

LEADERSHIP SKILLS MODEL FOR SUSTAINABILITY ENDOWMENT MANAGEMENT IN OMAN: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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Abstract: *Without arguing, the optimal use of endowment as a tool to alleviate poverty and enhance the living standard of the Muslim communities is depending on the sustainability endowment management. Unfortunately, the endowment fund in Oman has been underrated when it comes to its true ability. By misguided emphasis, endowment investments have been abused and neglected. Non-existence of the solutions to offer an excellent platform for sustainable endowment management is among the key problems even though there are highly educated personnel. Abuse of endowment funds in Muslim countries demonstrates a lack of management skills in the Islamic world and a lack of knowledge on the surface. This paper aims to offers leadership skills model that perhaps can be adopted for the survival of endowment funds. Specifically, this paper helps define the leadership skill model that should be used to support sustainability endowment management and how they can work symbiotically. The leadership skills model propose by this study consists of six elements, namely as setting a vision, creating opportunities, employees engagement, persuading people, making decisions, and preparing for new leaders. The model proposed in this study perhaps will assist on the human talent planning and appointing the right person for the right position in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs of Oman to manage the endowment funds.*

Keywords: *Leadership Model, Leadership Skills, Sustainability Endowment Management*

Introduction

The endowment fund, also known as Waqf, is an Islamic practice that has been practiced since the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW, even though there were conflicting narrations about the first property to be endowed and by whom. The endowment initiated by the Prophet SAW for the construction of a mosque is seen as an important foundation in his quest to propagate Islam to mankind. The following verse supports endowment fund practices.

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allah a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward”
(Quran 57:18).

This verse shows that giving a charity does not deplete one's wealth, but rather increases it. In other words, whatever cost is imposed on society reaps greater benefits. In ethics, Islam taught Muslims that those who possess money are not the owners of the wealth; they are only trustees, and they are expected to spend it for a good cause. This principle has continued to guide Muslims in ensuring equitable wealth distribution. The rudimentary in carrying out these social-economic activities, such as zakat distribution and endowment fund establishment, has aided to the social, economic, and cultural development of Muslim societies and countries.

Endowment fund plays an important role to achieve a just distribution of wealth and income in the economy including improving Muslim communities' quality of life by provide basic facilities (such as housing, medical facilities, mosques), economic development, orphan welfare, and poverty alleviation (Hasan et al., 2019). Realising the remarkably important role of endowment in social and economic development, many Muslim countries have given special attention to the development of the endowment assets and funds. It is worthily to note that the practices of endowment in the Muslim minority communities are very dynamic and response to the community's needs compare to the majority Muslim countries. This indicates that endowment practice is not limited to Muslim alone, but spreads beyond religious. In fact, the western world recognises the endowment fund system as a socioeconomic solution.

A sustained endowment can be relate to the foundation's ability to effectively manage and invest those endowment funds so that it can be returned back to the communities. Unfortunately, the management of endowment funds by the respective endowment institutions is still debatable. Not only the management, but the credibility of personnel who manage the endowment funds also became the major obstacle in the endowment development (Aldeen et al., 2020). In Oman, even though those who managed the endowment funds are personnel graduated from university, but it does not contributes to well-developed endowment management sustainability. Lack of professional and technical expertise in managing the endowment funds were part of the constraint facing by Muslim countries (Azganin, 2019). Personnel such as Imams and preachers are appointed to manage the endowment funds, but they have lack of knowledge in business and investment. Hence, the objective of sustainable endowment funds for current and future generation cannot be achieved due to inability of the personnel the sustainably manage the endowment funds. Question arises as what are the ideal leadership skills that should be possessed by personnel to manage endowment funds in sustainable way? The objective of this study is to offers leadership skills model that perhaps can be adopted by the endowment institution for the survival of endowment funds.

Literature Review

Endowment Funds Sustainability

Endowment fund institutions, either formal or informal, have played an important role in enhancing the powerful effects of economic and social formations. For instance, almost all public services were provided through endowment during the Ottoman Empire (Iman & Mohammad, 2017). The historical evolution of endowment institutional structure demonstrates that endowment has progressed from an autonomous entity to a court-controlled and then a state-controlled organisation (Khalil et al., 2014). When a semi-autonomous endowment institution is established, the possibility of endowment entrepreneurship is increased. Depending on the wisdom of the institution within the given environment, this can take a variety of forms. The institutional structure of an endowment may undergo fundamental change with the control of audit and regulation. Alternatively, some of the *nazir*'s functions and duties may

be delegated to another entity. The entity appointed by the *nazir* must then be autonomous in its daily operations, including the planning and execution of its objectives and goals.

Raising funds from the community without investing them and using the accrued income for community needs is conflicting with sustainability (Oladapo et al., 2016). Alternatively, if endowment funds are managed efficiently by investing it, and the accruable returns are used to address community needs, it may be more sustainable in future. Besides, various endowment entities can be established for self-sustaining endowment funds, which would provide an institutional endowment system for the community. It should be noted that endowment will lose focus in the Muslim society once there is no sustainability (Abdur-Rashid, 2021) and will therefore deprive them of endowment funds. Some scholars believe that the main factors for sustainability are developing need-related policies, long-term strategies manageable within the limited available resources, self-reliance, cost-effectiveness, technical skills, transparency, stakeholder participation, accountability, and supervisory ability (Falle et al., 2016; Oladapo et al., 2016).

Sustainability Endowment Management

Previous study refers sustainability management as the stability of ingrained change and the dynamism of continuing change in management of the organisation (Fleischer et al., 2015). In this study, sustainability endowment management explains the idea of managing the Omani endowment funds using several strategies that meet the needs of community today while protecting, sustaining and enhancing the endowment funds that will be needed in the future. The sustainability endowment is of extremely great importance in the success of the endowment management since it allows for competitiveness and control that are two keys of efficiency especially if we keep in mind that endowment management normally lacks the private profit motive (Gamon & Tagoranao, 2017).

Previous study proposed that sustainable endowment management should go hand in hand with business evolution and development (Gürsoy, 2018). In other words, a sustainable endowment should be managed by professional and expert personnel who know how and when to invest. However, the role of Imams and preachers cannot be undermined because they are actually a channel to source endowment to the Ministry by encouraging people to do so. To effectively build a sustainable endowment management, it is important to have personnel with leadership skills so that it can raise public trust. To acquire public trust, the best personnel should implement its professional knowledge and skills to keep the assets highly productive and income generating (Khuza'i et al., 2019).

Leadership Skills on Sustainability Endowment Management

Identify the leaders with competent leadership skills may assists the governments or endowment institutions in developing sustainable endowment funds because the leaders play an essential role in improving such a sector by planning, organising, leading, and controlling (Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018). The terms leadership has been defined differently by various academics. Karagianni and Jude Montgomery (2018) described leadership as behavioural traits, social control, cognitive attributes, emotional abilities, and character concerning community orientation and appeal to self-versus mutual interests. On the other hand, McClean et al. (2019) referred leadership as a complex procedure that could be evolved with the proper use of interventions. They contended that leadership is affected by external environment, and this subsequently will boost their capability. Leadership must be incorporated with skills that enable the organisational competitiveness to improve (Digirolamo & Tkach, 2019). Leadership skills

encompassed physical, mental proficiency and the willingness to comprehend or experience something (Tabassi et al., 2016). It may also refer to learning key skills by knowledge and teaching (Guzmán et al., 2020). Besides, Mumford et al. (2017) defined leadership skills as knowing how to do something or how to carry out a task, while Lashgarara et al. (2011) claimed that leadership skills are the ability to apply gained knowledge correctly and using it in the business administration.

Leadership skills are a useful word for seeking out leaders that have such expertise that can motivate businesses to transform. Indeed, effective leadership skills are a prerequisite for organisational management. Guzmán et al. (2020) argued that leaders should have the ability to talk, listen, write, understand, comprehend, and engage in logical thought. In addition, Mamabolo et al. (2017) claimed that skills leaders should lead the organisation and they proposed nine needed skills for a leader, namely as a start-up, business management, marketing, financial management, human resource management, technical skills, personal skills, leadership and social and interpersonal skills. While Zenger and Folkman (2019) proposed that a leader should possess four types of skills, which are the cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, business skills, and strategic skills. Another scholar, Ali and Anwar (2021) identified six leadership skills and these skills are (a) shaping a vision for focusing and challenging the team; (b) translating the vision into clear strategy about what action to take and what not; (c) recruiting, developing and rewarding a team of great people; (d) focusing on measurable results; (e) promoting innovation and learning to sustain the team or organisation and (f) leading yourself.

Research Methodology

This study uses qualitative methodological approaches via literature reviews on sustainability endowment management and leadership skills, as well as other supporting related research area from journal articles. This study also conducted an interview and discussion session with specific, credible and relevant respondents in the endowment industry for confirmation of related issues and visits to the respective Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs, Oman for observation and verification.

Findings and Discussion

This study aims to offer leadership skills model that perhaps can be adopted by the endowment institution in managing the endowment funds with the aims of sustainability. It is believed that leaders can change the perspective of endowment funds management in Oman so that the competitiveness and sustainability can be improved in future. Those personnel in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs can apply the respective leadership skills such as establish a vision, provide opportunities, persuade citizens, motivate their staff, make decisions within limited resources, and train new leaders to ensure that the endowment funds in Oman can be sustained for current and future generations. Figure 1 depicts the leadership skills model proposed by this study which consists of six (6) elements, namely as setting a vision, creating opportunities, employees engagement, persuading people, making decisions, and preparing for new leaders. Next sub-sections discuss the respective elements in the leadership skills model.



Figure 1: Sustainable Leadership Skills Model

Setting a Vision

Vision may explain future plan and long-term goals (Al-Hoorue & Shlowiy, 2020). Another study by Berson et al. (2015) defined vision as future-oriented idealisations (forecast) of shared organisational goals established by the leader. Vision plays a major role in setting up viable organisation, and leaders must realise that vision is not a message written in the key entrance. It presents the organisation's intention and guides it for the future (Aithal, 2016). Therefore, an organisation should explicitly write their vision statement which provides a broad picture and the organisation's ultimate goal by keeping its objective in mind. Besides, the organisation's vision can explain their strategic position in the future that they may want to achieve (Lówstedt, 2015).

In the context of this study, successfully forecasting an endowment institution's potential is challenging for leaders who want to improve endowment management so that it can be sustained in future. Therefore, the leaders in the Ministry should set Ministry's future vision depending on their potential available in the institution. According to Al-Hoorue and Shlowiy (2020), perception can be improved, allowing for better vision. Therefore, the leaders must define a goal that has hope of being accomplished. Additional conditions must be met to include executives who trust in the organisational mission. Once the vision has been established, the next stage is developing a detailed action plan. The vision must be operationalised so that the leader knows what has to be achieved to make it realized. In addition, Al-Hoorue and Shlowiy (2020) suggested that a vision needs to be activated to keep it alive. Besides, the leaders need to be prepared to change the vision if necessary, such in a case where the vision might be unsuccessful (González-Díaz et al., 2021).

Setting a vision requires forecasting skills which should appear before planning process. Empirical evidence shows that forecasting skill was a better predictor of vision strength than intelligence, divergent thinking, and leadership skills (Mumford et al., 2017). Hence,

forecasting skills appears to be an especially powerful element shaping leader performance. As a result, leaders who were assigned on sustainability endowment management in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs should possess sufficient forecasting abilities and knowledge in the case-specific as well the process of the potential sustainable endowment so that they can draft excellent vision especially to ensure that the endowment funds can be used for current and future public welfare.

Creating Opportunities

Leaders should have the skill to create opportunities for the business and followers to grow and achieve as they contribute to the organisation's goals (McKelvey et al., 2015). Specifically, they must have the capability to identify and exploit new business opportunities, as well as the ability to organise the necessary resources to respond to the opportunity (Sousa, 2018). A leader who is willing to put short-term and long-term results into perspective, who knows how to look at processes instead of narrowly, can create new opportunities for the organisation. Perhaps, leaders may use their potential to see the larger picture and break it down into specifics and see it from many angles to create opportunities (Domínguez et al., 2019). Day et al. (2016) stated that the most important feature of leadership is known as how to create value by discovering new opportunities and editing new strategies to gain competitive advantages.

In managing the endowment funds, the leaders have to keep pace with the present and future environmental conditions to ensure that new opportunities exist and the endowment institution invest their resources to gain more returns. Indirectly, the emphasis has to be placed on understanding the various cultures within an endowment institution (internal and external) and accounting for sustainability opportunities (Jedaman et al., 2019). In light of this, leaders who work in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs must proactively seeking new opportunities and at the same time stimulate their employees to actively look for opportunities outside the comfort zone. Some opportunities came by sheer providence, but the ability to exploit them was a key reason for sustainable endowment funds' development.

Employees Engagement

Engaging employees refers to an inspiring and motivated state of mind, coupled with a feeling of commitment and responsibility for task fueled by enthusiasm, investment, and devotion to work (Borst et al., 2019). Yi et al. (2019) proposed that leaders can engage their employees in the creative process and sustainable innovative outcomes by influencing employees' intrinsic motivation and proactive behaviour. Leffler (2020) stated that intrinsically motivated employees are prone to contribute to and engage in such unusual work behaviour, depending on how the organisation and their leader support them. Previous studies have shown the beneficial influence of employee engagement on task results. For instance, Chou and Yuan (2015) claimed that engaging employees in any businesses that use engagement practices and services would help employees meet their specific needs as well as increase their overall well-being. Further, Mahmood et al. (2019) found that leaders who proactively engaged their employees able to foster them to seek new information and better ways to use their active participation to improve the work process. In addition, Bakker and Albrecht (2018) argued that engaged employees get actively involved in their job, which can be measured by the number of creativity and emotional challenges they overcome in connection with it.

Employees' engagement often generates personal capital in the form of optimistic thoughts and emotions. According to Rahmadani et al. (2020), leaders should provide emotional and psychological needs for their employees to engage in the work. Hence, to ensure successful

sustainability endowment management, leaders are responsible for building a work atmosphere that encourages their subordinates to be committed and succeed together. This study argues that leaders who manage endowment funds in Oman would get their subordinates to actively participate and exerts great energy in getting sustainable endowment management is successful. They need to believe that they are an important part of the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs. In this way, the subordinates are content and proud with assigned duties and execute these to the best of his/her abilities.

Persuading People

Persuasion provides new science, practice and observations into how others may be influenced (Tewari & Gupta, 2020). It can be described as a symbolic process in which communicator's attempt, in an environment of free choice, to persuade others to change their attitudes or behaviour by conveying a message (Lebedeva, 2020). Guzmán et al. (2020) contended that it is important to build a learning and innovation environment that encourages the decision-making of collaborators and, therefore, persuading people to adopt a more open and digital mindset. However, persuasion is not straightforward since it needs to alter behaviours which often make people believe they are misinformed (Lebedeva, 2020). Cialdini (2016) proposed that to practice such a persuasion skill, the leaders need to acquire six (6) classical persuasion concepts, namely as reciprocity, social proof, liking, consistency, authority, and scarcity. These principles are composed of multiple strategies and are collectively called *weapons of influence* because they are carefully constructed to evoke desired behavior.

This study proposes that leaders in charge of endowment funds management should develop a strategy for persuasion to their subordinates. Specifically, leaders have to be persuasive when it comes to encourage their subordinates in completing the operation of sustainability endowment management. According to Aarseth et al. (2019), when the occasion to act and bring together the subordinates to address important issues in managing the endowment funds, the critical dimensions of persuasion that are important for leadership consideration are the source of the message, the timing, and the medium/form of persuasion. Hence, this study suggests the leaders in the Ministry must have the ability to convince their subordinates that they are a part of the endowment institution change process, and via dialogue, to increase their involvement in the decision making regards to sustainability endowment management.

Making Decisions

Leaders must possess a skill that can encourage the involvement of their subordinates in decision-making or problem-solving endeavours. According to Gupta et al. (2019), stimulating a discussion with the employees, encouraging them to contribute to the change effort via decision-making and improving communication and information-sharing among the subordinates enables them to share their ideas. Thus, leaders must enhance subordinates' involvement and participation in the organisational decision-making processes by allowing them to participate and make joint decisions. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2013) believed that when the employees work in a context that enables them to be actively involved in the decision-making process, the will feels that he or she is a part of the organisation and its decision-making processes. Employees' involvement in the decision-making also may promote their commitment to the decisions that are made and to increase their motivation to implement them, to enhance their job satisfaction, loyalty, decision acceptance and collaboration on any organisational issues (Sethumadhayan, 2018).

In the context of this study, leaders in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs must encourage their subordinates by giving the autonomy to participate in decision-making and have access to information sources for their tasks, so that they are motivated to carry out activities to achieve sustainable endowment management goals. One of the ways proposed by Bolis et al. (2017) to encourage the employees to make decisions is by empowers and care for the subordinates, and set an example of how to do things the right way concerning making decisions. Perhaps, the autonomy and decision-making authority given by the leaders in the Ministry enables the employees in their initiatives of exploring and evaluating new knowledge specifically in the sustainability endowment management.

Preparing For New Leaders

Preparation is describes as the act or method of getting anything ready. Current leaders have long played an important role in preparing new leaders who go on to have significant impact on the organisations. To ensure that the transition from current to future organisational development, the leaders must ensure that they can produce new leaders so that any of their effort for organisation can be carried forwards. Preparing future leaders involves acquiring many qualities, including stopping and paying attention to employees, improving the approach to solving problems, listening carefully and learning from failure (Marathe et al., 2020). Training the new leaders in a great way can be one of the strategies to prepare for the future leaders as the training involves giving them a broad set of skills, allowing them to realise their requirements, cultivating their talents, expectations, and helping them realise the requirements of others they work with within the organisation or industry (Ragins et al., 2017).

The leaders in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs must establish a plan for moving forward by preparing and appointing new leaders so that the endowment funds can be managed in a sustainable ways. Successful appointing new leader occurs through a process of mutual interaction between new leaders and organisation insiders especially current leaders. One way to accelerate a leader's transition into a new role is to develop a learning plan and use a structured method like new leader assimilations to develop actionable insights. Perhaps, the current leaders in the Ministry should arrange to have a facilitator solicit feedback from the leader's work group, share that feedback with the new leaders, and then have the leaders meet with the team to corroborate the data and establish a plan for moving forward.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Leadership can be seen as a process in which an individual influences the other members of the group in order to achieve common goals. This study offers leadership skills model that perhaps can be adopted by the endowment institution for the survival of endowment funds. This study proposes a Leadership Skills Model which consists of six (6) elements, namely as setting a vision, creating opportunities, employees engagement, persuading people, making decisions, and preparing for new leaders. These elements are perhaps helps the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs of Oman to embarked and subsequently maintain the sustainability endowment management for current and future generations. The leaders in the Ministry should focus on the empowerment of and providing support to employees which reflected in the fact that the leader in the Ministry represents a significant link for the successful and sustainable development of endowment funds because he/she makes the maximum contribution to the sustainable endowment management in the Ministry.

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