

# Prolegomena for an Islamic Perspective of Educational Management

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This article proposes an Islamic perspective to educational administration based on the Islamic worldview, the general purposes of the Shari'ah and the Islamic position on fundamental paradigmatic issues. It then relates the Islamic perspective to the field of educational administration, and generates, within the constraints of space, applications for selected areas of the field. The article concludes with a discussion that sets forth the "prolegomena" for an Islamic perspective of educational administration.

Exploring alternatives to the prevailing positivistic<sup>1</sup> paradigm is a phenomenon that now permeates almost all human and social sciences. In educational administration, voices dissenting from the mainstream positivistic scholarship have been heard since the early 1970s. Prior to that time, systematic efforts were undertaken to arrive at universal law-like generalizations that are valid to all organizations (e.g., schools). Law-like generalizations (causal regularities) were not discovered, and "there is every reason to believe that they will never be discovered in the social and educational areas."<sup>2</sup> The result is the break-up of positivism and the emergence of new perspectives (e.g., postpositivism, critical theory, hermeneutics) that seek to recast our thinking about social inquiry and practice. All these trends are secular. Recently, a few scholars have started to explore the religious perspective.<sup>3</sup>

Educational administration is now full of theories from all the colors of the intellectual spectrum. While Griffiths<sup>4</sup> observes a state of "intellectual

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turmoil" in educational administration, Evers and Lakomski<sup>5</sup> describe the situation as a *standoff between various theories*. This article is an attempt to articulate an Islamic perspective to "educational administration," to generate applications for selected areas in educational administration, and to identify the points of departure for approaching this field from the Islamic perspective.

## Rationale

Introducing the Islamic perspective to educational administration is a religious, cultural, civilizational as well as practical necessity. The prevailing models were developed within the secular traditions that either challenge or neglect religion. The Islamic perspective is a necessity to maintain the Ummatic identity by means of building a substantive Islamic body of knowledge and firmly establishing the collective memory of scholars and practitioners. The Islamic perspective is a practical necessity. When new ideas are introduced which are consistent with people's *a priori* understandings, such ideas are acquired quickly without unnecessary cognitive dissonance and the trauma of "word deep" translations.<sup>6</sup>

An Islamic perspective for educational administration is yet to be articulated. Saeed *et al.*<sup>7</sup> observe that management literature from an Islamic perspective is still in its infancy, and concentrate on public administration. In educational administration there is a real dearth of scholarly literature from an Islamic perspective. Apart from very few theses,<sup>8</sup> the author is not aware of any relevant study.

## The Theoretical Framework

Any attempt to develop an Islamic perspective to educational administration shall necessarily start with a theoretical framework and then relate it to the field. In this article, the proposed theoretical framework consists of the Islamic worldview<sup>9</sup> of the universe, man, and life; the general characteristics of the Islamic worldview; and the purposes of the Shari'ah, the Islamic position on some philosophical issues.

### The Islamic Worldview

*The Unity (Tawhid) Concept:*<sup>10</sup> *Tawhid* is based on the Oneness of Allah, from which the unity of human beings, unity of religion, unity of the universe, and unity of knowledge emanate. He alone is Omniscient,

Omnipresent, and Omnipotent. By His omnipotence everything is run, and by His care the world is sustained.

*The Universe:* This universe is characterized by uniformity, purposefulness, and interdependence of its elements. The firm order is manifested in the fixed laws and regularities which hold across time and place. It is furnished in such a way to enable man to undertake his *khilafah*-bound duties.<sup>11</sup>

*Human Nature:*<sup>12</sup> The holy Qur'an reveals that man is created from clay in which the Divine spirit is breathed. This means that man is composed of a spiritual component, which enables him to receive divine guidance, and a material component, which enables him to develop the universe. Although man is born in a pure natural state (*fitra*), he sometimes deviates from the right path. However, he can always repent and resume a righteous life. Man is provided with the tools of reflection and is given the choice and freedom to become good or bad. Man has an ability to learn, inclination for curiosity, and the ability to take initiatives and embark on adventures. In return, he is assigned the task of developing the universe and promoting himself in accordance with divine teachings (*khilafah*).

On the other hand, man is described in the Qur'an as weak, hasty, ungrateful, covetous, impatient, contentious, a tyrant and a fool, manipulative, prone to temptations, arrogant, versatile, rebellious, forgetful, and many other adjectives denoting his imperfection. That is why man is always required to perfect himself, to upgrade his knowledge. And that is also why he always stands in need of divine guidance.

*Man and the Universe:* The relationship between them is based on harmony rather than on conflict. This calls for moderation and a sense of responsibility in the utilization of nature's resources. It is against self-indulgence, extravagance, and waste.

*Ultimate Goal of Life:* Man is assigned the *khilafah* (vicegerency), which entails developing the universe in accordance with divine orders. Implementing the *khilafah*-bound duties is known as '*ibadah*, which is wider in scope than its English equivalent "worship." It permeates every activity, be it biological or intellectual. Man will be accountable for undertaking the *khilafa*, in this life, before fellow human beings, and in the hereafter, before Allah.

### Islamic Worldview and the Purposes of the Shari'ah

There is a consensus among Muslim scholars that the Islamic worldview is unique for being divinely-given, comprehensive, consistent, coherent,

balanced, realistic, practical, and simple.<sup>13</sup> Except for “being divinely-given,” other characteristics are laudable in the existing Western literature, although no one single theory accommodates them all.<sup>14</sup>

The general intent of the Shari’ah is to provide happiness to human beings in this life and in the hereafter. This is divided into three subpurposes: the necessary that is indispensable to the maintenance of the religious and temporal affairs; the need-oriented, which is needed to ease hardships; and the amelioration-oriented, which aims at achieving a better life. The “necessary” is further divided into the protection of religion, soul, progeny, property, and mind. These also can be broken into subpurposes that contribute to their accomplishment; inter alia, justice, brotherhood, developing the earth, and so on. While some of these sub-purposes are easily grasped, others are unraveled only through systematic investigation.<sup>15</sup>

### Some Philosophical Issues<sup>16</sup>

*The Ontological Issue:* Whether or not there is a reality “out there” to be apprehended is a controversial issue in contemporary debates.<sup>17</sup> From the Islamic perspective there is a reality “out there.” Searching for reality is a religious duty. However, reality is often mediated not only by the imperfection of our minds and senses and the complexity of facts (“hyper-reality”), but also by our desires and deviations, our biases and vested interests (*hawa*). The Qur’an warns against these barriers and calls for verification, gathering and refining evidences, exploring different alternatives, and avoiding oversimplification and jumping to conclusions.

*The Epistemological Issue:* The relationship between the inquirer and the investigated object, from the Islamic perspective, is transactional. Man can influence the truth and can be influenced by his object of investigation. However, this does not mean relativism. The inquirer is required to refine his methods and constantly gather and question data till he approximates the truth. And even in this case the likelihood that the inquirer is mistaken is high. That is why Muslim scholars often end their inquiry by saying *Allahu d’lam*, meaning Allah knows better.<sup>18</sup>

*The Nature of Knowledge and the Methodological Issue:* According to the Islamic perspective there is a balance between sources of knowledge. Besides revelation, knowledge can be generated by using reason, senses, induction, deduction, intuition, and personal experience. Islam does not overlook any source of knowledge. Of course revealed knowledge is the

most authentic.<sup>19</sup> This implies that multiple methods are to be applied to approximate the truth.

Knowledge in Islam accumulates by means of refining and criticizing in the light of the revealed knowledge and emerging evidences. The revealed text itself is not subject to verification or falsification, but the human understanding of the revealed text, particularly the nonconclusive statement, is subject to such a process.<sup>20</sup>

*The Position of Values and Ethics:* Values and ethics have a preeminent place in the Islamic perspective. These have to be derived from Islamic sources. What distinguishes the Islamic ethics and values is that they are not confined to “legal” or “situational” aspects.<sup>21</sup>

## Implications for Educational Administration

The Islamic perspective as outlined above is supposed to have innumerable ramifications for the field of educational administration as on other fields of inquiry. The implications span theoretical and practical areas. In this section selected implications will be highlighted.

### The Source of Administrative Knowledge

The history of educational administration witnessed sharp differences as to what constitutes a reliable, legitimate, and authoritative source for administrative knowledge. The early versions of the “scientific theory” view science and the scientific method as the only authentic source for administrative knowledge. This approach emerged rapidly after Simon’s groundbreaking “Administrative Behavior” in 1947<sup>22</sup> and climaxed with the efforts of the Theory Movement until its demise in the early 1970s.<sup>23</sup>

New generations of scholars worked to modify the previously blind subscription to science. The landmark works of Bertalanffy ushered in the “open systems” approach in educational administration, with biology replacing physics as a model. Moreover, science, for Bertalanffy, is one of the sources and not the only source. Symbols, myths, culture, and the like are also real. Later in the century Evers and Lakomski<sup>24</sup> worked eagerly to restore the confidence in science as a source for educational administration. They called for introducing the elements that were lacking in old scientific approaches, such as values and ethics and extra-organizational factors.

The subscribers to the interpretive paradigm<sup>25</sup> are of the opinion that educational administration cannot be put under the jurisdiction of science. They adopt, instead, a hermeneutic, phenomenological approach which gives more emphasis to the individual human experience. The subscribers

to the critical paradigm (e.g., the feminists) are also of the view that the real life of people in schools and educational settings rather than science is the authentic source of administrative knowledge. Critical theorists, however, give special importance to the oppressed and to minorities such as women and blacks.<sup>26</sup> Sergiovanni<sup>27</sup> calls for conferring legitimacy on other sources of knowledge such as the "sacred authority." With strong roots in secularism he stops short of explicitly specifying religion as a legitimate source of knowledge. Other scholars specified religion (Christianity) as a source of administrative knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

The Islamic perspective which is characterized by "balance" and "holism" accommodates science as a source of administrative knowledge, a convergence with the old versions of scientific approaches; but it considers science as only one source of knowledge, a convergence with the "open systems" approach. It gives significance to the real lives of participants in organizations, a convergence with the interpretive and critical paradigms; and it considers the experiences of the oppressed and minorities, a convergence with the critical paradigm. But, as with science, the real experience of members of organization is not the sole source of administrative knowledge. Moreover, the Islamic perspective radically differs from the interpretive and critical paradigm concerning gays and lesbians. These are not minorities but rather deviant groups who should be corrected, rehabilitated, or punished. The Islamic perspective converges with the recent calls for considering religion as a legitimate source of administrative knowledge. However, Islamic revelation is the most authentic source. Human knowledge, including that which is based on revelation, is subject to question and everlasting modification. This applies for the administrative works of Muslim scholars and the administrative practices of Muslims over centuries. These are sources that inform our modern administrative knowledge and practice, but they are not binding.

### The Role of Theoretical Knowledge

The role of theory is another contentious issue in the literature of educational administration. The metaphors of the "ivory towers" and the "firing line" are recalled in this respect. Theorizing may be viewed as impractical, detached abstractions that contrast with the experiences of practitioners and do not address or consider the latter's real concerns. These antitheory arguments could be traced to the positions of different paradigms on the aims of inquiry in general and the role of researchers. The positivists aim at explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena. The positivist

researcher is a disinterested scientist whose role is to inform decision making. Critical theorists aim to critique and transform the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit human kind, by engaging in confrontation, even conflict. The critical researcher is a transformative intellectual, who expands consciousness and confronts ignorance, a facilitator of change as greater insights develop. In the interpretive approach the aim of inquiry is to understand and reconstruct interpretations initially held by the participants but to still be open for more and new interpretations as information and sophistication improves. The interpretive inquirer is a passionate participant, a facilitator of multiple interpretations.

The practical characteristic of the Islamic worldview entails that inquiry, as a human endeavor, should be purposeful. The Prophet used to pray for useful knowledge and seek refuge with Allah from meaningless knowledge. In the light of the Islamic concept of the "man as *khalifah*," the inquirer is an active person. He is not a remote expert, indifferent to the consequences, or just a participant, or merely an interpreter of reality, but a leader of change. However, change and transformation should be guided by the revealed sources.

So while Muslim researchers share with their positivist colleagues the concern for explaining and predicting phenomena, they do not stop there but strive toward amelioration rather than control; and while they share their criticalist colleagues' sense of responsibility for transformation, they differ in the direction.

In the light of the characteristics of the Islamic worldview, theoretical knowledge is necessary to guide practice. It provides a sense of direction that helps in the holistic approach to the administrative work, with an awareness of the links and consequences. This works for optimal prioritization and against waste and fragmentation. However, scholars should consider the practitioners' experiences. While theory should inform practice, practice should be allowed to modify theories.

### The Concept of Educational Administration

The Islamic holistic approach puts emphasis on all variables and factors, be they social, cultural, or ethical (the extraorganizational factors) that affect the work of organizations. It emphasizes the ethical dimension, which has long been ignored in the prevailing models. Thus educational administration from the Islamic perspective would be more encompassing, balanced, and unique. It may be conceptualized as a human endeavor that

coincides closely, interrelates, and interacts with other endeavors to transform school children into good human beings, through systematic educational programs according to Islamic teachings. It is not working through, manipulating, or controlling others but through sincerely working with others. The others are not only the internal publics but the external publics as well. It is a purposeful, meaningful effort guided by a framework.

The Islamic perspective makes a difference in transforming educational administration into a noble mission that deals with another exalted mission, that is, education. As elsewhere mentioned, some Western scholars refer to educational administration as service and stewardship. From the Islamic perspective, service and stewardship are manifestations of *'ibadah* in its broad sense. The ultimate aim is to please Allah. This entails all meanings of sharing, caring, concern, and love, on the one hand, and efficiency, excellence, diligence, and smartness on the other. From this perspective, the hand of administration (action) will be guided by the heart (feelings) and mind (reason), in harmony and concurrence. The soft (the human) and the hard (rules and regulations) are marvelously integrated. This missionary feature of educational administration may be helpful, particularly these days, to counterbalance the adverse effects of the widespread self-interested practices of administrators.<sup>29</sup>

### The Organization (School)

Living in organizations started from the very beginning of Islamic history. The Hadith make it obligatory for any group to appoint a leader even if the number of members is only two. However, the significance accorded to man over other beings and to noble ideas over things, limits the tyranny of organizations where overbureaucracy leads to rigidity, boredom, corruption, communication gaps, and so on. The Islamic concept does not support technical rationality and all forms of reification.<sup>30</sup> Organization is necessary to manage human affairs and perfect human life. It is not an aim but the means. Put differently, it should be in the service of human beings and not the other way around. The features have become associated with organizations such as hierarchy, rules and regulations, impersonal relationships, and the like and should not be allowed to accumulate and overburden human beings.

### Educational Administrators

Administrators are salaried employees. This is not disputed from the Islamic perspective. However, the noble mission of administration entails

that administrators become leaders. A leader can see the organization in its entirety, view things from a wider perspective, make and execute decisions, and delegate authority, acquire loyalty, build consensus, project exemplary behavior and influence (not coerce), show concern for the group, and act responsibly; a leader is clear in talking, calm in discussing, skillful in persuading, powerful in carrying out duties, impartial, and able to articulate expectations. An Islamic leader is a change agent; he contemplates plans and methods for change and actually puts them into practice after listening to other views and sincerely considering them. The Islamic perspective, at the same time, works against arrogance, elation, and extravagance and calls for modesty, humility and simplicity. In summary, the Islamic perspective is not one-sided. The administrator/leader is, from this perspective, supposed to be a God-fearing, competent expert<sup>31</sup> (strong and trustworthy as stated in the Qur'an).

According to this concept, teachers become leaders, although some will, for the sake of accountability, be incumbents of administrative positions (e.g., principals).<sup>32</sup> However, Islam calls for realism. We cannot expect every member to be a leader. And we know stories of the Islamic history of the best Muslims, in terms of *taqwa*, who were denied higher administrative jobs because they were not fit. However, it is the duty of the leaders and organizations to bring up new leaders, to encourage everyone to be a leader, and to expose promising members to the real life of administration.

### Administrator-Staff Relationship

Management literature has dwelled extensively on the administrator-staff relationship. Broadly speaking, staff are seen, in the prevailing models, as a means to some end held by the leader who shapes follower's behavior in a desired direction. Within this context scholars raise many controversial issues. While, in the closed systems theories, staff have to follow the superordinates' orders by virtue of the latter's expertise or hierarchical position, staff are accorded more significance in human relations approaches. As is well documented in the literature, the human relations approach became another way of manipulating people to achieve a predetermined end, at worst, or engaging them in mutually beneficial exchanges, at best.<sup>33</sup>

As stated above, administration, from the Islamic perspective, is a missionary task and not a privilege. This means that the administrator-staff relationship is not seen as superordinate-subordinate as but a "leader-of-leaders" one:

We have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world, and raised some of them above others in rank that some of them may take labor from others and the mercy of your Lord is better than the wealth they amass. (43:32)

This Qur'anic verse shows that the hierarchical relationship is inherent in human settings but that such a relationship does not deprive the subordinate of human dignity and worth, nor does it imply a rigid "division of labor" where the wisdom is monopolized by the higher echelons. Members should feel free to voice feelings and objections and have their questions answered in an atmosphere of free thinking, healthy exchange of ideas, criticism, and mutual respect. On the other hand, members are ordered to be sincere in advice. On assuming the *khilafah*, Abu Bakr addressed the Ummah, "I was chosen to rule over you even though I am not the best of you." These concise words put to rest the rigid claims of the bureaucratic and scientific models that say that those higher in position are greater experts, and to the theory of "division of labor" which says that management plans and makes decisions while the workers merely carry them out. From the Islamic perspective, subordinates are stake holders in the real sense of the term. This may require rotating administrative positions to help teachers acquire administrative skills and to keep administrators in touch with reality.

However, these noble principles may be abused. For example, the recent calls in educational administration for empowerment, transformational leadership, power *with* rather than power *over*, devaluation or devolution of leadership, school-site management, "teachers as managers," and the like look appealing on the surface and even edge closer to the Islamic perspective. But the likelihood is high that they lack sincerity and that the hidden agenda is to achieve cost-effectiveness by adding more burdens to teachers.<sup>34</sup> Even in Islamic settings this should not occur. Islamic sentiments should not be exploited to add burdens to teachers except with their full consent. Coercive contracts and the like are not valid in Islam. The story of Moses and Shu'ayb is very pertinent in this respect.

### Decision-Making

The thrust of administration is to make decisions. *Shura* is well known as the Islamic model for decision making. *Shura* and its derivatives are mentioned in the holy Quran (Al-Shura:38; Al-Imran:158; Al-Baqara:233) to convey the meaning of deliberation in public as well as in personal affairs: exhibition, display, and pointing out. An interesting meaning of *shura* is "to

extract honey from the small hollow in the rock in which it is deposited by the wild bees, or to get honey from the hives of bees and other places.”

The scope of consultation should be as wide as possible. The majority of scholars hold that consultation is obligatory in all aspects of Muslim life, be it political or educational. However, *shura* is not applicable in situations where there is an explicit revealed injunction and should not contradict a conclusive injunction.

*Shura* is supposed to lead us closest to the truth. It rules out absolutism from the life of Muslims. It guarantees reasonable results, as those who will carry out tasks have participated in planning.

Those eligible to be consulted are known in Islamic literature as *ahl al-hal wa al-'aqd* (wise, influential people) and *ahl al-ijtihad* (qualified people). This notwithstanding, it would be helpful to follow a developmental approach in practicing *shura*. Every member of an organization can be at one time or another one of *ahl al-hal wa al-'aqd*, depending on her or his level of experience, specialization, and expertise and on the nature of the debated topic. For example, in allocating offices, timetables, and duties for teachers, their views should be considered, or at least, principals should circulate tentative timetables, then ask for feedback before finalization. The feedback of teachers should be sincerely considered, but it is expected that it may not be possible to meet all their demands.

The main concern is to have a meaningful *shura*. This would be accomplished when a *shura* becomes part of the culture, not a passing fad or a means for manipulation or selling or conferring legitimacy on given decisions. A leader who throws his ideas and asks for consent is not practicing *shura*. Principals are not practicing *shura* if they hint to their preferences ahead of consultation or at the start of a meeting. A leader who frowns at dissenting views or even worse, uses threatening remarks or acts, is not practicing real *shura*.

*Shura* demands multilevel communication, a working environment that is harmonious, cooperative, and problem free. For a meaningful *shura*, the leader should give credit to members, not nullify or discredit them. Credit is still to be given to “Salman” for his idea of digging a trench around Madinah; and to Al-Hubab bin al-Munzir for his idea in Badr. There should be transparency, open mindedness, respect, and trust. Resorting to verbal wrangling and defensive stances does not nurture a *shura* culture.

By the same token, *shura* should not cause the institution to collapse. It should always be considered that the quality decision is the goal rather than

the frequency of involvement in decision making. *Shura* cannot go on forever. There should be a time frame after which a leader resolves to make a decision and acts with *tawakul*. *Tawakul* is the reliance of the heart on and confidence in Allah and the belief that all ends are at His disposal.

The implementation should be a collective action irrespective of prior stances. Once a decision is made everyone is religiously bound to abide by it. Islamic ethics and values should guide the decision making process. Meaningful *shura* works with togetherness, harmony, and honesty and does not work with politicking, backbiting, hypocrisy, insincerity, cowardice, selfishness, or slander.<sup>35</sup>

### Responsibility and Accountability

Administrative thought and practices range between recommending tight measures that assure accountability to respecting professionalism and self-accountability. The Islamic position on this issue is balanced. As previously mentioned people are held accountable for their deeds. In educational organizations, teachers and administrators are not demigods. They should have a sense of responsibility and should show that tasks are undertaken. Objective measures should be utilized in accountability. Teachers are required to justify their actions to the head teacher, principal, supervisors, parents, the ministry of education, and board of directors. In Islam this should be combined with an effort to promote self-responsibility. Human beings can always sidetrack whatever tight measures are set forth. Instilling self-responsibility and God-consciousness works effectively against irresponsible behavior. Instilling the belief that we are accountable in the hereafter yields commitment, awareness, and vigilance. If we are accountable only before the administration then our performance may lack coherence and consistency.

For accountability to be meaningful duties should be reasonable. For example, it has been observed that teachers are now required to do tasks ranging from baby-sitting to innovative teaching in addition to clerical, counseling, and managerial duties. It has been a practice of some administrators to overburden teachers in order to achieve results that satisfy the educational departments. School administration is not less demanding. Stress and burnout are well documented in the literature. Holding teachers and administrators accountable should be done in the light of their over-demanding, maybe less rewarding (at least materially) jobs. All variables that play a role in shaping the events in a particular setting should be considered. For example, the academic attainment of students is the function of

many interlinked variables ranging from teacher's performance to school environment. Holding teachers as the sole responsible party for students' attainment is not reasonable.

## Communication

The bulk of administrative work in educational settings is conducted through communication with internal and external publics. The means are so diversified: circulars, phone calls, posted notices, official letters, electronic mail, fax messages; announcement through amplifiers and intercoms, verbal and body messages. Communication may take place in staff meetings, on the way to classes or other places; sometimes incidentally, at other times arranged, formal or informal.

Islamic communication is purposeful and is "belief-and-virtue-oriented." It should be associated with *khayr* (goodness), *birr* (virtue), *qist* (equity), *ihsan* (moral and spiritual excellence), *'adl* (justice), *haqq* (truth and righteousness), *ma'rouf* (what is recommended), and *taqwa* (awareness of God). However, the Islamic system of communication goes beyond that. The Islamic teachings educate us about when, what, how, and to whom we speak and why:

— In the light of *itqān* (precision, perfection, skill), communication in an Islamic setting should be efficient and effective. Concerned parties should always and immediately be informed of what is going on in the institution. For efficient communication, letters should always be dated and signed. Administrators and staff alike should respond without unnecessary delay. Messages should be forwarded to the concerned party upon receipt.

— The right to know, verify, scrutinize, question, clarify, and have access to information should be respected. An administrator should not frown at any request of this kind. Denial of the existence of requested information, and destroying documents and all kinds of coverup are not Islamic practices. The right to know should be counterbalanced with pertinent Islamic positions and values. Evil stories should not be publicized; sensationalization and excitation are not encouraged. Blowing events out of proportion is also not acceptable.

— The message should be clear and free from ambiguities and threatening, provocative, and equivocal language. It should not put words in the mouths of others. Twisting truths, particularly by means of eloquent speech and literary language, is not acceptable. For practical reasons communicators should make sure that receivers of the message have understood it from

their perspective. They may ask the receivers directly to this effect, or they may ask them to paraphrase it. Communicators should be direct and to the point.

— Style and content are both important. It is recommended that the message should be brief without doing injustice to the content. The local culture and the level of teaching of the receiver should also be considered.

— Staff should not be put at a psychological disadvantage in meetings by deliberately allowing some and preventing others from speaking, giving time for some and pretending to be running short of time for others, showing respect and interest when some talk and indifference or disrespect to others, and so on.

— Communication should not be manipulated to serve people in power or self-interests. It should not be used for public relations and image building.

— Decent language is highly appreciated. Arrogance, filthy language, and raising the voice are not acceptable. Islamic communication should be free from obscenity, distrust, pornography, fabrication of truth, misinformation, distortion, hyperreality, falsification or suspicion, and rumor.

— An Islamic setting is not ugly, boring, or even overly serious. Communication in an Islamic setting can be amusing and joyful. Debates should be lively and pleasant. However, this should be done far from idle entertainment. The climate of an Islamic setting may be measured by the extent to which the members like the place and enjoy their work.

— The “balance” characteristic of the Islamic worldview entails that Muslim communicators should not be aggressive or passive but well-balanced, patient, and perseverant; they should use persuasion, not coercion.

— Information should not be disseminated without certain knowledge and authenticity of source; character assassination is not acceptable. False or “managed” information, or divulging inauthentic stories may injure one’s honor and reputation and undermine the integrity of others.

And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge, for every act of hearing or seeing or feeling in the heart will be inquired into. (17:36)

Incorrect information may lead to hatred, conflict, and antagonism; managed news weakens trust and creates a credibility gap; the obsession with excitement and image building lead to thwarting responsible human communication. Ethical principles are necessary for harmony, without fear, despair, hopelessness, anxiety, apprehension, and uncertainty. Speaking

fairly includes such ethical behavior as truthfulness, brevity, and purposefulness.

— The Islamic perspective entails critical thinking. This requires vigilance in dealing with messages. One should understand the sifting and filtering processes, mediating interests and culture, attempts to distract, stereotyping, digressions, and verbal wrangling.

— As human beings sometimes shy away from communicating their views, administrators should think of ways to solicit the views of those who are reticent. Seeking information from the grapevine, from the “writings on the walls” and other channels of communication may be helpful.

— Body language is no less important. It is narrated for example that the Prophet used to show respect to his audience by facing them with his full face. In Islam it is recommended to smile, have eye contact, and show interest by listening, writing, and responding. Showing respect and interest should not be superficial.

### Safety and Occupational Health

Protecting the self is one of the five prime purposes of the Shari'ah. Therefore, safety in educational settings should be a primary concern for administrators. This encompasses physical, mental, and psychological safety. The Islamic approach to safety is a preventive/corrective one. The former entails providing a safe accident-free environment. Accidents could be the result of unsafe conditions and unsafe acts. Unsafe conditions include improperly guarded and defective equipment, and hazardous procedures; job-related conditions such as fatigue, night shifts; and the psychological climate due to layoffs, garnished wages, and blighted living conditions. Unsafe acts include failing to use safe protective equipment, making safety devices inoperative, and unhealthy relationships such as distracting, teasing, abusing, and startling. Personality plays a role in safety. Some people are, for different reasons, accident prone. Lack of information and poor skill, are other contributors to accidents.

How to prevent accidents? The prevailing literature recommends the so-called “three Es”: engineering, education, and enforcement. The job should be engineered for safety, employees should be educated in safe procedures, and safety rules should be enforced.<sup>36</sup>

These recommendations are generally accepted from the Islamic perspective, but with reservations. *Haram* practices cannot be accommodated on the grounds of providing safety measures (providing needles for drug addicts or promoting safe sex, for example) in an Islamic setting. The

Islamic alternative is to eliminate sexual arousal in the workplace by providing an environment free from the excessive mixing of the sexes, indecent language, pornography, and the like; and at the same time providing an environment conducive to virtues and free from distress. On the other hand the 3Es are not enough. These days drug addiction, alcoholism and substance abuse, sexual crimes, and mental diseases such as job stress and burnout, anxiety, depression, anger, and various physical consequences such as cardiovascular diseases, headaches, and accidents are among the work-place problems. These hazards cannot be treated by the 3Es alone. Instilling Islamic values, nurturing God-consciousness, satisfying spiritual needs, creating an awareness of the hereafter, spreading the Islamic atmosphere in the workplace, and promoting healthy relationships should be complementary to the 3Es.

Those hazards are the fallout of the cruel, materialistic, individualistic atmosphere where values, ethics, and moral deliberation have no place. Those who cannot win or cope are left behind. It is the legacy of the notorious positivistic, mechanistic, reductionistic, empiricist paradigm which provides no choices or alternatives; the legacy of the scientific administration which believes in the "one best method" and reduces human beings to just extensions of machines; the legacy of the bureaucratic model which puts human beings in an inferior position compared to rules and regulations, hierarchical relationships, and the proper channels of communications. It has its roots in social Darwinism and its cruel rule—the survival of the fittest. Even when it was felt that those hazards should be attended to and help through counseling was solicited, one was left to wonder to what extent this was helpful. This is not to discredit psychology but to emphasize that the 3Es and counseling will deliver a lot if they are practiced within the all-encompassing Islamic perspective and its preventive-corrective approach.

In schools a program for safety should include instructions to both staff and students, a plan to keep school sites free from hazards, continuous examining of the place, and training to use tools and equipment, and making sure that such equipment is properly maintained. Discipline should not cause physical or mental injuries. Administrators should practice self-restraint and control their temper when punishment is necessary. Punishment should not be seen as a way to vent frustration. Ample freedom should be given to children to exercise all their powers of choice and judgment.

Stress is one of the major occupational hazards in schools. It is caused by the physical and psychological constraints associated with over-demanding and less rewarding work, overcrowded classes, exhaustion and nervous breakdown, and other physical disorders such as hypertension and gastric ulcers. Another source of stress is poor career prospects, financial worries, job insecurity, the poor state of school building, and unsatisfactory labor relationships with the establishment. Other factors include the changing role of the teacher, role contradictions and ambiguity, the changing attitude of society toward teachers, the uncertainty about the objectives of the educational system, and the deterioration of the image of the teacher.

The prevailing literature recommends that school administrations help teachers overcome this problem by providing support to staff who are showing reactions to stress; understanding the cause of stress; getting staff together to talk about any stress they may be experiencing; improving teachers' self esteem; and rationalizing work patterns.

The above recommendations are, from the Islamic perspective, acceptable, but they are not enough. Scrupulous reference to the Islamic perspective can assist in predicting and understanding the stress that affects teachers. Islamic beliefs, particularly the belief in Allah as our Creator and Sustainer, and the belief in the hereafter, can moderate the cognitive-stress relationship. Islamic stress management<sup>37</sup>

- develops awareness of the internal sources of stress,
- uses Islamic beliefs to alter the quality of the perceived stressor,
- develops self-leadership,
- restructures goal-oriented behavior so that internal needs and wants are met but with less stress,
- focuses attention on interpretations (of a stressor) that promote resolution and growth rather than on those that promote damage and disease,
- develops self-correction skills which enable a Muslim to change the negative aspects in his personality that may be causing stress, and
- uses prayers to provide a quiet environment, free from distractions.

The Islamic atmosphere, which radiates confidence, honesty, cheerfulness, affection, friendship, generosity, self-discipline, cooperation, persistence, ingenuity, vigilance, and a sense of responsibility and of mission, is a

powerful preventive measure against mental breakdown. The Islamic injunctions of controlling temper, forgiveness, and patience are conducive to a safe environment.

## Discussion and Conclusions

We have thus far sought to develop the Islamic perspective to educational administration and generate, within the allowed space, applications for selected areas pertinent to this field. Based on this, we set forth the following points (prolegomena) for approaching this field from the Islamic perspective:

1. The Islamic perspective is a frame of reference. It is not a theory or model, but many theories and models can be developed within its context. Its uniqueness emanates from its theoretical basis. First and foremost it is divinely given, which is the bedrock for other characteristics such as comprehensiveness, balance, coherence, fecundity, and simplicity. This would be manifested in administration in different ways. For instance, all the variables and factors that affect organizations, including the extra-organizational factors, should be considered to describe organizational behavior and to prescribe optimal solutions. Acknowledging the role of extra-organizational factors connects administration to the mother organization, society, the Ummah, and humanity to the grand system, the universe, and its Creator. This is a manifestation of Oneness and transcendentalism. Administration thus becomes a subsystem of the grand system. This sets the pace for many ethical and environmental implications whose discussion is outside the scope of this article.

This unique perspective is able to accommodate the dualities and reconcile the otherwise discordant issues, which caused turmoil, standoffs, and different levels of tensions in the legacy of educational administration. As frequently mentioned in this article, administration from the Islamic perspective will be result-oriented and human-oriented. Efficiency will be counterbalanced by a sense of social responsibility and respect for human dignity. The administrator-staff relationship will follow the "leader of leaders" model. Physiological, psychological, and spiritual needs will be responded to. Science, revealed text, reason, sense experience, deduction and induction, and intuition are legitimate sources of administrative knowledge with revelation superseding them all. In formal and informal organizations, culture and structure are entertained.

Idealism and realism go hand in hand. The Islamic perspective is descriptive as well as normative. However, though “what is” should be considered, it does not dictate “what ought to be.” This gives administrators more latitude to tailor their leadership style to the current educational and commitment levels of their staff without losing faith in the ability to tap into the staff’s higher potentials. To use some technical terms, an administrator can start as a “transactional” leader if the staff are employees who believe in “a fair day’s work for a fair wage.” At such a level, rules and regulations; extrinsic motives and needs; and rewards responding to physical, security, social, and ego needs and the like are required. However, from the Islamic perspective this should be only a transitional stage during which an organization is transformed into a milieu of *khulafa’* and *shuhud* who adhere to Islamic common values, aspire toward improvisation, experience a great sense of efficacy, are intrinsically motivated, and strive for meaning and significance. This transformational process should climax with both leader and led transcending their self-interests to subscribe to a cause beyond themselves. At this stage, the leader needs to invoke the staff’s esteem, competence, autonomy, sense of worth and, above all, God’s pleasure and the hereafter rather than rules and regulations.

Such an approach would turn staff into dedicated, committed, trustworthy, efficient, competent *dai’yah*, who care for others and love to render service to others regardless of immediate, particularly material rewards.

The Islamic perspective is unique for being value-based. Core values are not compromised. Rules and regulations, objectivity, rationality, and the like are wanting and should be supported by ethics and values. As Zarqa puts it:

Society clearly needs both ethics and law. Law seems more prominent as it has clear sanctions and the state’s “power of coercion” behind it. But law cannot survive for long without an ethical foundation. Laws, which defy commonly held ethical beliefs cannot be effectively enforced.<sup>38</sup>

Values and ethics have been excluded from the prevailing models on the grounds that they cannot lend themselves to empirical verification. Of late, they have received more emphasis. Essentially though, there are sharp differences on what constitute valued values, the source of values, whether values are time-and-context free or situational and utilitarian in nature and as a consequence can be compromised, whether legality is considered, and similar controversies.

Such a perspective has the ability to tap higher levels of human potential. It equips subscribers, whether scholars or practitioners, with a sense of direction. As a consequence, they can approach their field holistically, relate events to each other, particularly those that seem unrelated, identify the threads that go through them, and set forth proper solutions. In the light of the Islamic perspective, administrators will be in a better position to explain and understand behavior in their institutions, plumb the depths, trace roots, and generate meanings.

The Islamic perspective should help in prioritization and strategic planning. This entails transcending the immediate to the long range, disseminating meanings through actions, and relating the obvious to the subtle. Sergiovanni<sup>39</sup> observes that the holistic values of purpose, goodness, long-term quality, and importance are missed in the current Western management culture, which emphasizes efficiency, specificity, rationality, measurability, and objectivity with the belief that good management is tough minded. He attributes this to the fact that leadership in the West is more result-oriented and more tactical than strategic. This results in giving more emphasis to the form rather than to the essence. In school settings, improvement plans become more important than improving outcomes, scores on teacher appraisal systems become more important substitutes for good teaching, accumulation of credits in courses and in service workshops becomes a substitute for changes in practice, discipline plans become substitutes to student control, leadership styles become a substitute for purpose and substance, cooperation becomes a substitute for commitment, compliance becomes a substitute for results. The ultimate result is "goal displacement," losing sight of purpose and allowing instrumental processes and procedures to become ends in themselves. Rules are enforced because they exist. Supervision and evaluation are repeated thousands of times with little effect.

The Islamic frame of reference will turn administrators into leaders of leaders, who carry out a missionary task. In the light of the Islamic perspective administrators will not be concerned only with discharging of routine duties; rather, they will be initiating and leading their institutions toward new horizons. Moreover they will see their institutions in their relationship with the grand institution, that is the society and the Ummah as a whole.

2. The Islamic perspective allows for flexibility. It will help administrators generate applications to existing and emerging situations, as has been shown in this article. The following should be noted:

— The applications are by no means finite or rigid. The point of departure for this article is that once a perspective is articulated and internalized, infinite applications would be arrived at. The author holds that generating applications is an act of *ijtihad* which should be done by scholars, researchers, and practitioners who have experience in their field and a reasonable grasp of the revealed knowledge. This *ijtihad* is subject to criticism and modification.

— To apply the Islamic perspective, every component of it should be translated into realities and acts of behavior in educational settings. For example, being divinely given invites respect for human individuality, exalting modesty, humility, justice, perfection, and excellence and works against arrogance, elation and extravagance, mediocrity, and complacency. This and other characteristics such as simplicity and practicality should be manifested in the interpersonal relationships, in the type of communications, furniture, the accessibility of administrators, school schedules, time management, students' achievements, and school community relationship.

However, these components are interrelated and therefore should be considered together. For example, being divinely given and the "divine breath" in man require perfection which can take the form of high expectations for students' and teachers' performance. Realism, practicality, and the "clay" aspect of man, on the other hand, call for "reasonable expectations." Balance and comprehensiveness work to reconcile by considering reasonable expectations as a phase on the way toward higher expectations.

— Those applications are not necessarily or literally stated in the Quranic verses or Hadith or the Islamic-related literature or practice. In fact, the term "generating" suggests proposing novel ideas and solutions. It is enough that such applications be inspired by and in congruence with the Islamic perspective.

3. Dealing with the other, the Islamic frame of reference helps to incorporate any thought or practice that may be found in the literature, as long as it is in line with the Islamic worldview. However, this should be done in a rational, mature, and honest way. This requires a creative engagement with the existing literature that does not stop at the surface but plumbs the motives, connotations, and agenda. As a consequence, incorporating the other requires many processes of purification, correction, and reorientation.

In this respect, the author observes the inclination of Muslim scholars to prove the Muslims' precedence (associated with underestimating the other). The other side of the argument is to establish the congruity between Islamic management and the most recent ideas (spontaneous overestimation of the other), mistakenly assuming that the most recent is necessarily the best or that recency is a fixed state. On the contrary, the author holds that recentness is in flux, that the most recent is not necessarily the best, and that the old is not necessarily obsolete. In the author's view, Taylor's scientific management, for example, which was developed in the late 1900s and has since been very much criticized, has some concepts, such as efficiency, which can be accommodated in a body of Islamic management. By the same token, some ideas of Evers and Lakomski in the 1990s, such as the role of extra-organizational factors in administration, converge with the Islamic perspective. Another side of the argument is that both theories contain some ideas which diverge from the Islamic perspective (the "one best method" of Taylor and the "science as the sole source of administrative knowledge" of Evers and Lakomski).

On the other hand, one should be aware of the connotations that are associated with the other's thought and practice. Many ideas which appear appealing on the surface may have negative connotations or a hidden agenda that contradict the Islamic perspective. For example, the most recent calls, in the Western world and literature, for "empowerment," "school-site management," "devolution or devaluation of schools," "teachers as managers or leaders," and "transformational leadership" are appealing and do not conflict with the Islamic line of thinking. However, a scrupulous investigation may reveal that these recent shifts are tools of economic rationalism rather than of educational effectiveness, associated with the aim of cheaper rather than better schools and with a desire to weaken public education and promote privatization.

With a stretch of the imagination this exercise may be repeated with other ideas and recommended practices. For example, efficiency, effectiveness, and result-and-task-orientation (in the scientific approaches), if not checked, may lead to reducing human beings to mere machine extensions, while human orientation (in the human relations approaches) in its extremist form may lead to a laissez-fair situation, manipulation, and even dishonest practices. Customer satisfaction (the essence of Total Quality Management), though appealing, may be abused. In education the customer is the student. Abusing this principle may lead to "teaching the test."

Another principle in TQM is "doing things right the first time." From the Islamic perspective, it should be modified to "doing the right things right the first time." Feminist critical theory provides another example. While there is no quarrel with the bulk of demands of feminists in educational administration, the monosided conceptualizing of the relationship between male and female administrators as an everlasting struggle or conceptualizing males as the source of oppression is not acceptable. This can also be employed with the interpretive approaches which in its extremist position calls for "anything goes." These are just a few examples.

In sum, there are always levels of convergence and divergence between the Islamic perspective and other theories, despite recentness or obsolescence. An in-depth investigation into the literature of educational administration reveals that the standoff between various theories is the function of polarized positions on certain fundamental issues such as the role of science and individual experience, the possibility of arriving at law-like generalizations, the gender-related issues, the individual-organization duality, and the role of theory and practice. These differences are manifested in the tension that results from the uncompromising arguments and counterarguments that characterize the whole current scholarship in social sciences. In AbuSulaiman's words:

this is so because human reason alone is incapable of attaining the ultimate truth about and full understanding of what is desirable for humanity. . . . this predicament lies in the fact that Western Civilization is lost in so many haphazard and contradictory theories, that it is unable to arrive at one single theory or confidently resolve any problem . . .<sup>40</sup>

4. Contribution: Approaching educational administration from the Islamic perspective reaches its apogee when it goes beyond incorporating the other or reviving the past, to contributing. And this is the most challenging and urgent task, which needs painstaking efforts. A theory, perspective, or paradigm is measured by its fecundity, that is, its capability to generate research and ideas. Contribution is, in fact, the highest form of creative, mutual civilizational exchange.

The most important contribution would be the creating of an Islamic organizational climate which is the outcome of social and professional interactions, and organizational culture, that is, the shared beliefs, expectations, norms, and values of the members.<sup>41</sup> The Islamic climate should give the Islamic institution its distinctive identity that one senses immediately on

entering the building. The major functions of educational administration such as meetings, record keeping, appraisal, delegation, and discipline and the major processes such as communication and decision making are undertaken in all settings regardless of the prevailing perspective. However, the difference will be felt in the institution's climate. It is assumed that the Islamic perspective brings about a unique organizational climate characterized by spreading Islamic sublime values.<sup>42</sup> This could be measured by the ways information is disseminated, communication is conducted, conflicts are resolved, the offices are run, and the premises are maintained; by the kind of interpersonal relationships; and by the degree of satisfaction.

In an Islamic climate it is assumed that many problems which seem incurable in modern organizations such as sexual harassment, drug addiction, alcoholism, and sexual diseases and the problems which face Western schools such as student pregnancy, rape, drugs, and alcohol will almost not exist, while other problems such as smoking and stress will be kept at a minimum. This virtue-oriented climate is by no means anti-achievement. To the contrary, we hold that a virtue-oriented atmosphere is the most conducive to academic achievement. Although virtue is a justifiable end in its own right, the evidence from research on school effectiveness and school culture increasingly suggests that effective schools have virtuous qualities that account for a large measure of their successes.<sup>43</sup>

5. Universality: The contribution of the Islamic perspective should be seen in a global context. It meets an urgently felt need in educational administration worldwide. As frequently mentioned in this article, a widening circle of learned scholars are searching for alternatives. Their concern is not for efficiency, but rather for ethical practices. Duignan and Bhindi<sup>44</sup> report the results of numerous research studies which were conducted over a number of years in a variety of cultures where managers and others were asked to nominate the key characteristics of effective managers. Such qualities as honesty, integrity, and credibility head the list. Good leaders were described as being fair-minded, straightforward, competent, effective, inspiring, decisive, and dependable and having direction. They conclude that "trusted leaders are rare; our doubts are not about our leaders' talents but about their trustworthiness. We are not sure whether they serve their institutions or themselves."

However, the problem in Western models is the disagreement on the source and scope of values. While scientific scholarship is extended to

accommodate values for the neoscientific theories of Evers and Lakomski, philosophy and hermeneutics, rather than science, are the legitimate authorities for the subscribers to the interpretive and phenomenological approaches, in general. The latter fall into relativism and "anything goes."

Although most of the Islamic values are, in a sense, universal, what distinguishes the Islamic values is that they are interwoven in the texture of the Islamic religion and perspective, which helps to provide commitment, continuity, stability, certainty, and coherence. They are not situational or temporary. However this does not imply rigidity.

6. Is the Islamic perspective Muslim-specific or can it be implemented by non-Muslims too? The above argument (item 5) may be advanced to address the issue of the generality and specificity of the Islamic perspective as set forth in this question.

Going by the very nature of Islam as a universal religion, the Islamic perspective of educational administration is meant to be for humanity at large. Developing and introducing the Islamic perspective, on the part of Muslims, would be an act of *da'wa* and fulfillment of civilizational *shuhud*. For non-Muslims, the Islamic perspective is supposed to be viewed within the context of searching for better alternatives. It coincides with the Western trends that border at the confines of religion, implicitly or explicitly suggesting the failure, or at least the limits of the secular trends. It also coincides with the call for exploring indigenous perspectives. However, one should not underestimate the negative connotations associated with Islam, the solid grip of secularism, the identification of Westernization with modernization, and the materialistic orientation of contemporary societies. Therefore, despite dissatisfaction with the existing models Western scholars, in general, are still looking for alternatives from within rather than from without. If precedence<sup>45</sup> is any indication, one can say that unless Muslims are able to show that their perspective delivers, the likelihood that non-Muslims will show any interest in, much less acceptance of, the Islamic perspective is very low. Delivery here is used to denote the ability of presenting, among other things, an Islamic organizational climate as above detailed (item 4), a successful Islamic management that is efficiently sound and at the same time Islamically oriented, Muslim managers who project the image of the "competent and trustworthy." Such an achievement would influence non-Muslims, at least by radiation. Interest in studying, and maybe incorporating the Islamic perspective would, most probably, be generated. Assuming that Muslims project the above desired image, and

non-Muslims show interest in studying and incorporating the Islamic perspective, can this be implemented by non-Muslims? It has been argued (item 2) that implementing the Islamic perspective requires its internalization. Once internalized it will influence, with different levels, the organizational behavior of its subscribers even without their being aware of it. Breaking the organizational behavior into “descriptive” (what is) and “normative” (what should be) assumes that the former may be easier to internalize than the latter. Put differently, non-Muslims would find it less demanding to employ the Islamic perspective to understand organizational behavior than to prescribe and take stances that impact on organizational performance, because this is related to one’s value system. As above stated, although most of the Islamic values are universal, they are embedded in the Islamic religion. This requires that non-Muslims, among other things, avail themselves of the viability and merits of the Islamic perspective, despite professing a different religion. However, an ideal implementation of the Islamic perspective requires not only the belief in but also the awareness of the Islamic religion, which provides the basic characteristics of coherence, comprehensiveness, balance, consistency, simplicity, realism, and practicality.

In sum, non-Muslims would be influenced with different levels and forms by the Islamic perspective should Muslims prove it as a going concern. Non-Muslims would show interest in studying the Islamic perspective, may select some of its components, and incorporate them in their own perspectives. However, implementing the Islamic perspective, in its entirety, requires the belief in Islam as a religion; such belief is necessary to generate commitment and consciousness.<sup>46</sup>

— Lastly it should sincerely be stated that a misconception or improper implementation of the Islamic perspective may defeat the purpose. This may take the form of oversimplification, overzealousness, superficiality, literalism, close-mindedness, overidealism, overemotionalization, an inclination to demonize the other, unwarranted conclusions, and imposing one’s own understandings and interpretations of the revealed texts as if they were the only binding understandings. All these might be done with good faith and good intention but would be counterproductive.

These evils may lead to irrational, coercive, and oppressive leadership that squash individual thought and initiative by force and intimidation and may even open a Pandora’s box of opportunism and theocracy, and the “I am more religious than you” practice. Charismatic leaders may emerge,

gain unfair advantage, and through manipulation of emotion cultivate a blind following.

The above remark points out that there is the possibility that introducing the Islamic perspective into the administration of educational settings may deliver little or nothing at all. Inconsistencies, discrepancies between the "ideal" and the "actual," occur simply because the Islamic perspective must be adopted by human beings who, whatever their sincerity, are vulnerable to imperfection. Failure to perform well should not lead to creating artificial realities or achievements. Pushing this argument a little bit further, this requires giving importance to the descriptive level of Islamic administration. So far the focus of Muslim scholars<sup>47</sup> has been on "what ought to be" (normative level) rather than "what is" (the descriptive level). The few studies which were conducted on organizations in some Islamic countries<sup>48</sup> show that much is left to be desired in terms of applying the Islamic perspective in management. Muslim managers were found to adopt a father role vis-à-vis their subordinates and to assume a social role in the wider community. This is compatible with their Islamic roots. However, the studies show a high degree of distance among employees and their managers, leading to highly centralized decision making styles, with little evidence of widespread consultation and employee participation.

On the other hand this emphasizes the importance of ongoing training programs, reflection, perfection, and toiling toward the better.

## Notes

1. *Positivism* is used here in a rather loose way to denote the intellectual trend that believes in the objective, value-free study of all phenomena. *Positivism*, *empiricism*, and *scientific scholarship* are sometimes used interchangeably. There are various versions of positivism which cannot be elaborated upon due to scarcity of space. Positivism is criticized for being reductionist, deterministic, and mechanistic. For further discussion, see Denzin and Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994).

2. J. Smith and J. Blase, "From Empiricism to Hermeneutics: Educational Leadership as a Practical and Moral Activity," *Journal of Educational Administration* 29(1) (1991): 6-21.

3. See G. Fairholm, *Capturing the Heart of Leadership* (Westport: Praeger, 1997); S. Ray and K. Wong, *Beyond Integrity: A Judeo Christian Approach to Business Ethics* (Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House [Harper Collins], 1996).

4. D. Griffiths, "Intellectual Turmoil in Educational Administration," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 15(3) (1979): 43-65.

5. C. Evers and G. Lakomski, *Exploring Educational Administration* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1996); C. Evers and G. Lakomski, *Knowing Educational Administration* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1991).

6. I. Bajunid, "Preliminary Exploration of Indigenous Perspectives of Educational Management," *Journal of Educational Administration* 34(5) (1996): 50-73.

7. N. Saeed et al., "A Survey of Management from an Islamic Perspective," *IJUM Journal of Economics and Management* 5(1) (1997): 87-100.

8. See A. Salleh, *Philosophy and Principles of Educational Administration: An Islamic Perspective*, Med. thesis, International Islamic University Malaysia, 1998; A. Khalfan, *Ethics and Values in Educational Administration: A Comparative Study*, Med. Thesis, International Islamic University Malaysia, 1998. Ibrahim Banjunid touches on the Islamization of knowledge as an indigenous perspective for educational administration. See I. Banjunid, "Preliminary Exploration of Indigenous Perspectives of Educational Management."

9. A *worldview* is a basic belief system that guides action, deals with the first principles or ultimates, and defines for its holder the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts.

10. According to Sayyed Qutb, *tawhid* is both the essence and a characteristic of the Islamic worldview. See Sayyed Qutb, *Khasa'es al Tasawwur al Islami wa Muqawwimatuh*, 8th edition (Beirut: Dar Al Shuruq, 1983).

11. For more information on the Islamic worldview, see Abdelmajid al-Naggar, *Khilafat al Insan Bain al Wahy wal Aql* (Herndon, Va.: IIIT, 1993).

12. At the center of the ongoing discussion in educational administration is the difference with regard to the position of man. Taylor presents two different conceptions of what it means to be a person. On the one side, there is the representation perspective that is closely associated with the empiricist theory of knowledge, and the significance perspective that is intimately related to hermeneutics. From the representation perspective human beings do not differ markedly from other beings. By contrast, the significance concept of the person views the distinction between persons and other beings as not simply a matter of degree but as one of kind. We attribute to human beings a reflexive awareness of purposes, intentions, likes, dislikes, and so on which are peculiarly human and have no analogue with animals. See C. Taylor, *Human Agency and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). The empiricist view of man is still dominating. Maslow (quoted in Sergiovanni and Starrat, 1983) for example states that "man is a perpetual wanting animal." See T. Sergiovanni and R. Starrat, *Supervision: Human Perspectives*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983).

13. For an elaboration on these characteristics, see Sayyed Qutb, *Khasa'es al Tasawwur al Islami Wa Muqawwimatuh*.

14. According to Littlejohn a theory should be evaluated on the basis of its comprehensiveness or inclusiveness, which relies on the principle of generality: "A theory's explanation must be sufficiently general to cover a range of events beyond a single observation." Other criteria include logical consistency between theories and assumptions; the potential of the theory to generate research, help decide what to observe and how to observe, the utility, correspondence or fit, that is, whether the concepts and relationships can be seen in life; generalizability, i.e., whether the tenets of theory apply across time; and parsimony or logical simplicity. See S. Littlejohn, *Theories of Human Communication* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992); Evers and Lakomski in *Exploring Educational Administration* claim that their theory is characterized by coherence, fecundity, simplicity, consistency, comprehensiveness, and conservativeness.

15. See Abdelmajid al-Naggar, *Khilafat al Insan Bain al Wahy wal Aql*.

16. These issues have practical implications for research which cannot be discussed due to the scarcity of space. For further information, see Denzin and Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.

17. Scholars are divided between those who hold that there is a reality "out there" to be apprehended, and that time-and-context-free, cause-effect generalizations are possible (positivism) and those who believe in a "reality" that is only imperfectly apprehendable because of flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the intractable nature of phenomenon (post-positivism). From the "critical theories" perspective, reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors. On the extreme end, "interpretive" theories

conceptualize reality as apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific in nature.

18. In positivism, the investigator and the investigated object are independent entities. The inquirer can study the investigated object without influencing it or being influenced by it. Values and biases are prevented from influencing outcomes, so long as the prescribed procedures are rigorously followed. Once recognized, influence can be eliminated by various strategies such as criticism of the professional community members of referees, editors, and peers. Replicable findings are, in fact, true. For postpositivism, replicated findings are probably true and always subject to falsification. For both the "interpretive" and the "critical" approaches, the investigator and investigated object are interactively linked. Values of the researcher and the other influence the inquiry. Findings are value-mediated. So what can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular object.

19. It is interesting that an increasing number of Western scholars are now advocating the expansion of the modes of knowing to include intuition, sense experience, emotions, and religion (also referred to as *sacred authority*). Sergiovanni, an authority on educational administration, observes that sense experience and intuition have made important inroads, in recent years, into legitimacy as modes of knowing. He reports some views that the traditional ways of knowing—secular authority, science, and deductive knowledge—should inform but not dictate practice and that legitimacy should be conferred on sacred authority and emotions. See: Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1992).

20. In positivism knowledge consists of verified hypotheses in hierarchical levels, the highest of which become facts or laws. For postpositivism knowledge consists of non-falsified hypothesis in hierarchical levels, the highest of which is probable facts and laws. Knowledge accumulates by process of accession. Each fact is a building block that combines with other facts in cause-effect linkages to arrive at generalizations with the ultimate aim of prediction and control.

In critical theories knowledge is a series of structural/historical insights that will be transformed as time passes, when ignorance and apprehension are replaced by more informed insights and dialectic interaction. Knowledge does not accumulate in absolute sense but rather grows and changes through a dialectic process that erodes ignorance and misapprehension and enlarges more informed insights. Generalizations can occur when the mix of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender circumstances and values is similar across settings.

Interpretive approaches view knowledge as a construction about which relative consensus exists. Multiple knowledge can coexist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree or because of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors that differentiate the interpreters. Knowledge accumulates only in a relative sense through the formation of more informed and sophisticated interpretations via the hermeneutical/dialectical process, as varying interpretations are brought into juxtapositions. Generalizations are not possible.

21. Values are excluded in the positivistic tradition because they are nonscientific propositions. Values are considered in interpretive approaches to the extent of "anything goes." In critical theories values are one-sided (anti-oppression).

22. H. Simon, *Administrative Behaviour*, 3rd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1976).

23. R. Campbell, T. Fleming, L. Newell, and J. Bennion, *A History of Thought and Practice In Educational Administration* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987).

24. C. Evers and G. Lakomski, *Exploring Educational Administration* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1996); C. Evers and G. Lakomski, *Knowing Educational Administration* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1991).

25. T. Greenfield and P. Ribbins, *Greenfield on Educational Administration* (London: Routledge, 1993).

26. In the interpretive and critical paradigms, gays and lesbians are considered to be minorities.

27. T. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1992).
28. S. Covey, *Principle-Centered Leadership* (New York: Summet Books, 1991); G. Fairholm, *Capturing the Heart of Leadership*; S. Ray and K. Wong, *Beyond Integrity: A Judeo Christian Approach to Business Ethics*.
29. P. Duignan and N. Bhindi, "Authenticity in Leadership: An Emerging Perspective," *Journal of Educational Administration* 35(3) (1997): 195-209.
30. Technical rationality is flawed in assumptions and detrimental in consequences. It has its roots in secularism and closed systems approaches. Excluding transcendentalism and deifying man, it assumes that man is a rational being and organization is a rational entity. This entails employing an optimizing strategy by seeking the best possible alternative to maximize the achievement of goals and objectives. The authority in technical rationality exists in the form of evidence derived from logic and scientific research. Consequently, teachers are expected to respond in the light of what is considered to be true. In implementation it needs external force that pushes or pulls people in the desired direction. It induces subordination and may succeed in bringing staff to cooperate, but it cannot inspire the kind of commitment that will make schools work well. See Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership*. Most scholars now consider technical rationality as unrealistic and naive because it assumes intellectual capacities, rationality, and knowledge that decision makers simply do not possess. Consequently, it is impossible to generate all the possible alternatives and their consequences. Moreover, hierarchy is often equated with expertise. See W. Hoy and C. Miskel, *Educational Administration* (New York: Random House, 1987). Even the progenitors of "technical rationality" and "scientific method" realized the limits of such approaches. Herbert Simon, for example, proposes the "satisfying" instead of the "rational or ideal" strategy to provide a more accurate description of the way administrators both do and should make organizational decisions. See H. Simon, *Administrative Behavior*. However, this leads to moral relativism. The author holds that rationality needs to be purified from its secular legacy. Maybe reflective rationality guided by the Islamic perspective fits the position of man the *khalifah*.
- Reification reduces human beings and organizations to merely natural objects and implies that they can be studied and run as clockwork. This departs markedly from the Islamic position, because it deprives man of the distinguished characteristics of feelings, emotions, aspirations, moral deliberation, and will, to cite but a few. This is not to deny that man shares with other beings of this universe some characteristics, or that there are regularities in human life that hold across time and place, but rather to point out the complexity of man and organizations as human artifacts. This and the fact that man is the object and instrument of analyzing organizational behavior warn against oversimplification in studying organizations or prescribing unrealistic alternatives. In fact, this reification is also severely attacked by the subscribers to the interpretive approaches. These opponents posit that science is not qualified to study human and organizational behavior.
31. For more information, see H. Al-Talib, *Training Guide for Islamic Workers* (Herndon, Va.: IIIT, 1991).
32. Until very recently educational leadership has tended to be construed as associated with ascribed authority and position. The idea of educational leadership as involving practicing teachers and paraprofessionals as central figures has been a seriously underdeveloped topic, although terms like superior-subordinates and leader-follower, which were once standard usage in educational administration texts and which tend to cast teachers in positions of relative dependency and powerlessness, are now less commonly used. See Crowther and Olsen, "Teachers as Leaders," *International Journal of Educational Management* 11(1) (1997): 6-13.
33. W. Lovel, and K. Wiles, *Supervision for Better Schools* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1983). See also T. Sergiovanni, "Advances in Leadership Theory and Practice," in P. Thurston and L. Lotto (eds.), *Advances in Educational Administration* (London: Jai Press, 1990).
34. For further information see F. Sharpe, "Towards a Research Paradigm on Devolution," *Journal of Educational Administration* 34(1) (1996): 4-23.

35. M. Sheikh, "Ethics of Decision Making in Islamic and Western Environment," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 5(1) (1988): 115-128.

36. For further information, see E. Fleishman and A. Bass, *Industrial Psychology* (New York: Homewood, 1984).

37. O. Abdel-Kawi, "Islamic Beliefs as Moderators of Organizational Stress," in *Proceedings of the Seminar on Islamic Principles of Organizational Behavior* (Herndon, Va.: IIIT, 1988).

38. M.A. Zarqa, "The Relevance of Values in Management: An Islamic Perspective," in Nik Mustapha Nik Hassan (ed.), *Valued-Based Management* (Kuala Lumpur: IKIM, 1998), 4.

39. T. Sergiovanni, "Leadership as Cultural Expression," in T. Sergiovanni and J. Corbally, *Leadership and Organizational Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

40. A. AbuSulayman, "Islamization of Knowledge," in IIIT (ed.), *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge* (Herndon, Va.: IIIT, 1988).

41. Usually organizational climate is measured by investigating the perceptions of the members of an organization of various aspects of their organization.

42. There have been in the last two decades systematic and rigorous attempts to identify the Islamic values which could be relevant to administration (Alhabshi and Al-Ghazali, 1994 (cited in Bajunid, 1996); 1997; Lattifi, 1997; Endot, 1995 (cited in Tayeb, "Islamic Revival in Asia and Human Resource Management," *Employee Relations* 19(4): 352-364). The investigation of such studies points out a general agreement on the following values which can also be considered as universal: *niyat* (intention), *itqan* (perfection), *ihsan* (efficiency and proficiency), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *al-falah* (passion for excellence), *muhasabah* (self-examination), *taqwa* (piety), *'adl* (justice), *amana* (truthfulness), *sabr* (patience), moderation, promise keeping, accountability, dedication, gratefulness, cleanliness, consistency, discipline, cooperation, value of time, perseverance, joy of working, simplicity, worth of character, kindness, positive examples, obligation of duty, wisdom of economy, improvement of talent, creativity, nobility, self-discipline, good appearance, abstinence, resolve, servitude and trust, trustworthiness, responsibility, and good conduct. This list is far from finite. One would add tolerance, leniency, persistence, hard and smart working, respect for elders, adhering to rights and discharging duties, the passion for excellence, diligence, quest for knowledge, proficiency, honesty, smooth communication, humility, punctuality, and healthy interpersonal relationship. Tayeb assumes that an Islamic setting should be characterized by a consultative decision making process, a fairly diffused power structure. Self-discipline, trustfulness, honesty, resolve, loyalty, and abstinence should encourage managers to trust their subordinates' judgment and integrity, which could in turn lead to a participative management style. Cooperation, patience, and family-like relationships among people should encourage teamwork and mutual support within an organization and care for the community outside it.

43. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership*.

44. Duignan and Bhindi, "Authenticity in Leadership: An Emerging Perspective," *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(3): 195-209.

45. A case in point is the Japanese economic performance after its devastation in the World War II. Western scholars, in general, were curious to study the Japanese management, and many of them called for learning from the Japanese success. The special significance accorded to the role of "culture" in management was a result of that interest. See P. Watkins, "Japanization and the Management of Education in Australia," *International Journal of Educational Management* 7(2) (1993): 20-29. Another example is the intense interest in the Soviet school system after Sputnik was launched. Even China's cultural revolution in the 1960s raised the curiosity of American educators.

46. The author wishes to share his experience in teaching "management from Islamic perspective" to non-Muslim postgraduate students (Christians, Chinese, and Hindus). Usually these students come with a secular background, shallow knowledge of and reservations toward Islam. As classes proceed they start showing more interest and curiosity. Later

in the course, some start addressing management topics from the Islamic perspective as if they have internalized it, in the real sense of the term. Some of them excelled even their Muslim colleagues. However, whether this academic exercise is carried over to practice is an issue which merits further investigation.

47. Bajunid (see endnote 6) observes that much of the literature on Islamic perspectives of management is necessarily perspective and normative, not descriptive, because of the primary approach from the perspective of faith and revealed truths. He adds that the analysis of phenomena is carried out primarily by reference to revealed verses from the Quran to the Hadith. There is unconditional acceptance of the revealed truths. Although Bajunid's observation is correct, it is not "necessary" that the Islamic literature be prescriptive. The author of this article holds that it is a shortcoming in the Islamic literature to be concerned only with what "should be" although the Quran and Hadith address both "what is" and "what should be." The balance and comprehensiveness of the Islamic perspective entails that it is both prescriptive and descriptive. Its ultimate concern is "what ought to be," but it describes also "what is." For example, man is described in the Islamic revealed text with both wicked and noble characteristics. However, the noble is what human beings should seek to be. Man is described as "weak," "hasty," "jealous," "ungrateful." But man is supposed to purify himself from such traits.

In educational administration this dichotomy is best reflected in theories x and y. While the former posits that the average man is by nature indolent, lacks ambition, dislikes responsibility, is self-interested, and so on, the latter holds the opposite. Later theory z came up with a synthesis. From the Islamic perspective, staff who are indolent, self-interested, and so on, may be found but the capability for learning and change require the administration to avail opportunities for such staff to improve. See Sergiovanni and Starrat, *Supervision: Human Perspectives*.

48. M. Tayeb, "Islamic Revival in Asia and Human Resource Management," *Employee Relations* 19(4) (1997): 352-364.