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The Role of Spiritual Intelligence in Resilient Leadership: An Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

To date, research has focused on developing a resilient leadership model for entrepreneurs. Given the current economic and competitive business landscape, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) leaders are expected to become more resilient to ensure organizational survival and to remain sustainable and relevant in the marketplace. Recent scholars have incorporated the element of spiritual intelligence as a dimension of a resilient leadership construct. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to discuss the importance of resilient leadership and spiritual intelligence by taking on the contemporary and Islamic perspectives. The final score of the four items measuring spiritual intelligence indicated a good level of consistency and reliability (a = 0.846). The themes that remained are self-consciousness, purpose-driven, self-determination, and devotional inclusivity. A review from an Islamic perspective indicated that quality leaders need to possess physical strength (al-qaviyy) and moral strength (al-amin). The development of these strengths would allow them to endure challenges, instill good values and be accountable as they understand that they are the guardians of their subjects (businesses and people). In addition, spiritual intelligence from an Islamic perspective also highlights four main components that include the heart (al-qalb), the spirit (al-ruh), the soul (al-nafs) and the intellect (a;-'aql). The development and combination of all these four components would help leaders reach the level of "Qudwah Hasanah," a true leader with the utmost awareness of his responsibility of leadership in his organization.

Keywords: Spiritual intelligence, Resilient leadership, Islamic perspective, SMEs.

INTRODUCTION

The business landscape is becoming more challenging. Technological changes, economic uncertainties, intense competition from local and international competitors, and climate change are among the challenges faced by any form of business, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It is acknowledged that occasionally, some of these factors may present an opportunity for them to exploit, but most of the time, they pose significant risks to the survival and growth of SMEs. Thus, to ensure sustainable success, SMEs need to be more resilient.

According to research, poor leadership is one of the factors contributing to SMEs' poor performance (Mhlongo & Daya, 2023; Jumayardi, 2022). The leadership of leaders of SMEs or any form of business organization, regardless of its size, is important to set the right culture, set a promising vision and direction, form effective networking and teamwork between all personnel, effectively delegate tasks, and motivate and encourage superior work performance. Recently, scholars have urged leaders to be more resilient (Prayag et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). Thus, several initiatives have been made towards the development of factors representing resilient leadership.

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Resilient leadership, in the context of SMEs, is not just about weathering the storm. It is about embracing and adapting to change, fostering trust and confidence, and developing the capacity to adapt both individually and across organizational contexts (Arham et al., 2024b). A resilient leader in an SME is not only adept at handling unexpected challenges but also at seizing emerging opportunities and turning them into success in a dynamic operating environment.

This paper is written based on the recent resilient leadership model published by Arham et al. (2024a). According to these authors, resilient leadership attributes for leaders of SMEs in Malaysia comprise six dimensions. These dimensions include adaptability, emotional intelligence, visionary, spiritual intelligence, growth mindset and internal ecosystem. Assessment of existing leadership models or theories as compared to their model of resilient leadership indicated a unique dimension has been established to represent resilient leadership among leaders of SMEs in Malaysia, which is the spiritual intelligence dimension. These authors also argue that incorporating a spiritual aspect is seen as a crucial factor in enabling leaders to have a deep comprehension of their own identity and the purpose of their role. This, in turn, allows leaders to get the support of their workforce by aligning with their beliefs (Arham et al., 2024a).

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the significance of spiritual intelligence in the context of effective leadership. It will examine the essential elements of spiritual intelligence, the advantages it offers, and its implications for the development of leadership skills. Furthermore, this paper will specifically focus on the significance of spiritual intelligence and its influence on the efficacy of leadership, particularly from an Islamic standpoint. Therefore, leaders, practitioners, and researchers can acquire useful knowledge to facilitate the development and achievement of individuals and organizations in a progressively intricate and interconnected environment.

A Review of Resilient Leadership

One of the important aspects that must exist in the leadership style of an institution is the value of resilience. This resilient value is measured not only through individual capacity but also collectively and involves organizational management. Therefore, overall collaboration between individuals and organizations plays an important role in creating a sustainable and competitive work culture. Resilient leadership can transform a toxic and damaged organizational environment into a high-performing organization (Tudor et al., 2021). Thus, resilient leadership can be formulated as a leader's competence to remain effective even in a bad organizational environment, even able to spur significant changes in facing that environment (Forster & Duchek, 2018). According to Fletcher & Sarkar (2013), resilient leadership is centered on two main indicators, namely (1) the personal quality of a leader who can face a challenging environment' and (2) a dynamic process that encompasses positive adaptation in a difficult context. The combination of these two indicators can produce resilient leaders who can lead change in an organization.

Etymologically, resilience comes from the Latin word resilire, which means to jump back or retreat. This value of resilience is not only applied in the field of leadership but also plays a role in various other disciplines, such as psychiatry, psychology, engineering, biology, and ecology. Management resilience refers to the ability to absorb and learn from the environment, as well as being prepared to respond to potential risks that occur (Valikangas, 2010). So, resilient leadership includes two main cores, namely reactive and adaptive (Giustiniano et al., 2020). These two cores have the flexibility to manifest efficiency in managing life's problems and challenges (Ghimbulut & Opre, 2013). Thus, resilience is important in increasing the individual's ability to bear, manage, and solve all issues and problems that occur in the social environment (Perreira et al., 2019). Two sources that are pillars of individual resilience are external sources, which are support from family, community, school, and social environment, and internal sources, which are self-efficacy, emotions, social interactions, self-esteem, and autonomy (Albuquerque et al., 2014).

For an organization, resilient leadership is driven by the interaction of individual characteristics, main sources of stress, management support, and goal-achievement mechanisms (Cooper et al., 2013). The interaction of these influences can produce a positive or negative environment depending on the response to the shock. Resilient leaders have strong mindsets, see failure as a temporary setback, and are able to recover from failure quickly. They maintain a positive attitude and try to seize any opportunity during difficult times. Resilient

leaders are also able to find various alternatives when faced with ambiguity, to improve organizational performance without having to wait for outside help. In addition, they can also maintain performance and ability under pressure, as well as be ready to face any changes that affect the course of the organization, further adapting resilient management in dealing with various environments.

Spiritual Intelligence and Leadership: A Contemporary Perspective

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the relationship between spirituality and leadership, particularly the role of spiritual intelligence in enhancing leadership effectiveness. Spiritual intelligence is defined as the ability to understand and apply spiritual resources to everyday life, fostering a deeper sense of meaning, purpose, and interconnectedness (Wigglesworth, 2014). In the context of leadership, spiritual intelligence is believed to contribute to essential competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, and ethical decision-making.

According to Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (1983), spiritual intelligence is comprised of a diverse set of skills that individuals possess, rather than a singular ability. This theory identifies eight different types of intelligence, each representing a unique way in which individuals interact with the world and showcase their abilities. These intelligence include verbal-linguistic intelligence (language skills), logical-mathematical intelligence (problem-solving and reasoning), visual-spatial intelligence (visualizing and understanding spatial relationships), bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (physical coordination and movement), musical intelligence (appreciation and understanding of music), interpersonal intelligence (understanding others' emotions and motivations), intrapersonal intelligence (self-awareness and introspection), and naturalist intelligence (connection with nature and the environment) (Gardner, 2983).

Spiritual intelligence and leadership are interconnected concepts with significant implications in various settings. Research indicates that spiritual intelligence positively influences self-efficacy and organizational commitment (Nur Utomo et al., 2023). Additionally, the psychometric quality of measuring leaders' spiritual intelligence has been assessed, showing cultural differences in scores between Brazilian and Portuguese workers (Fidelis et al., 2023). Furthermore, the effects of spiritual leadership, emotional intelligence, and career calling on teacher burnout have been explored, highlighting the importance of spiritual leadership in reducing burnout through enhancing career calling and emotional intelligence among teachers (Li et al., 2023). These findings underscore the importance of incorporating spiritual intelligence and leadership practices to improve individual well-being and organizational commitment and mitigate burnout in professional settings.

Effective leadership requires not only technical and interpersonal skills but also a strong sense of personal values, purpose, and inner wisdom. Leaders with high spiritual intelligence can better navigate the complex challenges of modern organizations by drawing on their inner resources and transcending the limitations of conventional thinking (Hacker & Washington, 2017). Moreover, they can inspire and empower their followers by creating a shared sense of purpose and fostering a culture of integrity, compassion, and collaboration. Thus, contributing to improved performance and productivity within the business environment.

Spiritual intelligence within leadership primarily focuses on developing one's inner strength, judgment, and ethical principles by embracing fundamental human virtues such as empathy, honesty, and fairness (Elqaweliya et al.,2023). A profound sense of mission, empathy, and ethical judgment directs leaders with a robust spiritual basis. They are motivated by a strong aspiration to create a beneficial influence on others, cultivating a feeling of interconnectedness and a common vision among their team members and the wider community.

Measures of Spiritual Intelligence

Measures of resilient leadership for leaders of SMEs in Malaysia have been developed in the previous study by Arham et al. (2024). In their study, initially, there are seven themes representing the dimension of spiritual intelligence. These themes are reflective, self-consciousness, purpose-driven, self-determination, devotional inclusivity, introspective, and faith-driven (refer to Table 1.0). However, after the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted, only four themes remained (self-consciousness, purpose-driven, self-determination,

and devotional inclusivity). Three themes were deleted due to poor factor loading and cross-loading. Further analysis of the dimension reliability before and after the EFA revealed that the Cronbach Alphas for this dimension has increased from 0.781 (all 7 items) to 0.846 (4 items only), indicating that the four remaining items exemplified a better consistency and reliability of the spiritual intelligence dimension.

No	Themes	Items	Action
1	Reflective	I spend time contemplating the reason for my existence.	Deleted
2	Self-consciousness	I am able to find meaning in life that helps me to adapt to stressful situations.	Remained
3	Purpose-driven	I am able to define a purpose for my life.	Remained
4	Self-determination	I am able to find meaning and purpose in my everyday experiences.	Remained
5	Devotional inclusivity	I integrate spiritual and existential aspects of life into my overall worldview in the decision-making process.	Remained
6	Introspective	I am aware of my own emotions and those of others.	Deleted
7	Faith-driven	I believe the stronger that I connect myself with the higher power, the easier my life is going to get.	Deleted

Table 1.0: Spiritual Leadership Dimension

Resilient Leadership from an Islamic Perspective

In the context of Islam, leadership refers to a method to organize human activities through the centralization of power to achieve the goals of community life. It is one of the demands of religion because, without government, religious and community administration affairs cannot be realized perfectly (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1991). According to al-Mawardi (2006), leaders play a role as a pillar of community unification, providing the basic needs of the people, safeguarding the security and sovereignty of the country, guaranteeing the payment of the people's rights and responsibilities fairly and defending the country's legislation. Therefore, the appointed leaders need to have superior quality in line with the great responsibility that needs to be carried out. This superior quality needs to include a resilient character as well as a high value of integrity. This explanation is formulated in the Qur'an as follows:

"And their Prophet said to them: Indeed, Allah has sent forth Saul (Talut) as your king. They said: By what right shall he rule over us when we are more worthy than he to dominion, for he is not very wealthy? He said: Allah has chosen him over you and has endowed him abundantly with both intellectual and physical capacities. Allah indeed has the power to bestow dominion upon whomsoever He wills. Allah is All-Resourceful, All- Knowing." (Surah al-Baqarah, verse 247)

According to al-Zuhayli (2009), the selection of leaders is not based on inheritance, fame, or wealth but is based on personal competence, efficiency, knowledge, skills, an intact personality, and a strong will. Therefore, the selection of Talut as the leader of the Bani Israel to face the enemy's challenge at that time was due to the breadth of knowledge and physical strength. These two criteria are important to create resilient leadership values at various levels of the organization. The same criterion is also mentioned in the Qur'an by adding another important criterion, which is a noble quality of personality based on the value of integrity. Allah SWT stated:

"Then one of the two women came to him, walking bashfully. She said: My father is inviting you so he may reward you for watering our animals for us. When Moses came to him and told him his whole story, the old man said: Have no fear! You are now safe from the wrongdoing of people. One of the two daughters suggested: O my dear father! Hire him. A strong, trustworthy person is definitely the best to hire." (Surah al-Qasas, verse 25-26)

According to Ibn Kathir (1997), the two main qualities of a leader outlined in the verse are physical strength (al-qawiyy) and moral strength (al-amin). Physical strength refers to the personal ability to remain resilient in the face of external challenges, and moral strength refers to the ability to continue to defend noble values in the management of an organization. This physical strength is not only about the strength of the body, but also includes intellectual ability, far-sightedness, being smart in organizing strategies, being able to manage pressure, and not easily giving in to any challenges and difficulties. Moral strength is a complement to physical strength, through the characteristics of integrity, tolerance, diligence, concern, empathy and politeness. Each of these skills and qualities is not limited to a specific place or period, but instead constantly changes according to the development of globalization. Therefore, resilient leaders need to have a comprehensive set of skills to ensure they remain relevant in the face of rapid and challenging environmental changes (Quraish, 2005).

In addition, resilient leaders also have a high value of accountability towards the organization and work resources. They cannot ignore the demands and needs of the organization to meet personal interests alone. In fact, resilient leadership is always willing to sacrifice self-interest to ensure the survival of the organization and work resources under its control. Messenger of Allah said:

"All of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects. The ruler is a guardian and responsible for his subjects; the man is a guardian of his family; the woman is guardian in her husband's house and responsible for her wards; a servant is guardian of his master's property and responsible for his ward. So, all of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects." (al-Bukhari, 2002)

Therefore, resilient leaders need to have a clear vision, good values and strength. Leaders who have a clear vision can think in various approaches to find alternatives and are able to clarify or refine something abstract to something real. They can lead others with the value of love, example and have the value of integrity in themselves. In addition, they also have the power to be able to move others and have physical and mental endurance (Rafiki, 2020).

Spiritual Intelligence in Leadership from an Islamic Perspective

Spiritual intelligence is an important internal aspect in the development of human potential because humans themselves consist of two realities, the physical (material) and the spiritual (spiritual). Therefore, discussions related to spiritual intelligence in leadership by scholars are often linked to religion. This is because religion plays an important role in shaping the soul, behavior and actions of humans to give meaning to life. Islam demands that its people excel and be balanced in both aspects by giving priority to aspects of personality which become other branches of excellence so that physical development can be realized (Mohd Haridi et.al, 2019). Furthermore, leadership based on Islamic spiritual values will bring positive effects to leaders and organizations. In fact, leadership based on Islamic spiritual intelligence also changes the leaders' perception of development from a purely material aspect to a form of development that emphasizes universal human needs (Dahamat Azam et.al., 2012).

Therefore, the application of the knowledge of monotheism should be given priority by the leaders of a spiritual practice organization, whether directly or indirectly. As a result, it produces leaders who are proactive by practicing innovative leadership, open-minded, far-sighted, a source of inspiration, and viable in guiding organizational members (Siti Khadijah and Ahmad Marzuki, 2017). Al-Ghazali (1998) explained that there are four main ideas that make up the spiritual dimension and become the basis in a person, namely the heart (al-qalb), the spirit (al-ruh), the soul (al-nafs), and the mind (al-' intellect). Indirectly, each of these ideas becomes the main internal component that influences and manifests in the external personality. Accordingly, the main idea which is the heart (al-qalb) plays a role in controlling all the activities of the spirit, passion, and intellect and functions to lead all human senses in doing good or bad. The human heart tends to become sick when there is a lack of faith because the aspect of faith plays an important role in keeping the heart from being affected by lust arising from the whispers of the devil (Abu Dardaa et. al., 2014). In addition, strengthening faith requires deep knowledge (Firdaus, 2016). This coincides with the hadith of the Prophet SAW which means:

"Know that there is a lump of flesh on the body, if it is good then the whole body is good, if it is bad then the whole body is bad, know that it is the heart." (al-Bukhari, 2002)

In the second idea, it is the spirit (al-ruh) that causes the body to live, move, obtain benefits, and avoid harm. Spirit is divided into two parts, including the human spirit and the animal spirit (Marzuq, 1996). The human spirit is a subtle element that can know and acquire knowledge, possessed by humans, which consists of animal spirits that make the mind weak in knowing the essence of the spirit. While the animal spirit is defined as a subtle mass that resides in the empty space of the heart and circulates throughout the body through the blood vessels (al-Jurjani, 2000). In addition, the idea of the soul (al-nafs) according to Ibn 'Abbas includes two elements of the soul, namely the nafs 'agliyyah which is capable of distinguishing things, and the spiritual nafs which is an element of life (Mahmod, 2022). Al-Nafs functions to lead people to act in accordance with the desire that is in him whether it is the path of goodness or the path of evil. The fact is that the potential for good is stronger than the potential for bad, but the attraction to bad is stronger than good. Therefore, everyone is advised to always preserve the purity of his passions so as not to be tainted with any impurities that can have a negative effect (Quraish, 1996).

Next, the idea of reason (al-Aql) will lead the mind to always obey the laws of Allah SWT in every situation. According to Amin (2018), Islam has established that human reason has a very noble position. However, it does not mean that the human mind is given unlimited freedom. Islam has rules to set the intellect in its proper place. Not only that, but Islam also strongly emphasizes its servants to use reason in living life in this world. All the actions of each of his servants should be guided by reason based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah so that the practice does not deviate from the right path. In fact, spiritual intelligence in Islam is closely related to a person's personality (Jumahat & Abdullah, 2014). Through it, will give birth to individuals who have a good relationship with Allah SWT, fellow human beings, and the surrounding environment. A good relationship with Allah SWT will form a person who has faith and piety. Not only that, spiritual intelligence in Islam also refers to the strength of the combination of the four ideas of heart, spirit, soul, and intellect that underlie human spirituality will increase faith, integrity in doing good deeds, and form commendable morals (Baharuddin & Ismail, 2016). If examined, the four ideas interact with each other and have a symbiotic relationship with the elements of the body and become a source of knowledge, happiness, or sorrow for humans.

The results of the four main ideas have influenced four domains related to spiritual intelligence, namely through faith, worship, morals and knowledge. The main domain, which is spiritual intelligence through faith, will lead a person to understand with full confidence the meaning and content of the utterance of shahadah (testimony). This belief encourages us to support the Sunnah of the Prophet SAW, as well as being protected from the influence of misguided groups (Abd Ghani & Abu Mansor, 2006). Najati (2001) is of the view that the obligation to believe in Allah SWT and appreciate all aspects of the Islamic faith is to change the soul and spirit of man. Spiritual intelligence through the implementation of worship that has been made obligatory by Allah SWT is able to purify the soul. Worshiping Allah SWT is also a way to lead people in erasing sins and strengthening a person's relationship with Allah SWT, which is built by obeying His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. Through this continuous relationship, a servant will feel his closeness to Allah SWT, which brings a feeling of hope, tranquility, and peace (Az-Zahrani, 2005). Finally, the result of spiritual intelligence through worship leads to a sense of tranquility, peace, happiness of the soul.

Next, spiritual intelligence through the formation of good morals is a sign of a healthy soul. Inconsistency in a person's morals will cause heart disease. Therefore, an urgent need for treatment is needed to cure the problem of liver disease, because if it is delayed, the problem of the existing disease will get worse (Abd Ghani & Abu Mansor, 2006). Finally, spiritual intelligence through knowledge can bring fear to Allah SWT. An individual needs to continue to deepen knowledge to purify his soul, while realizing that the knowledge acquired in the world is only intended to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT (Abd Ghani & Abu Mansor, 2006). Overall, this discussion can be concluded that in organizational management, sincere intentions will lead to honest, sincere, and fair leadership and help build trust and integrity in the organization. The spirit of faith will influence decisions and actions that are in line with moral values in religion. In addition, the control of passions also plays an important role so that leaders can control personal desires for the common good and ensure that justice and well-being in the organization are strengthened. Next, leaders who use common sense well will be able to solve problems effectively and guide the organization in the right direction. Therefore, an

organizational leader who has spiritual intelligence can implement religious principles in his leadership and will lead an organization that not only functions well but also has a high spiritual and ethical awareness.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual intelligence acts as a catalyst for an effective leadership style in an organization. Therefore, continuous strategy planning by SMEs leaders needs to be done to increase resilience in facing internal and external challenges. Emphasis on spiritual intelligence through physical strength (al-qawiyy) and moral strength (al-amin) will produce quality leaders and generate a generation of superior leadership in the future. The results of the study found that the main components, namely the heart (al-qalb), the spirit (al-ruh), the soul (al-nafs), and the intellect (al-'aql) should be used as an important basis in forming the spiritual intelligence of leaders as outlined by Islam. Indirectly, it will produce 'Qudwah Hasanah' leaders who are aware of the responsibility of leadership to the organization. This clearly shows the spiritual intelligence of Islam in leadership is not merely an answer to fill spiritual emptiness but to educate and discipline the soul in order to fulfill the responsibilities prescribed by Allah SWT.

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