when he quoted Hendrick and Ludeman (2002) that "*Latently, the concern of the big corporation toward ethical, and even spiritual aspect of their employee has grown rapidly – in the global market in the future ...*" (p.14). This indicates that there is giant step made by corporations towards spirituality in their human resource development.

This is a phenomenon elaborated further by Covey (2004) when he states, "*Spiritual intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all the intelligence, because it becomes the source of guidance of the other three intelligences.*" The strong belief that spirituality acts as the front of defence from any leadership disadvantage serves well for an organisation, in particular, institution of higher education as it is the training platform for human capital development and generation. In creating and generating human resources, it is also only in recent years that published work on spirituality takes on a serious note in journals. In his comprehensive review on Spirituality and Performance in Organization, Fahri Karakas (2010) who reviewed 140 articles on the said issue, seems to agree on the fact that spirituality improves performance and organizational effectiveness, of which he verified the relevance that spirituality provides in enhancing work performance. The current research takes it as an essential variable as it is to be proven having both direct effect on leadership effectiveness.

Karakas (2010), who further emphasized on work done by Bierly et al., 2000; Korac-Kakabadse and Korac-Kakabadse, 1997; reported that there is positive relationship between spirituality at work and organisational productivity and performance. However, he admitted that as much as there have been reservation on spirituality effect on organization, other research have proven that spirituality in-house practices have positive returns for the organizations. This diagram depicts the aims of the review by integrating three different perspectives on how spirituality enables or leads to organizational performance:

Figure 1 : Three perspectives of spirituality and performance



Source: Karakas (2010)

In this work, Karakas (2010) introduced three perspectives on how spirituality benefits the organization as an individual and as a unit by itself. He listed that spirituality has its impact on the following by the fact that it:

- (1) enhances employee well-being and quality of life
- (2) provides employees a sense of purpose and meaning at work
- (3) provides employees a sense of interconnectedness and community.

This current research has included spirituality, a contribution to the body of knowledge, as the independent variable. Various academic theories and research have provided the support of the relationship between spirituality and leadership (Fry, 2003). Spiritual beliefs and practices have been a factor that is linked to the forming and fostering of servant leaders, however, historically spirituality and leadership theories are said to be world apart. It is quite recent that Reave (2005) has reiterated that nowadays an increasing body of evidence has indicated that these two fields are related.

Freeman (2001) in his paper quoted Fry (2005) stated that spirituality in relation to work has been receiving increased attention and hence, has resulted in a fast growing area of new research and inquiry in relation to leadership theory, research and practice. Therefore, this current study, based on literature and observation of the population of research in which majority of them are Muslims, attempts to identify the relationship of the IV, that is spirituality cause more effect on the academic leadership effectiveness.

Freeman (2001) has also included the proposition of leadership construct with measurable variables via the following empirical approach, which are:

- (a) Spiritual beliefs, an independent variable measure which is measurable by a subset of Fetzer's *Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality* (BMMRS);
- (b) Servant leadership behaviour, a mediating variable measured by Liden et al.'s (2008) named *Servant Leadership Scale*;
- (c) Leadership effectiveness, an outcome variable which is measured by the modified version of Denison, Hooijberg and Quinn's (1995) named *Leadership Effectiveness Survey*;
- (d) Spiritual practices which is a moderating variable that is measured by the items on the BMMRS with specification on Spiritual Practices domain.

Based on the review, this current research attempts to capture the common items in constructing the questions for the questionnaire to test the hypothesized relationships of the variables which are discussed in the study. Historically, taking examples from the Malay Archipelago, the movement of spirituality is to be found in the work task and performance. This section of the literature will present several cases to indicate that spirituality plays a link within its relationships as the independent variable with regards to the dependent variable.

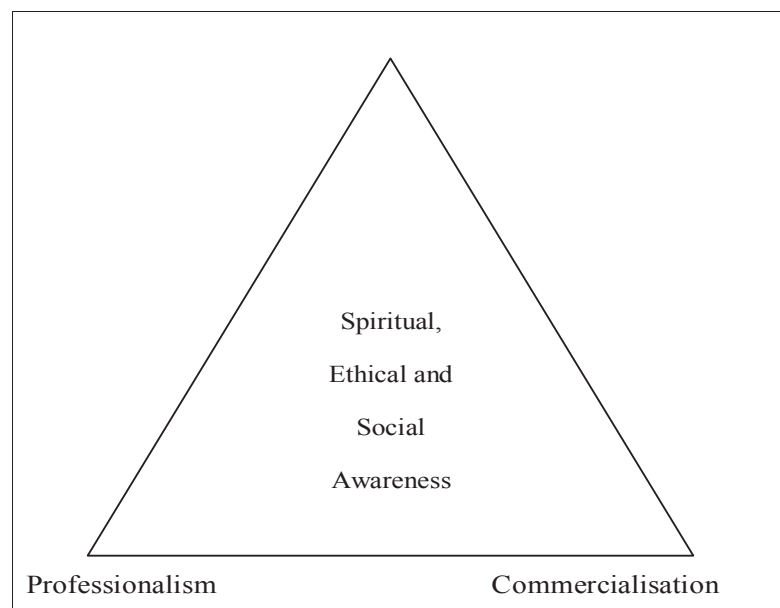
Spirituality-based Models for Leadership Effectiveness

In this study, spirituality has been included in the conceptual framework as it is a crucial element in developing human capital that spells (1) effectiveness, (2) excellence, (3) knowledgeable, (4) discipline and (5) visionary (Siti Akmar et al., 2011). With the rise of conscious market-driven community, many have concluded that to achieve the highest stake in business is to simultaneously reconstruct the moral consciousness. Spiritual capability here is referred to as the intelligence that defines the essence or values, the intelligence that places a person's actions and lives into a wider and richer meaning. This is found in the way actions, tasks, duties or jobs are executed at institutional level. Hence, this study will contribute to filling in the gap of the present knowledge.

Sembuk Model

Additionally, Sembuk et al., (1999) put forth a triangular holistic curriculum that fits in developing human capital of all fields. The proposed model attempts to create wholesome and rounded workers who are not only (1) knowledgeable, (2) skilful and (3) possess professional ability, but also (4) possess strong spiritual, (5) are ethical and (6) have social awareness in conducting his duties.

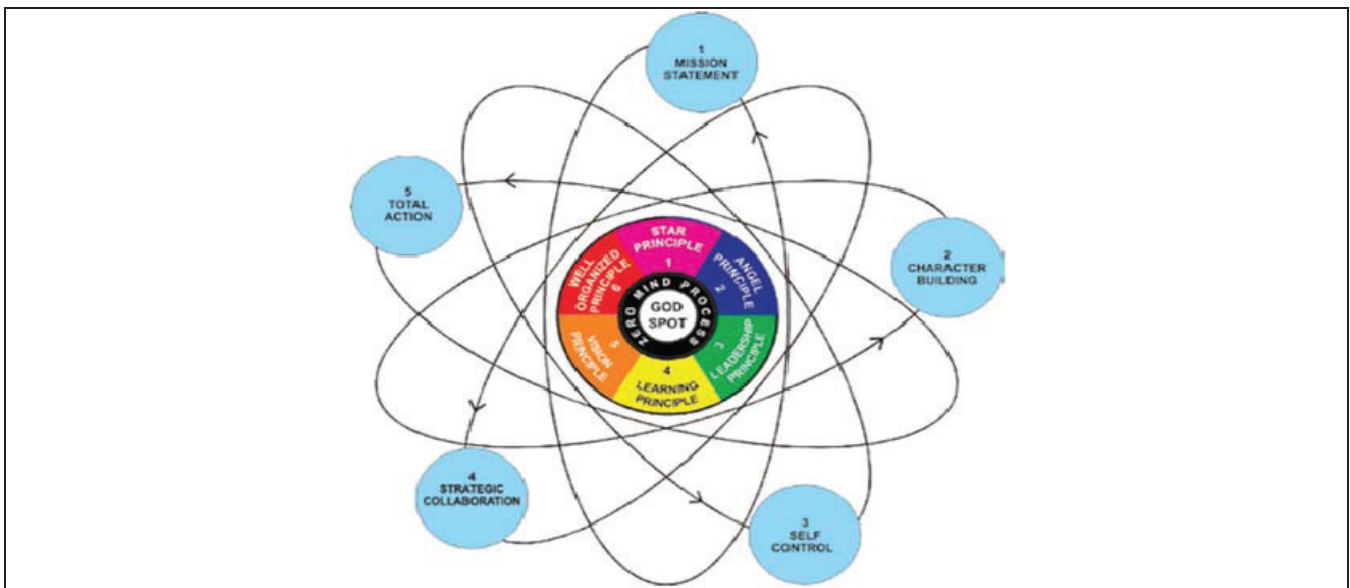
Figure 2 : A Holistic Model of Manpower Creation of Knowledge and Skills



Source: Sembuk et al. (1999)

ESQ Model

The ESQ Model does not separate the rest of the other quotients namely (1) intellectual, (2) emotional and (3) spiritual. In fact these quotients are integratively functioned to create an integral and transcendental unity. These quotients are equally important substances which in togetherness sustain the individual to strive efficiently and effectively. With the combination of these quotients at work, it creates energies that form dependable method to seek fundamental knowledge.

Figure 3 : ESQ Model on Leadership Development

Source: Ary (2009)

SPIES Model

Figure 4 : S.P.I.E.S. Model

Source: <http://www.spiesselangor.net/retrieved> 15 November 2011

This is the model developed by the Selangor State Government, Malaysia under the auspices of the Executive Council Member for Education, Higher Education and Human Capital Development headed by the Chairperson, Dr. Hajah Halimah Ali in which its mission is to produce excellent human being and community holistically encompassing five primary capability domains namely spiritual, physical, intellect, emotional and social.

Spiritual capital is the foundational element that ensures personality effectiveness on the physical, emotional and intellectual. A spiritually-driven individual understands himself and his self-potential as he knows the meaning of life and the value system through his relationship with God. In his belief, there is love of God, he loves himself and other beings that have relationship with God. This unity becomes the foundation for integration and love for one another and amongst others.

Meanwhile **physical capital** requires intellect development, strength within oneself to face the challenges and pressures as well as self-wellness to undertake whatever actions that will benefit oneself, family and the community.

Intellectual capital does not only refer to the thinking ability of an individual, but also it needs to be evaluated on the direction and the objective of the thoughts. Having high level of creativity does not justify the aims or the effects on others, either beneficial or otherwise are indications of weakness of the thinking ability. Nonetheless, the idea promoted to resolve certain issue by an individual is not considered wise if the resolution is at the advantage of oneself, and disadvantaged others. This indicates that his self-intellectual potential is compromised. Intellectual capital is influenced directly by emotion and value system. Hence, the primary principle is that vision and aim is based upon value, collaborative, proactive and creative thinking and lifelong learning.

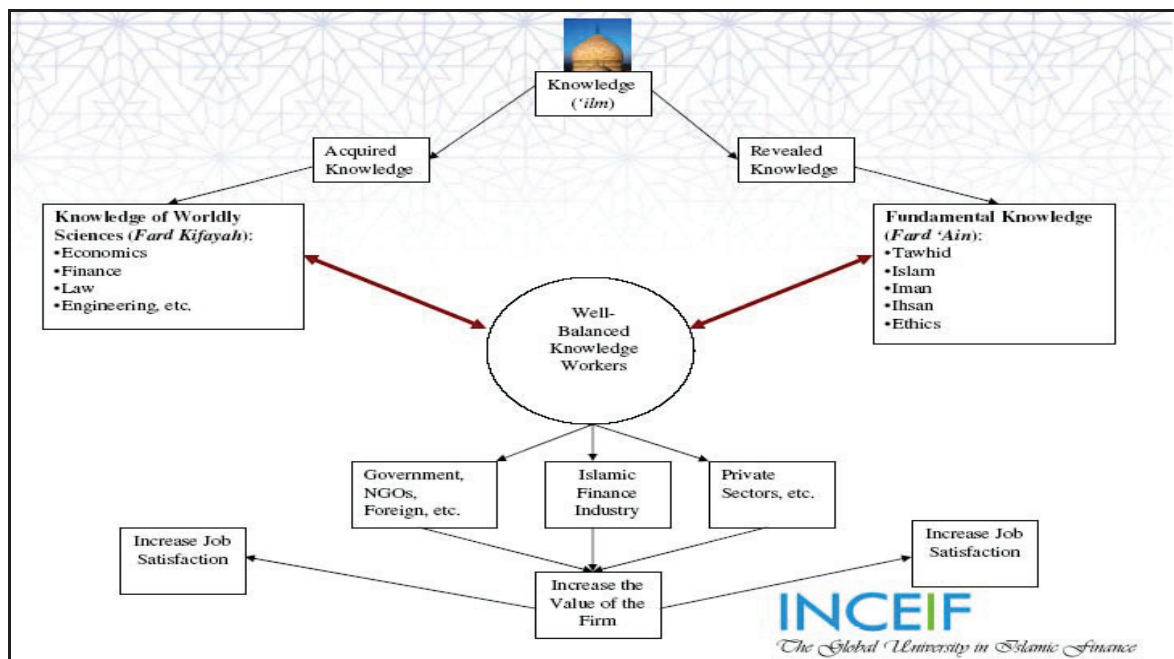
Emotional capital is the individual's wisdom in creating awareness and controlling emotion and the effects on oneself and on others. The guiding principles of empathy, motivation, influence, compassion, the skills of positive and negative actions are essential.

Finally, it is the **social capital** which refers to the individual's ability to react with wisdom in the interpersonal communication. Goleman (2006) elaborated that social quotient does not only depends on the cognitive aspect of social skills, but also on the non-cognitive aspects which include empathy, altruism and care. This indicates that the individual acts collaboratively or a win-win social communication be it formal or non-formal.

INCIEF Model

In the Malaysian perspective, human capital development model is not merely affected by financial capital, intellectual capital and social capital. As a country with multiethnic people, Malaysia has developed a rich value in religion, culture, and ethic. That being said, Malaysia has already possessed the additional and yet important capital that plays the same important role with the other capitals. This model presented in Figure 5 is what INCIEF (2008) emphasised as the best model to develop human capital in Malaysia.

Figure 5: A Model of Well-Balanced Worker Proposed by INCIEF



Source : INCIEF (2008)

The model comprises the fundamental information as represented by the Islamic values. Based on the fundamental knowledge (*Fard 'Ain*), the items comprise (1) Tawhid, (2) Islam, (3) Iman, (4) Ehsan and (5) Ethics. The current research attempts to determine the relationship of spirituality element of Islam with regards to effective academic leadership in institution of higher education.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the presentation above, the models presented displayed some very common terms. Previous research that involved the studies on religion and spirituality are beginning to successfully define the items in spirituality (Muller et al., 2004). Furthermore, previous studies have also indicated that belief in prayer is associated with higher levels of well-being (Francis and Kaldor, 2002). The above models are to be found pertinent in providing the dimensions to define that the true character of human capital exists with values, integrity and ethics. The main limitation is that the study has proposed causal relationships but has used cross-sectional methodology. While the notion that the spiritual organisation can provide an alternative social institution to work as an avenue for accessing latent benefits is an interesting proposition, longitudinal data are required to tease out the roles played by the latent and manifest benefits of employment and spirituality. Despite these shortcomings, there are some important findings from the study for unemployed people, including that: (1) access to latent and manifest benefits of employment is associated with positive psychological well-being; (2) reporting a spiritual orientation is associated with better well-being; (3) reporting higher spirituality is associated with better access to the latent benefits of employment; and (4) spirituality mediates the relationship of the latent benefits of employment and well-being.

One of the aims of this doctoral research is to examine the relationship between spirituality and leadership effectiveness. The rationale was to investigate whether spirituality would provide access to the latent benefits of what it takes to be an effective leader; as opposed to other previous research which indicated that other factors would be beneficial. And that spirituality would have a positive effect on leadership effectiveness. At the same time, the study is currently detailing on the competencies of what an academic leaders should be equipped with, in order to execute duties for the institutions effectively. Based on the present scenario and taking on from Nadler's proposition, leadership development also takes a centre stage in preparing academicians to hold leadership position. In addition, with the advent of dynamic literature, relevance and significance of spirituality in performance, this current research embarks on the last variable as the mediator in order to verify the direct and indirect effects on the outcome of the study. Therefore, this will be the contribution of the current doctoral study to the body of knowledge.

Acknowledgments

The researchers wish to thank Universiti Teknologi MARA for the conference sponsorship and Universiti Putra Malaysia for the academic support and guidance.

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