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An Islamic Perspective Review on Organizational Ethics

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Abstract

Ethical culture and integrity values are the bases that a nation needs to establish in order to achieve optimum development. A nation's identity and reputation will become tarnished if the two elements are not presented in at least, adequate scale. Ethics that are meant to bring eminence in an organization have to be expanded to form a high-minded society, in accordance with the concept of Islam which is progressively being put into practice today. This paperwork is going to deepen and analyse Islamic sources which are al-Quran, al Hadith and Seerah Nabawiyyah (Biography of Muhammad PUBH) with specificity in the particular topic discussed here, which is organizational ethics. Related verses from al-Quran and hadiths will be scrutinized. This will include the bases, purposes and demands of ethical forming. Concepts and principles of organizational ethics will be explained in details by which verdicts from former and current scholars are made reference to. It is hoped that through the ethical approaches suggested in this paperwork, outstanding and productive organizations can be defily produced in the future.

Key-words: Organizational, Ethic, Principles, Concept and Islamic.

1. Introduction

As a religion of naturality and total aspect coverage, Islam has always come with certain principles and concepts to thrive on its purpose of forming a a blissful and prosperous community. The glory of Islam, as portrayed in the past as well as in the present, would not happen if it was not

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for its preeminent political and administrative system which had been perfectly assigned in Islamic teachings.

The significance of administrative system in Islam could be clearly seen via excellent qualities of an organization. Even so, if we look at the two main shariah sources which are al Quran and al Hadith, followed by the existing analysis on *Seerah an Nabawiyyah* (Biography of Muhammad(PBUH)), it is clear that an organization's supremacy does not wholly depend on large-scale principles of the administrative system but also on the small detailed principles that complete the former. The purpose of this study is to lay those principles as a guidance to build an outstanding Islamic-based organization.

2. Method

In general, this study uses a qualitative method (philosophical approach), namely the methodology of library research with qualitative approach of both exploratory and descriptive. Exploratory approach uses the formula of investigative focus to give a clue on necessary identified results (Marican, 2005). The purpose of the study is to Identify the basic concepts underlying administration and review key sources that discuss matters of administration in Islam.

The author has conducted a research to study any form of ancient writing and now that relate to the study either directly or indirectly. Information obtained from books, journals, magazines, papers, printed media, electronic media, and internet and so on. Research-based study in the form library, then the writing will go through the following processes:

- 1. Referring to verses al Quran that have related to this topic, and then examine the interpretation of Islamic scholar on it.
- 2. Refers to some hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad that have related to this study and review the description of scholar of hadith-hadith.
- 3. Study and disclose the views from current Islamic scholar in this matter.

Figure 1 - Primary Sources for Research

The Holy Quran

The Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad

Ijtihad—views from Islamic scholars

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3. Literature Reviews

Ethics in Islam are defined as the good principles and values based on the Shariah sources.

They are consistent with the ability of human beings and cover all aspects of life (al-Aidaros, 2013).

Hence, Islamic organizational ethics is originally derived from the Holy al-Qur'an, the as Sunnah

(teachings sayings and actions) of Prophet Mohammad S.A.W and Ijtihad (the independent or

original interpretation of problems not precisely covered by the al-Quran, As Sunnah,

and ijma (scholarly consensus)) (al-Ali, 1985). There are some concepts in Islam as below:

Concept 1: Different Backgrounds for Different Roles

Islam sees human differences as a natural phenomenon created by Allah to have them

diversify and be in charge of different roles, and this is even more relevant when we look at it in the

administrative context. These differences include cognitive background, intellectual capability,

interest, inclination, education, ability and others related. Positions that are essentially acknowledged

in an organization are leader(s), secretary(s), officer(s), clerk(s) and assistant(s). Different abilities

and skills possessed by men make this division of roles possible to reach the optimum efficiency

(Azim, 1994).

In the history of Islam, Prophet Muhammad S.A.W himself used to take into account these

differences whenever he had to appoint people for certain positions in the administration that he was

in charge for. Even his *sahabahs* (companions) had different proficiencies that he then divided them

into different sectors based on what they did best (Abu Sin, 1986). Among of them that were skilled

in military-related sector were Amru bin al As r.a, Khalid bin al Wa r.a, Abdullah bin Rawahah r.a

and Usamah bin Zaid r.a. For the political and administrative sector, there were several renowned

personages who proved to be very efficient with the governing system, among of whom were the four

al Khulafa' al Rashidin r.a, Abdullah bin Amir r.a, Uqbah bin Walid r.a, Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan

r.a and Abdullah bin Abu Sarah r.a. Also, some of those who had the speciality in Islamic sciences

then were Abdullah bin Umar r.a, Aisyah binti Abu Bakar r.a and Abdullah bin Mas'ud r.a who

specialised in figh, Zaid bin Thabit r.a in faraid, and Ubai bin Kaab r.a for the scrutiny of Al Quran

(Omar, 2007).

This arrangement of who in charge of what was made by Muhammad S.A.W with no

prejudice on their ancestral background, looks, ethnicity or age. Each appointment is based on one's

qualifications and strengths (Basbus, 1987). It is narrated that during the time of Muhammad's S.A.W

administration, he had nominated Itab bin Usaid as the Governor of Mecca although he was not

among the early followers of Islam and was not a member of the family of Hashim, plus he was still

young at the time of the appointment. Similar case happened with Amru bin al As when he was

appointed by Muhammad S.A.W as the military commander in the war of Zat al Salasila to lead

distinguished national leaders like Abu Bakar r.a and Umar r.a in spite of his new conversion to Islam

(Ibn Kathir, 2014).

Concept 2: Gender Equality

Islamic teaching guided the people to realm of faith in absolute gender equality. The Quran in

its own subtle manner and with characteristic sagacity, place the reclassification of women as fully

participating members of society (al-'Alwani, 1996). The baseline of the creation of men and women

principally is to devote to Allah. This is evident in a verse in Surat al Azhab (35) which suggests that

both men and women are rewarded (either good or bad) the same for each of their doings. The verse

is translated as below:

"Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing

women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful

women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women,

the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the

men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who

remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared

forgiveness and a great reward."

There is no difference between the people of the two genders except for the responsibilities

that they carry. According to Islam, women get inheritance less than men because of bigger

responsibilities that men are assigned to in matters like household affairs, maintenance and social

development of family members (Uqlah, 1990). A wide spectrum of modern scholars and ulama',

including Rahid Rida, Mahmud Shaltut, Muhammad Yusuf Musa, Abd Hamid Mutawalli and others

maintains that women are qualified to be representative in Parliament, ministers, witnesses and judge,

all of whic partake in the exercise of public authority (wilayah 'ammah). Women should be appointed

if the criteria required are met, as in the situation of Ummu Syifa' who was given the responsibility of

supervising the trading accountability in the market of Madinah (Syaikhah Suq al-Madinah) during

the Khulafa' al Rasyidin era (Kamali, 2015).

Concept 3: Different Remunerations for Different Positions

The remuneration or compensation which every post-holder is entitled to has to be different

depending on the level of their position. This difference is based on one's expertise, capability and

education, which have initially determined the position they are eligible for. This is validated in a part

of a verse in Surat an-Nahl (71), translated as:

"And Allah has favoured some of you over others in provision"

Abdul Karim Zaidan also mentions in his book titled Nizam al Qada' about this. He

categorizes remuneration into two, which are Had al Kifayah (the sufficiency line) and Had al

Tafaddul (the advantage line). Had al Kifayah is the remuneration based on one's labour, while Had

al Tafaddul is based on one's expertise or capability (Zaidan, 1986). The formulation of the salary

scale should be made carefully according to employees' past experience and qualification. More

importantly, the wage to be granted by the employer to the employee must commensurate with the

work done and performance made by the employee. Islam encourages employers to reward their

employees according to their qualification, experiences, knowledge, capabilities and amount of work

they do (Uddin, 2014).

Concept 4: Loyalty to the Leader

Employee loyalty can be explained as the increase of employee commitment to the

organizational success and belief in doing the right thing working for the organization. Employees

with a high organizational commitment tend to employ themselves for the benefit of the organization

(Zanabazar, 2021). Therefore, every post-holder in an organization has to comply with the commands

of their chief or leader. This principle is based on a verse in Surat al-Nisa (59)', translated as:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in

authority among you"

Loyalty has to be given to a leader, or an institution in general, in two terms. The first term is

its accordance with Islamic law, with consideration on matters like halal (lawfulness) and haram

(prohibition), agidah (faith) and religious practices. This term is regarded as the general term. The

second term is more narrow and deals with matters like leadership approach and governance policies

within the institution (Basbus, 1987).

4. Analysis and Discussion

A. Principles of Organizational Ethics

In Islam, there are principles that are demanded to be followed in running an organization.

Primarily, these principles are abide by as a symbol of obedience and devotion to Allah. Also, these

principles are essentially adhered based on *muragabah* (the awareness of Allah's observation upon all

doings, be it good or bad) and muhasabah (the awareness of retribution for those doings on the

Judgement Day). The specified principles set for the chief or leader and subordinates in an

organization are as followed:

Principle 1: Responsibility Over Rewards

Whatever position that is held, mas'uliyat (responsibility) should be on top of a person's

priority. Giving full responsibility on the work is regarded as a religious requirement. Islam

considered each position as a divine responsibility and anyone who puts responsibility atop rewards

will be recompensed greatly not only in this world but also in the hereafter. Here, the accountability

aspect is not only responsible to organization, but also to the supervisory board, and God (Hakim

et.al, 2019).

In Islamic history, it is documented that the caliph Uthman bin Affan r.a had never accepted

any compensation during his time of governance for twelve years (24-35 H). In fact, he sacrificed a

lot of his personal properties to help those in need (Khan, 2001). This is quite similar with the case of

Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan r.a who is narrated to make a will to give half of his properties to the

government and baitulmal (House of Treasury) for the fear of indeliberately using or spending any

government's property during his 20-year period of governing the Kingdom of Bani Umayyah. He is

also described as a very simple man who was regularly found in markets with patched clothes despite

his status as the government leader (Ibn Kathir, 2014). What is evidently clear from these two stories

are that top priority for a person holding a position (be it big or small) is the responsibility, not the

rewards they make from it.

Principle 2: Position not as a Privilege

Whatever position one holds, it should not be seen as a privilege or honour though it demands

gratitude or contentment within oneself. This is because only one group of people are considered

honourable and worthy of receiving privileges in Islam which is the prophets. They are spared a very

special position in the eyes of Allah.

Through this absence of honour and privileges in the community, the act of arrogance and

pride can be avoided, and consequently generates the spread of integrity and high-mindedness among

the society. The effectiveness of this concept was perceptible in the era of Khulafa' al Rashidin r.a

where the caliphs were said to continuously depict great humbleness in their ruling times. Umar bin

al Khattab once carried the wheat himself to a poor family in Madinah, and Uthman bin Affan r.a

could easily be found around the territory especially in mosques where he regularly made as his

resting place. It is narrated that he would go from one person to another to inquire about any issue

they might be encountering, and even led them in their prayers (Khan, 2001).

This conveys that status or social class never mattered to these eminent leaders, and what was

crucial was the responsibility that they were given the trust to to execute in accordance with Islamic

teachings. The position they held was not an honour that could promise them *jannah* (paradise).

Several assertions on this concept are as below:

Muhammad's saying translated as:

"Verily, (a status or position) is a responsibility and will become a disgrace and

regret in the hereafter"

Narrated by Muslim

The words "disgrace" and "regret" in this hadith indicates the damnation one would suffer if

the responsibility was not properly fulfilled, which also obliquely implies that positions and statuses

are never regarded as an honour.

ii. Another Muhammad's saying translated as:

"Whoever is given a position (in something), and they then restrain people from

coming upon it (negligent with the responsibility), then Allah will restrain them in

the hereafter"

Narrated by Abu Daud and Tarmizi

Principle 3: Strength and Trust

A post-holder must possess physical, mental and emotional strength to accomplish things that

are expected from them. The word "strength" here is relative, depending on the nature of the position.

For example, a post-holder who serves in military needs more of physical strength compared to those

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who work in the educational field, who are required more of mental and intelligent advantages. Trust,

on the other hand, is every right of one's responsibility either from the right of Allah (haqqullah) or

the right of the creation (haqqul adami) weither in work (action), words and belief (Laming, 2002).

This concept is asserted in a verse in Surah al-Qasas, translated as:

"Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy"

Al-Qasas: 26

It is narrated that as a caliph, Umar al Khattab had counted himself the number of camels and

other farm animals that belonged to the government under the hot sun with thorough inspection, and

shouted it out to Ali bin Abu Talib and Uthman bin Affan, who were under the tree, to be recorded in

a particular notebook. Ali then said to Uthman, "This is (the example of) a strong and trustworthy

person" (Ni'mat, 1988).

Principle 4: Talent and Expertise

A post-holder must have the talent and expertise in the field they are in. This concept is

supported in the verse translated below:

"(Yusuf) said, 'Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a

knowing guardian'"

Yusuf: 55

Also, it is narrated that Prophet Musa once asked Allah to appoint Harun as a prophet and

make him his assisstant because of his capability and expertise in communicating with Bani Israil.

The verse asserting this is as below (translated):

"(Musa) said, 'My Lord, indeed I fear that they will deny me. And that my breast

will tighten and my tongue will not be fluent, so send for Harun"

Al Syuara': 12-13

This concept is discussed broadly by Islamic scholars. It is mutually agreed that capability and

expertise especially in matters concerning nawazil (current issues) are very essential, and even

considered as one of the most important qualities that a person must have to be appointed as a caliph

or national leader (Mawardi, 1989).

According to Hakim (2019), in term of professionalism aspect in organization leadership,

indicators can be seen on several parameters; competence (ability), totality in work, long-life

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learning, participating in professional membership, the existence of ethics of profession or code of

conduct, an appropriate income.

B. Organizational Ethics in Human Resource Management

Human resource management practices is significantly associated with achieving

organizational objectives. It also shows that, improving the quality of work induces certain behaviors

in the employee who is a source of competitive advantage for the organization (Ogedegbe, 2014).

Selected human resource management practices in an organization according to Islam are as followed:

Practice 1: Recruitment and Selection

In Islam, appointment for a position can only be done after a person's ability and capability

are recognized and acknowledged by a qualified party. One way of executing this is through

interview. A person's caliber will be notably manifested through this process, and thus resulting in an

excellent empire or institution in the long run. Muhammad S.A.W himself did an interview with

Mu'az bin Jabal r.a before appointing him as a judge in Yemen. Among the questions that were asked

(Ibn Kathir, 2014):

"With what principles do you base your judgement?" And Mu'az answered "With

the principles of Al Quran". Muhammad S.A.W then asked "If it could not be

found in Al Quran?" Mu'az answered "With the principles of Al Hadith"

Muhammad S.A.W then asked again "If it could not be found in Al Hadith?" And

Mu'az answered "With the principles of ijtihad".

In the human resource management in Islam, doing an interview is not the only method that

can be used in the process of appointing someone for a position. Another method is giving them a

"trial period". The length of this period is up to the upper party to decide. This particular method had

been made a policy in the era of Umar bin al Khattab r.a in appointment of office. It is narrated that

he had tested Ka'ab bin Surah in making judgment and decision on a case that was brought to the

court at that time. He then impressed Umar r.a to a great extent with his brilliant judgment and

decision, and that led him being appointed for a permanent position as a judge (Mun'im, n.d.).

The Islamic way of life does not allow favoritism in recruitment or selection since it violates

the ethical principles of justice (al-'Adl), fulfifillment of contract with the employer to look after the

interest of the organization (Ifa al-'Aqd), and the right of others in dealings (Huquq al-'Ibad). Such

kind of favoritism is not permitted in Shariah since Islam always promotes unbiased behavior (Khan,

2010).

Practice 2: Training and Development

Another requirement for successful appointment is skills training which shall be related to the

field or position they are going to take charge for. This skills training is conducted via specific related

course(s) within specific period. In today's world, a candidate's capability is measured and evaluated

through academic achievement that is acknowledged with certificates from qualified institutions.

Organizations intending to gain a sustained competitive advantage should help their employees raise

their skills by receiving continuous training so that they can learn new things needed to ensure quality

improvement of the products and services (Ogedegbe, 2014).

However, there is another matter that is pointed out by Muhammad S.A.W which is connected

to this concept. A person, who is to hold a specific position, must not only possess skills background

in the field related, but also a comprehension on the environment, culture and appearance of the

community they are about to serve or be in contact with. It is narrated that before appointing Mu'az

bin Jabal r.a as a judge in Yemen, Muhammad S.A.W had given him a brief speech on the

background of the local community (Yemeni people). He S.A.W also narrated that (Ibn Hisham,

2013):

"Certainly, you will deal with the people of the book who will continuously be

questioning on the key to paradise (on faith and principles), so answer them with

shahadah (declaration) on the non-existence of god but Allah (based on Islamic

faith and principles)"

Practice 3: Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal of a post-holder is also very much stressed in the Islamic

administration. In Islam, the performance appraisal is based on normative directives and the practice

of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W as well as his four Caliphs but it became most noticeably apparent

during the era of Umar bin al Khattab r.a and Uthman bin Affan r.a, as it lasted for almost

quarter-century.

In Umar's time, he once gave a talk to his subordinates regarding the policies on appointment

of office. He then asked one of them "What do you say if I appointed someone eligible (for a

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position) then he took the responsibility with good and just manner, had I been doing my best (as a

leader)?". They answered, "Yes, Amirul mukminin", and Umar r.a replied, "No, I hadn't, unless I

kept tabs on whether or not he could do his job as in my command (policies)". This answer proves the

importance of performance evaluation (Azim, 1994).

While during Uthman's time, the caliph set a regulation for the governors of every Muslim

territory to go and perform hajj in Mecca every year to hear for themselves the folks' remarks on

them before the decisions of whether to retain or dismiss them were made official. A post-holder is

never secure with their position unless they really fulfill the required needs as expected from them. If

the needs are not really fulfilled, dismissal, demotion or change of position could be happening

(Azim, 1994).

C. Organizational Ethics in Appointment

Managers must acknowledge their role in shaping organizational ethics and seize this

opportunity to create a climate that can strengthen the relationships and reputations on which their

companies' success depends. Executives who ignore ethics run the risk of personal and corporate

liability in today's increasingly tough legal environment. Listed below are selected the organizational

ethics in the appointment according to Islam:

First: Democracy in Appointment

Apart from the methods mentioned above, opinions from the subordinates must also be

considered genuinely when appointing someone to be a post-holder. This is specifically practical

when there are more than one qualified candidates for a position. However, this "democracy" concept

may only be performed after other elements (in terms of academic achievements, experiences,

knowledge, performance/reputation, skills and expertise) are contemplated thoroughly and ensured

are not lacking anywhere. This concept, though, is important in assuring the stability and progression

of a department or institution as cooperation among post-holders including subordinates becomes

strong. The essence of this method is taken from a hadith, translated as:

"Muhammad S.A.W anathematizes three types of people, one of them is a man

who leads a prayer when he is not loved by the followers".

Narrated by Tarmizi

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According to Islamic scholars, although this hadith particularly addresses the issue of the

appointment of an *imam*, it can be broadened to administrative issues like the one we discuss here

which is the appointment in an organization (Azim, 1994). In the early Islamic history, the Prophet

Muhammad S.A.W used to consult with his Companions concerning many issues, such as wars. Also

Caliph 'Umar bin al-Khattab r.a, when he was dying, he entrusted the choice of the next Caliph

(Khalifah) to be consulted among six chosen Companions. They were 'Uthman r.a, 'Ali, Talhah r.a,

az-Zubayr, Sa'id r.a and 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf r.a. As the decision, they agreed to appoint

'Uthman bin 'Affan as their next leader (Othman, 2018).

Regarding the practice of Syura, Allah S.W.T also mentions in Surah Ali 'Imran: 159:

"And by the mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe

and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pardon

them, and ask forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when

you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who

put their trust (in Him)."

This verse informs us that Prophet Muhammad S.A.W used to ask his Companions for advice

about various matters. The purpose was to comfort their hearts so they can effectively implement the

decision they have reached. When describing this verse, Ibn Katsir provides several examples from

the history of the Prophet S.A.W and how the Messenger of Allah applied the concept of *shur*a in his

daily life (Ibn Kathir, 2003).

Second: Unbiased Appointment

This concept is regarded as one of the most essential concepts in appointment of office. This

is because every nomination that a person in charge makes will be assessed and rewarded by Allah,

either good or bad. For this reason, the Quran call every action as "Kasab", means what one has enjoy

or bear in consequence (Laming, 2000). When a person who is not qualified is appointed to hold a

certain position, the betrayal is not only considered to be towards the people in the administration and

the commoners, but also to Allah and Muhammad S.A.W as stated in the hadith below (translated):

"Whoever appoints a person when there is another person who is more qualified,

then he has betrayed Allah and Muhammad S.A.W"

Biased appointment of office can happen due to bribery, and it can also be due to friendship

and relations. Consequently, unqualified person is hired. Another possible cause for this is pressure,

which occurs when an upper party puts pressure on the person in charge to appoint certain person(s)

for certain position(s) generally for personal or political reasons. This kind of deed is considered

haram (proscribed in Islam) as it may result to unpleasant outcomes in the future (Omar, 2006).

Another issue coming from the bias in appointment of office is the status of the remuneration

received that is quite blurry (shubhah). Whether it is halal (permissible) or haram (proscribed) is

vague. However, in the author's opinion, if the appointed person is not qualified or lacking of any

criterion that is needed, the remuneration received will be haram. Yet, if the person is actually

qualified although his appointment is based on bias in the first place, the remuneration they obtain is

halal. Even so, despite the halal status, it is missing the blessedness from Allah as it contains the

elements of *subhat* (confusion and doubt) and does not follow the nature of democracy (Omar, 2007).

Third: Dismisal Right by Institution

Many people resist acknowledging the influence of organizational factors on individual

behavior—especially on misconduct—for fear of diluting people's sense of personal moral responsibility.

But this fear is based on a false dichotomy between holding individual transgressors accountable and

holding "the system" accountable. Acknowledging the importance of organizational context need not

imply exculpating individual wrongdoers. To understand all is not to forgive all (Paine, 1994). Any

institution, including governmental institution, is given the rights in Islam to dismiss any post-holder

who is proven to have broken any regulation or done anything inappropriate to the institution.

Dismissal is also permissible if a certain party or the public is poorly affected. This second

situation rarely occurs but there is a history about it, with one of them being the dismissal of Khalid

bin al Walid r.a as the highest military commander. The dismissal was decided by Umar for the

purpose of preserving people's faith in Allah as too many victories they gained may lead them to

believe that it happened because of Khalid's shrewdness instead of Allah's power and wills

(Athamina, 1994).

The first situation, however, is quite common. One event depicting this is the dismissal of

Sa'ad bin Abu Waqas r.a and Abdullah bin Mas'ud r.a from the positions as the governor and

financial manager of Basra respectively due to incompatibility between them. Another instance is the

dismissal of Mua'wiyah bin Abu Sufyan as the governor of Syam (known as Syria today) for his

refusal of taking bai'ah (oath of allegiance) to Ali r.a who was just appointed as the new caliph (Ibn

5561

Kathir, 2014).

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5. Conclusion

To conclude, the preeminence of Islamic civilization, with its sources that were based on revelations from Allah, managed to organize and drive Muslims as a whole to lead a perfectly systemic life that generated quality in every aspect of life. It is hoped that this paperwork demonstrates the delicacy and meticulousness of Islam particularly in the issue of organizational ethics. The truth is, Islam is wide scale and provides the best solution to every problem and situation that may happen regardless the era we are in.

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