

Human Resource Management: Mixing Islamic Principles with Conventional Practices

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ABSTRACT

Human resource management is the process of selecting suitable employees, training them with proper motivation, appraising and retaining them for organizational growth. Since Islamic principles are the contemporary issues in today's business world including Islamic marketing, Islamic banking, Halal tourism, human resource management possesses worth of integrating Islamic ethics with the ongoing management practices. To the best of knowledge, no complete study was found dealing with Islamic principles and human resource management. Therefore, this paper aims to contribute in the existing literature providing with necessary Islamic inputs. Existing literatures have been analyzed with the selected verses from the Noble Quran. Additionally, a very simplified model has been proposed for managing human resource in an organization exploring Islamic thought following a qualitative method. The work is likely to add new insights in the business field addressing as an induction in business. Furthermore, a conceptual model suggests that personnel in the organizations may be motivated using the intrinsic values that ultimately may increase organizational productivity resulting in a sustainable human resource development classifying the whole process into three segments, for instance, knowing human; getting them to make resource and managing them. The concerns aiming to practice human resource management linking with Islamic values as an intrinsic motivator will be benefitted. One of the limitations includes the application of the Quranic theory into practices since this paper is supposed to work as an induction lacking of empirical evidence. Yet, organizations run in the secular perspectives are also likely to get new insights.

Keywords: Control, Human Resource, Intrinsic Value, Islamic Principles, Management, Motivation

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management consists of the application of the management principles for managing people in the organization. It also refers to the people-related functions as hiring, training, development and like. Human resource management is addressed as building of human capital as well (Aswathappa, 2013). Moreover, the term 'human capital' is treated as recognition that organizational people and their professions are more important than tangible assets. Though organizations employ thousands of dollars behind developing human resources, still the world lacks of spiritual and moral leaders/manpower both in business and non-business sectors. However, all of those attempts and theories used to nourish human capital are based on the traditional view (Afrin, Rahman, Sumi and Hossain, 2015). It also can be noted that modern management theory is constricted by a fractured epistemology separating humanity from nature and truth from morality (Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause, 1995), whereas truth and morality are linked with religion.

Religion composes a unique system of beliefs, practices, and assumptions that form the value structure of a society (Mokhlis, 2009a, 2009b) shared to generation to generation through a learning process (Ferraro and Koch, 1994). Worthington, Wade, Hight, Ripley, McCullough, Berry and Bursley (2003) claimed religiosity as the magnitude a person uses adheres to his or her religious values, beliefs and practices and uses them in daily living. Moreover, religion is an important factor in a manager's ethical decision making together with an important contribution to the extant ethics literature (Singhapakdi, Scott, Dong-Jin Lee, Nisius and Grace, 2013). It is also an integral part of the ethical decision-making process (Hunt and Vitell, 1986). Religious revival has been identified by Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) as one of the ten megatrends of the new millennium as a person's religiosity influences person's ethical decision-making.

Religiosity also impacts on one’s recognition of ethical issues, ethical judgments, and ethical intentions and behaviors (Terpstra, Rozell, and Robinson, 1993; Vitell, Bing, Davison, Ammeter, Garner, and Novicevic, 2009). Thus, religion helps to develop comparatively better ethical judgment (Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2013; Hunt and Vitell, 1986). Vitell (2009) urged that the relation between business and religion in the contemporary business literature was reportedly first made by Culliton (1949). Recently, the influence of religion in contemporary business has been expanded (Rod, ALHussan, and Beal, 2015). Since people’s religious beliefs motivate their choices and decisions regarding business and consumption, scholars have started to seriously study the linkage between religion and business decisions during the past four decades (Rod *et al.*, 2015).

The Islamic view offers an integral spiritual view based on the teachings of the Qur’an and the Sunnah providing a better alternative philosophical framework for man’s interaction with his community and fellowmen (Ahmad, 2002). He added that, the moral and ethical principles derived from the Holy Quran are more enduring, eternal and absolute that may provide as better guidelines for corporations in exercising their business and social responsibilities simultaneously. Moreover, the aim in Islamic principles is not to please the stakeholders or to have a reputation among consumers and the public, but to satisfy Allah.

Islamic guidance, with its commitment to justice, brings about a balance between the rights of individuals and their duties and responsibilities towards others (Dusuki, 2008). Thus, Islam recognizes self-interest as a natural motivating force in all human life. But self-interest has to be linked to the overall concept of goodness and justice. Ahmad (2003a) further noted that Islam, in fact, lays down a moral framework what is desirable and reprehensible from a moral, spiritual and social perspective.

Kirat (2015) points out individual’s duties and responsibilities toward himself, his family, his environment and society in Islam. Afrin *et al.*, (2015) stresses that religious organizations and leaders are liable to develop the morality of human beings of the society. It is noted that there is no religion which teaches the immoral to the people. Therefore, to be moral, people have to know the religious command and instructions and they should follow these. By doing this, it is possible to provide the honest and committed manpower to the organization.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is applicable to the conditions that it is attempting to describe, analyze, or predict (Clarkson’s, 1995). The following figure shows the theoretical framework of the study in which the term ‘Human’, ‘Resource’ and ‘Management’ have been classified into three phases.

Figure one shows the three segments of human resource management. Firstly, organizations should try to know the basic characteristics of human as most of the cases, human are weak, hasty, limitedly knowledgeable, deniers, ungrateful, miserly, impatient and quarrelsome as per the Holy Quran resulting in opportunistic behavior.

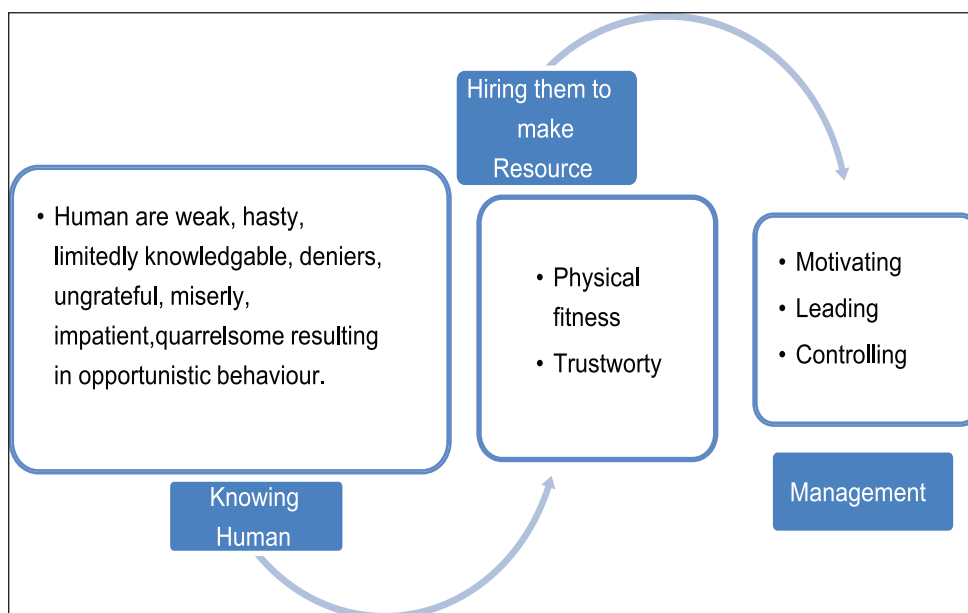


Figure 1: A simplified model of human resource management

At the second phase, it is necessary to convert organizational people resources emphasizing their physical health and honesty to make them as capital and achieving their positive behavior suited for the organization. Finally, rest of the management process has to be practiced to manage the resources emphasizing motivation, leading and control.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literatures on sustainable human resource management fall into three streams including capability reproduction, promoting social and environmental health and building relations with different stakeholders (Kramar, 2014). To assure sustainable competitive advantage of the organizations, it is suggested that human resources need to be regenerated, at least, in time for its consumption (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, human factors are the new dimension to sustainability. As the social sustainability of employees with a specific focus, human resources are related to human health and mortality. Management scholars, however, are today considering some steps to include morality and teaching spirituality in some training and development sessions for their employees in the corporate world. All the Muslim practitioners are following those without any adequate amendment in the flavor of Islam (Afrin *et al.*, 2015). Yet, correlating human health and mortality with the sustainability notion seems to be a great challenge.

The challenge faced by human resource management is the growing competition for highly expert employees (App *et al.*, 2012 and Lis, 2012). Consequently, the concern of the human resource managers is to ensure the availability of these resources in the future along with retaining their valued human capital. Therefore, human resource managers will have to ensure that those highly skilled employees are attached to the organization (Ehnert, 2006) resulting in assurance of sustainable competitive advantage of the organizations (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2001).

Beauregard and Henry (2009) linked work-life balance practices with organizational performances claiming that the business case for work-life balance practices, as espoused by many organizations, rests on attracting better applicants and reducing work-life conflict among existing employees in order to enhance organizational performance. How organizational talented employees can be managed has been explored by Collings and Mellahi (2009). The study has developed conceptual human resource model following the conventional way. Lewis and Heckman (2006) viewed managing talent using their own intuition based on the available literatures.

Schroeder (2012) recommends an art and science based approach to strategic sustainability and discusses the important role of Human Resource professionals in contributing to the organizational success. The study by Alex Mak, Loretta Leung and Amy Mak (2015) has focused sustainability in human resource management is an emerging management issue. However, the research efforts put into sustainability does not seem to be integrated since few aspects mainly from company, social, and environmental perspectives have been focused. A holistic approach to in managing human is still missing from research to date.

Nevertheless, the literatures for human resource management from Islamic perspective are not highly available (Afrin *et al.*, 2015). Recently, few works are apparent on recruitment and selection process in Islam, Islamic payment and compensation system and reward with training mechanisms. Altalib (1991) urged that Islamic training and development is about encompassing, beginning of the moral and spiritual development. Every religion in the world has a great command to be moral and spiritual in every aspect of life. Alhabshi *et al.*, (1998) showed the association of the Islamic values with management principles followed by Hassi (2012) correlating training and professional development with Islamic values.

The study of Khan and Hussain (2010) explored managing human resources using few Islamic principles whereas Rahman *et al.*, (2013) has shown the link of trust building with human resource management. Furthermore, Thaib (2013) noted an empirical study concerning human capital development from Islamic view. Probably, the study of Arefin, *et al.*, (2015) seems to be an influence one regarding human capital development with Islamic values mentioning the roles of family and relatives, friends and society, wider environment and other organizations that can shape to the human capitals, yet, family and relatives with friends and society possess the basics for the human capital development.

From the above literatures, it has been conceived that no complete study has been viewed on Islamic human resource management according to the teaching of the Islamic principles. Consequently, the present study would like to induct a new insight as a discovery in the human resource management discipline. Thus, the study aims to overview a unique concept as to managing human resources in the organization mixing the existing practice with the Quranic teaching. Specifically, this study intends to focus two objectives as

1. To show a guideline to the human resource management focusing few selected verses from the Holy Quran as a theory and
2. To overview a simplified model of Islamic human resource management.

3. METHOD

The study has followed a qualitative method of research blending the scriptural theories in the existing human resource management settings. The selected verses from the Holy Quran have been analyzed in managing organization people. According to Ambert *et al.* (1995), qualitative research includes both field observations and analysis of texts.

Qualitative research, moreover, seeks depth rather than breadth. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) claim that it is not necessarily important for qualitative research to begin with a priori hypothesis, and finding data to prove or disprove it. In other words, the focus of qualitative research is to convey its workings in its phenomenological integrity (Ambert *et al.*, 1995). Although developing measures of concepts will not be significant consideration, concepts are very much important in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008, 2004). In addition, this approach sees the contexts as important, and the phenomenon needs to be understood based on its settings (Robson, 2011, 2002).

In addition, the work is likely to explore the nature of human deeply before undertaking managerial principles. Thus, it is about theory development which is inductive in nature in order to meet the unmet demand on human resource management following the principles of the Holy Qur'an associating with the conventional management practices. A simplified framework has also been developed as per the intended objectives to overview the human resource management process as easy as possible.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Knowing Human

People are different themselves having no average state (Hans, 1976; Wehrich and koontz, 1994). They are the best creation in the world indeed. Therefore, human have to be known well before managing them whether the organizational culture is Islamic or anything else. Although corporate world is continuously trying to learn human, their behavior to undertake suitable business strategy but a complete study on human may not be possible as individual human possesses separate personal traits. However, the Creator of human knows details.

Consequently, perceiving the knowledge of the words of Creator only can offer a complete knowledge base on human resulting in proper human resource management.

Human are the best creation of Allah. Few subsequent stages are followed in creating human what medical science has discovered. The stages have been mentioned in the Holy Quran earlier what science has claimed. The Noble Quran says, "And indeed We created man out of extract of clay. Thereafter, We made him as *Nutfah* (mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging (womb of the woman). Then, We made the *Nutfah* into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), then, We made the clot into a little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation. So Blessed is Allah, the Best of creation" (23:12-14).

Every creation belongs to weakness since it possesses limitations. The holy Quran says, "Man was created weak" (Chapter 4:28), "Man is created of haste" (21:37), "Man is ever hasty" (17:11), "Man is ever ungrateful" (17:67), "Man is ever miserly" (17:100), "Man was created very impatient" (70:19), "you (mankind) have been given only a little of knowledge" (17:85), "Man is ever more quarrelsome than anything" (18:54). Thus, human is not out of criticisms except some exception. However, exception is not considered as an overall example. In spite of those limitations and criticisms human are honored over all creations in the world. The glorious Quran claims, "Indeed, We have honored the children of Adam" (17:70).

4.1.1 Implications of knowing human

Since man is weak, hasty and ungrateful, efforts have to be made to make him strong, patient and grateful. He is also miserly, impatient and limitedly knowledgeable, strategies should be made to make him liberal, passionate and knowledgeable.

Furthermore, man is quarrelsome, techniques have to be undertaken to make him calm and decent. Moreover, human are worth of being honored. By providing appropriate training, development measures, knowledge sharing facilities, suitable working

environment and proper motivation, the weaknesses of man can be converted into strengths that ultimately will result in expected and realistic behavior from organizational people in lieu of opportunistic behavior.

4.2 Hiring Them to Make Resources

The collective approach, expertise and power of people contribute to organizational performance and productivity. Competent and motivational people can make things happen and enable an organization to achieve its goals. As a result, organizations must continuously ensure that the competency and motivation of its people keep constant at a high level (Arefin *et al.*, 2015). In recruiting human and in making resources for the intended organization, considerations of their common features should be remembered. In the selection process, it is very natural to search for a suitable candidate. Knowing human based on the basic consideration shall guide a human resource manager in searching a qualified incumbent. For instance, it may not be feasible to ask for the higher or rare qualities that the probable candidate does not belong to.

Few common criteria should be judged so that the door of the organization remains open to all the potential candidates known as equal opportunity notion. Regarding this issue, the teaching of the Quran can guide the human resource manager. “Verily, the best of men for you to hire is the strong, the trustworthy” (28: 26). Therefore, it may not be wise to ask some questions in the interview or to set some questions out of the scope of the job candidates. However, the most important affairs include the working ability of the potential employee for what he is going to be appointed. Furthermore, his personality on the trustworthiness should be checked at the time of the selection process.

Preliminary assessment of the physical fitness can be perceived at the first sight or through the medical checkup and trustworthiness can be conceived by the references the candidates mention.

Although the candidates can be judged fully regarding their working ability and honesty, a trial period can make sense. Through offering suitable sound working environment to the candidates and motivating them of having a hygienic feeding habit can make the employees physically energetic. The holy Quran also says about having good food claiming “O mankind, eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth” (2:168). In addition, it encourages of having “purified food” (18:19). Furthermore, the employees should be induced not to take any food or drink including alcohol, cigarette or other drags which are harmful to health. About this regards, the holy Quran says, “Do not throw your selves into destruction” (2:195). In one word, it can be urged that a sound body is the power house to render quality service to the organization. Therefore, no food items will be consumed that are apparently adverse or contingent to the human body.

To keep the body fit, the appointed human that are intended to make resources can be motivated to exercise in their homes. Simply, running in the morning and breathing fresh air can help in making them physically strong. In addition, a well trained physician can show few free hand exercises to the appointed employees so that they can practice the learnt exercise in their homes. Consequently, a healthy working team surely will be resources for organizations resulting in fewer sick leaves along with better performances.

Arefin *et al.*, (2015) claim that most of the people in this world are believers. They are used to believing in different religions, in particular, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam and so on. Every religion would like to preach its own teachings to develop human beings. In Islam, a lot of teachings and guidelines are apparent to develop the human beings as the best quality people. *Salah* (prayer), *Sawm* (fasting), *Hazz* (pilgrim), *Zakah* (donation) are the mentionable deeds of self developmental tools in Islam. To be human capital, the incumbent must have a very good physical structure. Self developmental tools in Islam cannot but help in developing individual.

The individual development in Islam originates from spiritual development. That includes shared values and practices in the spiritual advancement of an Individual consisting of *Iman* (faith), *Ihsan* (perfection), *Ikhlas* (purity of intent), *Tawakkul* (ultimate trust in Allah), *Taqwa* (Arefin *et al.*, 2015). Besides, making better performers for the organizations, human resource managers also should try to make the employees trustworthy. In order to get the employees fully, touching their hearts are very significant since heart works as a center that operates the whole body. The feeling that the employees are not working for money but for pleasure that has to be steadied in the mind of the workers. To do so, the notion that the organization is for the employees’ and thus they are not only employees but owners has to be shared in their mind.

Creation consciousness among the employees might be possible when an employee will perceive that his work is an obligatory worship for Allah and an inseparable part in his life. Since, prayer will not be accepted when money earned from the job is

not purified. Deceiving in job is unjustified work and a sinful act that will be a punishable deed in the light of the Holy Quran. About this, Allah says, “Deal not unjustly and you shall not be dealt with unjustly” (2:279).

Moreover, to earn money through deceiving organizational duty is to eat up another’s property unjustly. The Holy Quran says in chapter 2 verse 188, “And eat up not one another’s property unjustly.”(or in any illegal way e.g. stealing, robbing, deceiving, etc.) It warns in chapter 6 verse 88, “And eat of the things which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and fear Allah in Whom you believe.” And it also says in chapter 5 verse 29, “O you who believe, Eat not up your property among yourselves unjustly.”

Thus, employees following Islamic principles will not earn their bread and butter from the money gained unlawfully that can make them trustworthy to the organization. Moreover, a manager of Islamic values belongs to the responsibility to make the hired employees resources using the Islamic principles.

4.3. Management

Management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals work together in groups efficiently to accomplish selected aims (Wehrich and koontz, 1994, p. 4). The primary goal of managing human resource is to guarantee of a skilled and keen work force to an organization. The duty of the human resource manager is to enlighten all the working employees through ethical practices as government and law cannot always protect the society, but ethics can (Aswathappa, 2013). Islamic management, however, fully based on ethics based which is a holistic approach.

The holy Quran says, “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority” (4:59). An organization of the Islamic culture should consider the above verses regarding management as authority is concerned with management. Manager has to communicate the teaching of the Holy Quran among the hired employees that obeying the orders of organization as per Islamic principles is obeying Allah acting as the part of worship. This is because, “Allah has raised you in ranks, some above others that He may try you in that which He has bestowed on you” (6:165). Thus, exercising management power wrongly is checked in Islamic human resource management since the authoritative manger is liable to Allah for his power.

As per the glorious Quran, management is about employing fellow human in the organization and ensuring intensive obedience for the betterment of the organization according to ranks consisting of motivating, directing and controlling tasks. Lastly, the strengths and weaknesses of human as per the ‘knowing man’ phase in the conceptual model will have to be considered in adapting any management strategy. Motivation, leading and control, however, have been focused in the current study as management tools.

4.3.1 Motivating employees

Motivation refers to a general term applying to whole class of derives, desires, needs wishes and similar forces whereas motivators include objects or things that induce an individual to perform (Wehrich and koontz, 1994). Achieving the satisfaction of Allah is the motivation of the Muslims and performing some authentic deeds as per the Holy Quran are the motivators. The Glorious Quran says, “Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah” (Chapter 6: 162).

Services by the human in the organization are invisible; its inputs to make it sustainable could be unseen or something spiritual. Although religion is very personal belief which varies individually but the common phenomena is that belief is an intrinsic motivation; having free of choice and done for pleasure. Ryan and Deci (2000) urged that a person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated toward an end is considered motivated. People have not only different amounts, but also different kinds of motivation. That is, they vary not only in *level* of motivation, but also in the *orientation* of that motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Thus, intrinsic motivation or social science theories have close connection with religious belief. As intrinsic motivation theories deal with human behavior and religion is also related to human behavior.

Therefore, intrinsic motivation theories can tremendously assist belief oriented ethics. The phenomenon of intrinsic motivation was first acknowledged within experimental studies of animal behavior, where it was discovered that many organisms engage in exploratory, playful, and curiosity-driven behaviors even in the absence of reinforcement or reward. And intrinsic motivation remains an important construct, reflecting the natural human propensity to learn and assimilate (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Deci, 1971).

Application of the teaching of the Noble Quran is one of the most influential intrinsic motivations that are practiced to be rewarded hereafter correcting human behavior. Allah says, "Whosoever brings good he shall have the better thereof whosoever brings evil then those who do evil deeds" (28:84). Thus check and balance works as the motivation where "He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for which (evil) he has earned" (2:286). However, "The most honorable of you with Allah is that who has At- Taqwa" (49:13). Thus, gaining satisfaction of Allah is the main motivation of the employees working in the organization whereas receiving appropriate rewards is the logical consequences of their performances.

4.3.2 Leading employees

After communicating proper motivation among the employees, a human resource manager needs to direct the working people. Allah says, "We raised some of them above others in ranks so that some may employ others in work" (43:32). Therefore, leading through assigning right task for the right people in the right time and place is very crucial. Nevertheless, it is noted that at the time of assigning duties and responsibilities individual strength and weakness should be considered. About this regards, the Holy Quran says, "Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope" (2:286). Checking performance according to target or standard is very essential since rewards rely on the performance according to the verse 19 of chapter 26 in the Quran.

Communication is very much essential for leading. Here, Almighty Allah suggests, "Speak good to the people" (2:83). If honesty through speaking truth is cultured in the organization, performance will be better resulting in effective direction. The glorious Quran also claims, "And speak the truth, He will direct you to do righteous good deeds" (33:70-71). What seems the most influential and significant for a human resource manager in leading is that a leader must maintain a balance between speech and performance since imbalance of words with deeds are prohibited in Islam mentioned in the Noble Quran (See chapter 61: 2-3).

4.3.3 Controlling employees

After motivating and directing employees, setting effective control system is the key to success in any organization. Although conventional human resource management is tied with target fulfillment introducing technical control like close circuit camera, Islamic human resource management will have to emphasize on consciousness of Allah. It is a feeling that Allah sees everything even what is in mind, and that shall be the real control checking himself from any kind of irregularities. Allah says, "Allah Who has created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed" (Al Qur'an, 67: 2). Best in deeds means the best quality. The human resource managers will communicate the employees the teaching of Allah that Allah wants the employees to do their best in their work place. Performing the commandments of Allah will ensure best quality and standard service. Human possesses opportunistic behavior like deceiving, stealing, or other unfair means in absence of the supervisor. Human, however, never can deceive Allah. Allah says, "Verily, All is the all hearer, He is the all seer"(Al Qur'an, 17:1), "Allah is aware of everything" (Al Qur'an, 67:14). The consciousness of Allah who sees everything shall save employees from deceiving their work making them capable in rendering best quality service for better control.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since modern management theory is blamed to be separated humanity from nature and truth from morality in which reintegration is necessary (Gladwin *et al.*, 1995). A physically sound and trustworthy individual is certainly resource or valuable capital than other tangible capital in an organization. Islamic human resource management might work as a bridge between conventional management literatures ensuring a flow of human capital that the practicing business concerns are in need. Consequently, the study is likely to induct new insight in the human resource management field over viewing a unique concept as to managing human resources in the organization mixing the existing practice with the teaching of the Quranic principles. Furthermore, the guidelines shown on the human resource management stressing few selected verses from the Holy Quran as a theory might work as the new knowledge base for the academics and for the management practitioners interested in scriptural knowledge.

It also can be noted that the basic features of human according to the Noble Quran possesses implications to the consumer behavior, human psychology and other disciplines. Finally, the simplified model of human resource management shown as a theoretical framework might glance the whole work together to the stakeholders intending to build different models further. As integration of Islamic principles in various academic and business fields are well recognized, a separate human resource management notion based on the Islamic principles is the demand of time. However, future study is highly required applying the mentioned Islamic principles of basis characteristics of human. The conceptual model of the current study also may show the ways to explore new thoughts to the academics in enriching knowledge, and to the Islamic corporate managers in managing their people making them spiritual human capital working in the organization.

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