The Quality of Educational Management Systems: Selected Principles from the Qur'an

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ABSTRACT--- It is increasingly challenging in today's world to view the education sector as vital and one that should be made a priority in achieving a country's objectives and visions. The concepts and systems of management are organized and drafted according to modern world standards of development and each country competes to showcase the success of their educational systems. Contemporary management and administration systems constantly refer to the theories established by Western ideals and studies. However, there are still shortcomings in its strategy and modelling. Is this due to the quality of the teachers, the unproductive administration system or the general weakness of the educational management? Through the method of documentation and comprehensive review of literature, this study has found that educational management needs to be managed prudently by its stakeholders. Good quality students are the products of constant refinement and development, the success of which has the potential to secure a country's wellbeing for the current generation as well as the next. Thus, management from the perspective of the Qur'an is seen as the best basis and guiding principle which should be espoused for the national education management strategy.

Keywords--- Education, Quality, Management, Tawhidic, Humanity.

I. INTRODUCTION

In times of rapid technological developments, various parties have strived to provide quality education opportunities to those who want to improve their level of education. Malaysia's education system undergoes improvement processes on its various aspects from time to time. As with any other system, it is results that matters most. The success of the educational system will be measured based on its effectiveness in producing high integrity and high quality students. The approach towards that goal begins from the top leadership of schools or higher learning institutions and it encompasses aspects such as leadership character, its strategy in education management and the management system that is in place.

Due to the above, leadership is a paramount factor in education. By definition, leadership is an attempt to influence other people to achieve certain desired outcomes (Cuban, 1988). It has been shown that the success of a country's education system is associated with excellent leadership in educational institutions, be it from a low level or a higher level institution (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 2000). Furthermore, a multitude of local and global challenges brought about by an educational environment that is constantly changing necessitates an ongoing paradigm shift in the field of education (Norazizah et al., 2017).

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According to Cheng (1996), various reforms and restructuring exercises have been undertaken not only in the west but also in the Asia-Pacific region, including Malaysia, in order to enhance educational effectiveness and school development. Recent technological advancements such as the development of the information highway have increased the awareness of educators, administrators and also of the public on several issues relating to education. Hee (2002) stated that aspects of accountability and transparency in the implementation of education policy has led to greater workloads and a sense of responsibility in an ever-growing profession.

II.   A BRIEF ON MORAL EDUCATION: AN ISLAMIC DISCOURSE

Based on its own worldview, every educational system has its own ends and objectives, be it a secular or Islamic system of education. Contrary to contemporary secular education which considers this life as an end itself, Islamic education provides a holistic and comprehensive concept of this world and the subsequent hereafter. It can be said that in Islamic education there is no dichotomy between religion and science. In fact, Islam puts forth that when an education system disregards religious moral teaching then the system is doomed to fail. Afzalur-Rahman posits that should education be divorced from religion and moral values, it shall lead to the disintegration and destruction of the social fabric of society. This may be seen from the achievements of liberal education in the west as well as in the east (Rahman, 1980).

Fundamentally, education in Islam is a combination of three terms; *Tarbiyyah*, *Ta'lim* and *Ta'dib* (Salleh, 2009). The three terms taken together convey the meaning and scope of both formal and non-formal education in Islam. *Tarbiyyah* comes from the root word 'raba' which means to increase, to grow, to rear or to educate; this implies a state of spiritual and ethical nurturing in accordance with the will of God. *Ta'lim* comes from the root word *'alima'* that means to know, to be aware of, to perceive, to learn or be knowledgeable; it is used to denote knowledge being sought or imparted through instruction and teaching. *Ta'dib* is derived from the word '*adaba'* which is taken to mean to be cultured, refined, well-mannered or moral. Hence, if education is a combination and summation of the aforementioned three terms, then it would essentially mean the gradual nurturing of something to completeness, perfection or maturity (Al-Taftazani, 1986).

According to Mohammad Qutb (1991) as quoted by Sang (2004), education is the process of shaping a holistic and balanced human being. The main objective of education is to develop the potential of a human being's intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects towards perfection. Within this process, the implementation of values has been focused by the Islamic philosophy of education, in which the ethical and moral aspects could not be separated from each other and the school of Islamic thought. It is in parallel with the branches of axiology that believe education is a system that provides good values. Within the axiology of Islam itself, a knowledgeable person should be moralistic and well-behaved (Sang, 2004). In order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the education system in Islam, Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas (1977) asserts several concepts based on an Islamic perspective that forms the major elements of Islamic education. These concepts are *al-din*, the concept of man (*al-insan*), the concept of knowledge *(al-'ilm* and *ma'rifah)*, the concept of *hikmah*, the concept of equality, the

concept of ethics and finally the concept of *kulliyah jami'ah*. Al-Attas also concluded that the aim of Islamic education is to produce a good and righteous man who worships Allah the Creator and acts according to the dictates of s*hari'ah*. In line with verse 56 of surah *al-Dhariyat* in the Qur'an, this act of worship requires total submission to Allah. Therefore, several scholars during the 1977 World Conference on Muslim Education reaffirmed and resolved that education should aim for a balanced development and growth of man through the training and refinement of his spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses. The training imparted to a Muslim must be such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality and creates in him an emotional attachment to Islam; this enables him to follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah and be governed by the Islamic system of values willingly and joyfully so that he may proceed to the realization of his status as *Khalifatullah* to whom Allah has promised the authority of the universe (Al-Attas, 1979).

From the short discussion above we may conclude that from an Islamic viewpoint, moral education is not only dialectically unnecessary for moral development, it is beyond the essential point of moral education itself: the nurturing and awakening of the spiritual self. Contemporary Islamic scholars such as Nasr and al-Attas approach moral education as an essential internal development of the individual as a citizen in their own 'microcosmic kingdom of spirit' (al-Attas, 1999). In fact, there is a different approach among modern Islamic scholars in linking Islam and education. The majority of scholars base their opinions on the view that there is a distinct Islamic position with regards to education (Iqbal, 1996), while some argue for a common inter-faith religious framework on education and yet others claim, at least implicitly, a superiority of the Islamic approach over those of other religion.

III.   THE PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In the Arabic language, there are several commonly-used words relating to education. Among them is *tarbiyyah* which refers to the process of developing individual potential, nurturing or educating towards a mature state. *Ta'lim* refers to the process of conveying or receiving knowledge that is normally found through training, instruction, guidance or other forms of teaching. *Ta'dib* which refers to the process of building character and teaching the fundamentals of social life, including understanding and accepting the most basic principles of justice (al-Attas, 1979; Halsted, 2004; Rosnani Hashim, 2006).

As aforementioned, education encompasses the cognitive, physical and spiritual aspects in the context of Islam. The definition of this philosophy focuses on the development of an individual to approach perfection not only in terms of increasing knowledge, but also in terms of moral and spiritual formation (Murshid, 1975). According to Thoha (1996), Islamic education is about learning the philosophy, objectives and theories developed to implement educational practices that are based on Islamic values contained in the Qur'an and hadiths. Another viewpoint given by al-Attas (1992) states that Islamic education is an attempt by educators to educate their children on the rules of creation that will guide them towards goodness (Zakaria, et. al. 2012).

However, it is important to note that Islam does not see education in such a narrow scope. It is not limited to just worldly education nor is it merely overlapping the worldly aspect with the hereafter. This shows that Islam does not concern itself with high intellectual achievement; rather intellectual capability must be complemented

with a clear understanding of the Islamic religion itself to produce outstanding people who will excel both in the world and the hereafter (Zakaria, et al., 2012).

In organizations and educational institutions, effective leadership and administration is a key element in determining success or failure. In both settings, as members and pupils strive to achieve higher levels of accomplishment, their emotional and cognitive capabilities are often challenged and tested. Throughout this, they also have to manage their own emotions in order to facilitate effective leadership practice (Grobler, 2014).

Bolman and Deal (1994) proposed a change to be made to the leadership in schools to facilitate the handing out of instructions and equipment, the development of a solid vision and strategy, forming committed employees and encouraging them to be proactive in the organization. This is unsurprising, as school administration and management are important aspects of managing a school effectively and systematically with a goal towards ensuring the high quality of education and enhancing the academic achievement of students (Abdul Shukur, 1988).

The best management system should be accompanied by good guidance and planning. The Islamic system of management actually began from the time of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and was carried on by his companions, constantly being refined minutely till now. According to al-Abidi and al-Syaybani (2010), the Islamic management and administration policy is based on two *naqli* arguments which generally described the basic principles of a quality management system. In the Qur'an, surah *al-Zukhruf* verse 32 and surah *al-Tawbah* verse 122 pertains to the action to be undertaken in order to manage and administer more effectively towards achieving a goal, for instance the division of people into certain groups. Thus, this could be taken as the basis for the system of process management.

There are four basic principles of quality management system which will be discussed in this article and they are listed in the proceeding paragraphs.

1) Insaniyyah Concept

Humanism as the foundation of education (Finger, 1995) is in line with the notion of Islamic education because of all its efforts aim to develop human nature and potential humanism (Arabic: *Insaniya*h) towards the formation of the perfect man (*insan kamil*) and in accordance with the norms of Islam. Islamic education can be definitively interpreted as any attempt to develop human nature and potential *insaniyah* towards the formation of the *insan kamil* in accordance with the norms of Islam. The whole concept of "human" in general can be understood to refer to a human person who has faith and fear and manifests piety both vertically (in his or her relationship with Allah) and horizontally (in his or her relationship with man and nature) (Usman et al., 2017).

An employee, either a leader or a normal one belonging to the ranks, should take into consideration the nature of humanity in the managing of a particular matter. Allah says as such through surah *al-Zariyat* verse 56 in the Qur'an. A person who adheres to the *insaniyyah* principle (true humanity) is able to perform the duties entrusted unto him perfectly because he is convinced of the will and determination of Allah. This coincides with the provision of Allah, namely the leadership entrusted unto the prophet Adam as the first caliph in the world. This recognition and privilege given to mankind is proof that they need to manage their systems and environment as best they can. Surah *al-Baqarah* verse 30 is a guide for mankind's worldly management and administration system, which is among the scriptures decreed through the prophets and apostles (Hasan, 2013).

2) Ihsan-Centric Nature of the Tawhidic

The management system supported by the values of faith and belief in God distinguishes it from its more liberal western and eastern contemporaries. This is because the nature of *ihsan*, such as always doing good and general goodwill, is related to aspects of professional excellence because the person in question will strive to complete the task given in an outstanding manner, even more than just meeting the minimum requirements. This is further underlined by the word of Allah in verse 134 of surah *al-Imran* in the Qur'an.

To gain a more impactful outcome, the nature of this goodwill must be based on established Tawhidic values. Mohd Affandi (1992) describes this Tawhidic paradigm as an approach based on the existence of God Almighty and none like unto Him, the Creator of all worlds and creatures. Therefore, a management system that is inherently tied to staunch faith in Allah and His Messenger as enshrined in the Tawhidic values, will operate exceptionally well. A high level of adherence to the Tawhidic concept shall also include the upholding of justice in all aspects. For instance, if justice and equality exist between the management and their employees in an organization, there would be a high level of satisfaction amongst them and this would engender universal happiness (Hasan, 2013).

3) Management with Shura

The West often expresses how much the principles of consensus and cooperation produces a positive impact on the satisfaction of employees in an organization (Dimitriades, 2000; Ebrahimpour & Withers, 1992). However, their concept of consensus only makes provision for external achievement. This is in contrast to the concepts emphasized by Islam based on the Qur'an and the Sunnahs of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Two verses of the Qur'an from surah *al-Imran* verse 159 and surah *al-Shura* verse 38 clearly illustrates the impetus for Muslims to practice *syura* or the concept of collaborative meeting in any activity and then relying on Allah's providence and divine will to achieve its expected goal (Hasan, 2013).

According to Mohd Affandi (1985), an employee will gauge performance of s particular division to three main goals namely: (i) Establishment of a management philosophy based on the Qur'an and Sunnahs of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh); (ii) The presence of a leader or manager who has good character and high moral values; and (iii) The implementation of an organization's management practices that have the ability to ensure success in this world and the hereafter.

4) Istiqamah Culture and Commitment

Istiqamah is defined as being steadfast in persisting to the right and proper path and permitting no deviations. Ascribing to this principle entails the individual working conscientiously and striving diligently to achieve his desired goals. Allah mentions the term *istiqamah* through his words in the Qur'an, specifically in surah *Yunus* verse 89 and surah *al-Tawbah* verse 7. Both of the said verses give proof that Islam makes provision for redemption and both worldly and eternal happiness if there is faith and devotion to Allah. Based on this principle, an individual will be content to work better and more effectively (Hasan, 2013).

Therefore, it is important to implement Islamic elements in the management of national education. Moreover, it has to be realized that education is itself a powerful tool in the field of sustainable development, advancing

human society and the development of the state. Indeed, the strength of a nation and, in a large sense, of a civilization can be judged from the ubiquitousness of educated people equipped with knowledge and wisdom. The shift from using lumber in construction to modern concrete elements replete with stone and iron is a process of improvement and enhancement in science that evolved over time. It could be said that the developments that the world has seen is the result of incorporating and co-existing with science. Currently the 21st century is witnessing a revolution in the process of information gathering; now learning can be conducted by only using one's fingertips. This will ultimately increase the level of knowledge of the public in all respects. However, it is of note that education product issues are still at an alarming level.

As a result, a new approach has been adopted through democratic dialogue amongst citizens, especially school principals and teachers (Maranville, 2011). This led to a collaborative culture among stakeholders in the education sector which ultimately engendered a positive change in the teaching of teachers and the learning of pupils. However, there is still uncertainty on what mechanism to use in order to guide schools so that they can achieve their goals adequately. Thus, it is the responsibility of the management to ensure the quality of teachers, the quality of the education system, the quality of the management system and the students' effectiveness in creating the products needed by the country. It is crucial for every level in the field of education to take responsibility for their role in achieving the objectives of the national education system.

IV. CONCLUSION

The strength of a nation begins with the power of educated people. Developed countries are examples of countries with a great number of educated citizens. Consequently, it is important to make sure that the education sector will continue to grow in quality to produce first class educated persons. In making western countries an example, oftentimes religion is regarded as an ancient and outdated thing. When referring to matters of administration, psychology, medicine and others, the focus will continue along the western narrative thereby taking religion as a matter of faith and worship alone. This contrasts starkly with the Quranic discourse by Muslims in these areas. Hence, four guiding principles have been issued from the Qur'an to be the basis for structuring a better education management system which will benefit adherents both in this world and the hereafter.

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