

The Entrepreneurs Characteristic from al-Quran and al-Hadis

P. R. M. Faizal, A. A. M. Ridhwan, and A. W. Kalsom

Abstract—Entrepreneurship is a part of Islamic economics and businesses. Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled. Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions are examples of this. There are a lot of Muslims that are successful entrepreneurs in the world and Islam always invites all Muslims to be an innovative and active entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, Muslims have lost their confidence, their characters and souls through the time. This research aims to analyse the characteristic of entrepreneurs from al-Quran and al-Sunah. This research also concludes that Islam is not opposite with entrepreneurship. Islam warmly invites all Muslims to be entrepreneurs in their life by given the rules that should be followed by all Muslims which are derive from al-Quran and al-Hadis.

Index Terms—Entrepreneur, entrepreneur characteristic, muslimpreneur, islamic entrepreneurship.

I. INTRODUCTION

All the economics functions in the Islamic economics has been regulated by the concept of livelihood (*al-Rizq*) as well as lawful (*halal*) and unlawful (*haram*) sources of earnings.[1] The term *al-Rizq* is applied to connote livelihoods and means of further production, which has been intimated by the Prophet Muhammad SAW and predetermined by Allah SWT[1], [2]. One way to gain lawful livelihood is through entrepreneurship activities.

Islam is one of the religions that try to encourage people to be an entrepreneur. Islam encourages men to remain always in search of bounties of Allah. Islam accords business and entrepreneurship a place of high esteem [3]. Entrepreneurship is a factor that can change the economic problems of any country. It is also engage lots of people as employee or self-employed. Until a few years ago, most of the countries in the world were following other systems namely socialist rather than the capitalist system [4] especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall [5].

In recent years, the world has witnessed many big financial scandals leading researchers to express different views with regard to holding to higher ethical standards [6]. While, the religiously committed entrepreneurs exhibited a less tolerant attitude than others in the matter[7].

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Perkins (2003) analysed the role of Islam in the process of wealth creation and confirmed Weber's conclusions that Islam is an economic hindrance and barrier to prosperity and fulfilment of human ambition, potential and welfare [8]. However, the claims that Islam has the propensity to deter development [9] and that Muslims in general are low in achievement [10] have been conceptually challenged even by western intellectuals. A number of western thinkers, in addition to Muslim scholars, have acknowledged the progressive nature of Islam and recognized its positive attitude towards prosperity and the desirability of engaging in productive entrepreneurial activity [11], [12].

L.P. Dana asserts that religions are neutral and do neither promote nor prohibit entrepreneurship [13] but numerous other authors strongly argue that Islam does not block development through private initiatives and does in fact permit or encourage entrepreneurship [14]–[16]. In fact, entrepreneurship is a part of Islamic culture as showed by Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions. Islam always invites all Muslims to be innovative, entrepreneur and active.

Islam is a religion of knowledge [17] and Islamic tradition has always included a positive approach to economic activity and noted that the Prophet Muhammad SAW was a merchant before his prophetic mission [18]. As the result, a lot of Muslims entrepreneurs become successful entrepreneurs in the world.

Entrepreneurship is a process of searching and steering through the earth's tracts goes beyond simply finding employment opportunities or even engaging in basic entrepreneurial activities. The search implies the exploration of the unknown in order to discover new horizons and uncover new opportunities for the benefit of humankind. Such active search involves taking risks and requires innovative thinking and that is "entrepreneurship" [19].

II. ISLAMIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP: AN OVERVIEW

The sense of brotherhood creates a bond and a sense of unity in which all work together as a team. The cooperative and collaborative work within the team and between teams in Prophet Muhammad and his companions' era created powerful drivers for innovative societal change. Collaboration is necessary for entrepreneurs to derive innovative solutions that go beyond the traditional, and in which individuals are the key vehicles for such transformation and innovation[20].

In Islam, there is no separation between entrepreneurial activities and religion. Islam has its own entrepreneurship characteristic and guiding principles based on al-Qur'an and al-Hadis to guide entrepreneurship operation [6]. By virtue of

the human nature, the person must firstly be a Muslim, then the entrepreneur. He has the responsibility to perform ibadah and be a khalifah. Muslim entrepreneur should search for Allah's blessings above all other factors. Muslim entrepreneurs perform entrepreneurial activities not solely for profit, but above all, to fulfil the fardu kifayah [21].

Islam fulfils an important need by providing the means to satisfy both physical and spiritual need by establishing a framework for behaviour and providing a sense of existence. Islamic moral and ethical values are incentives to achieve greatness of spirit, helping to develop tolerance and empowering with adaptive capacities in response to life's challenging events. Islam provides the individual with a sense of self-respect and family values, and promotes a unified society in a brotherhood imbued with social responsibility. Allah says:

- The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy (Al-Hujurat 49: 10) [22].

By applying Islamic norms and values of the characteristic with prudent use of social, environmental, and economic resources, Islam has created the new communities outside *Al-Jazeera Al-Arabia* in an innovative entrepreneurial manner. These new communities were given considerable freedom in how they created their local social and economic values under the umbrella of *al-Qur'an* and *al-Hadis*, maintaining synergetic ties with the Islamic leadership. Through this unification of scientific, social, ethical, and economic values they were able to prosper for hundreds of years.

Furthermore, social change implemented under Islamic entrepreneurship influenced neighbouring Europe and other geographical regions through social and commercial interaction. The actions of current civilizations provide testimony to the success of Islamic social entrepreneurship as they currently are faced with developing solutions to their own social problems. Entrepreneur and entrepreneurship have a special place in Islam. An Islamic entrepreneurship model is sourced from the *al-Quran* and *al-Hadis*. Islam sees everything as a comprehensive element in life, including entrepreneurship. Therefore, in Islam, entrepreneurship includes all aspects of life, whether it is for the world or the hereafter [23].

III. METHODOLOGY

This study will employ content analysis as an approach in data analysis. Content analysis is the method of analysing documents in order to describe and quantify phenomena systematically and objectively [24]–[26]. It's allows the researcher enhancing the understanding of the data by testing the theoretical issues.

Content analysis was first use in the 19th century [27] is a method of analysing various types of documentation [28] such as hymns, newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements and political speeches. The uses of content analysis in communication, journalism, sociology,

psychology and entrepreneurship during the last few decades has shown steady growth [29]. Content analysis will give the possibility to distil the words into fewer content related categories. Therefore, every words, phrases and the like would share the same meaning [30].

In this way, content analysis helps researchers to build-up a picture of the characteristic of the entrepreneur portrayed in the *Al-Qur'an* and *Al-Hadis*. For the purpose of this research, the meaning of *Qur'anic* verses in *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfazh Al-Quran Al-Karim* [31] and *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an* [32] will be analysed to find out the characteristics of entrepreneurs. This finding then, will be supported by various hadis which taken from various books of hadis.

IV. MUSLIMPRENEURS CHARACTERISTIC

Al-Qur'an recognizes man as a being at once rational, volitional, acquisitive, and ethical. Being primarily a book of moral guidance, *al-Qur'an* advises all Muslim that it is in their best interest to pursue a moderate course. That is, Muslim should act to provide for existence on this material plane without sacrificing their moral sensibilities. *Al-Qur'an* insists on the harmony of Muslim's spiritual and material interests. It is guidance on how to achieve success in this life and the next [33].

The holistic characteristics of Muslimpreneurs has inculcated rule of metaphysics which are abstract like sin, merit, hell and heaven that becomes the trigger to human's behaviour in structuring entrepreneurial development. The implication from the concept of property as trust, test, instrument and its inabsolute ownership will make Muslimpreneurs more careful in searching and spending. Thus, Muslimpreneurs should differ from other entrepreneurs in their motives and aims. It is hoped that if they are able to manage their business successfully, they should also have good performance in terms of faith and belief towards Allah SWT [34].

A. *Taqwa* as a Framework

Successful Muslim entrepreneurs must have faith (*taqwa*) to Allah SWT. Allah says:

- O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you should know (Al-Saff. 61: 10-11) [22]

Through this decree, an entrepreneur must believe in Allah and strive in the search of wealth to improve himself and do all of Allah and the Prophet's teachings [35], [36]. The successful entrepreneur is when he has '*taqwa*' to Allah and greatness of '*iman*' through gaining lots of profit from the entrepreneurial activities [37].

Islam generally has a positive attitude to entrepreneurship and the rights of ownership [11]. Wilson (2006) also acknowledged the uniqueness of the Islamic code of business ethics and the positive contributions that "trust" can render to

the economic activity in the form of cost effectiveness and organization competence [12]. Religion shapes the society by giving meaning to a society's ethical structures, encouraging or discouraging certain behaviours [38].

In Muslim countries, which are usually defined as high-context cultures, people tend to be fatalist meaning that they do not believe that they have much control over events that affect them [39]. They strongly believe in destiny and events being controlled by fate. In Muslim culture, fatalism is characterised by the phrase "*Insha Allah*", which means "If God wills it" [40]. This means that a Muslim will do their best but the external outcome may not be under their control. For example, there is a widespread belief that strongly religious countries are not receptive to innovation and proactive [41]–[43]. This is explained by the high fatalism shaped by the religion of these cultures. In Muslim countries, fatalism is generally associated with less willingness to try new technical and non-technical products and with higher levels of perceived product risk [42], [43]. Confirming this, Farid (2007) advocates that Islam encourages a conservative culture that leads to risk-averse attitude among Muslim entrepreneur [44].

B. Halal as a Top Priority

Added to the *taqwa* is the concept of "*Halal*" (which can be translated as accepted by the religion) might discourage Muslim entrepreneurs to sell alcohol and pork which are considered to be "*Haram*" (which can be translated as not accepted by the religion) [45]. Allah says:

- Eat of the things which Allah hath provided for you, lawful and good; but fear Allah, In whom ye believe. (Al-Māidah. 5: 88) [32]

The suggestion that religion has a key role to play in shaping the mode and the level of entrepreneurial activity in a given society is gaining widespread acknowledgment and recognition. The link between religion and economic activity in the wider context was explored and demonstrated by the various studies [18], [38], [46]–[48].

Among the basic rights that all individuals are entitled to, and should enjoy, is access to income. Chapra (1985) explained that socio-economic justice, based on the theory of "social equilibrium", implies that people are entitled to have equal opportunity and does not entail that they should be equal in poverty or in richness [49]. Earning lawful (*Halal*) living is tenable through engagement in productive activities, namely: employment (working for others) and being self-employed and employing others (undertaking entrepreneurial activity). Allah says:

- O ye people! eat of what is on earth, lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for He is to you an avowed enemy. (Al-Baqarah. 2: 168) [32]

Although Islam endorses working for others for fixed salary, it encourages and stimulates Muslims to embark on entrepreneurship as the preferred option to earning *Halal* income. Beg, (1979) noted that Islam does not only motivate

Muslims to be entrepreneurs, but in fact, it makes it obligatory on them to work hard and gain *Halal* earnings beyond their immediate needs in order to care for the community and the Muslim *ummah* at large [50].

Earning *Halal* income through entrepreneurship and helping others to earn a living spares the public wealth from being exploited by a few and discourages them from being dependent on the state. Public wealth belongs to the Muslim *ummah*, so it should be utilized in projects that serve the common need and the common interest of society.

C. Do not Waste

Islam encourages people to enjoy blessings of life without waste, Allah says:

- Oh children of Adam! eat and drink but waste not in excess, for Allah does not love the wasters (al-A'rāf 7: 31) [22]

Prophet Muhammad SAW asked his followers not to over use water even while having the ablution for prayer next to a flowing river. He encouraged his people to remove harmful objects from the path of people and considered that the lowest manifestation of belief. Prophet Muhammad SAW encourage people to plant trees to benefit future generations [51]. The Prophet SAW said:

- There is no Muslim who plants a plant or a tree, except that whatever is eaten from it is a charity for him. Whatever is stolen from that is a charity for him. Whatever is eaten from it by an animal is a charity for him. Whatever a bird eats is a charity for him, no one suffers a loss except that it will be a charity for him till the Day of Judgement. (Muslim. Book 10: #3764) [52]

D. Worship to Allah is a Priority

Sadeq (1977) pointed out that entrepreneurship in Islam is highly regarded, and forcefully argued that Islam provides not only the incentives but also the conducive framework for economic and entrepreneurship development [53]. His argument is based on the interpretation of the *Qur'anic* verse and on the many traditions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Allah SWT says:

- And when prayer is over, disperse in the world and search for the bounty of Allah (Al-Jumu'ah 62: 10) [22]
- It is He Who made the earth manageable for you, so traverse ye through its tracts and enjoy of the sustenance which He furnishes: but unto Him is the resurrection (Al-Hijr 15: 67) [22]

E. Practicing High Moral Values

The Holy *al-Qur'an* and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW explicitly praise entrepreneurship and commend moral entrepreneurial activity such as the elimination of *riba*:

- But Allah hath permitted trade (bay') and forbidden

usury (riba) (Al-Baqarah 2: 275) [22].

F. Trustworthy

The economic transaction of buying and selling for profit (*bay'*) implies the existence of the entrepreneur. Abu Sa'ed reported that the Prophet said:

- The truthful trustworthy merchant is with the Prophet (SAW) the True ones and the martyrs (on the Day of Resurrection) (Al-Tirmidhi. Book 14: #1213) [54]

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad SAW and many of his close companions were trustworthy and successful entrepreneurs. He explicitly emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship and encouraged Muslims to actively participate in business and entrepreneurial activity. Narrated by Hudhaifa that the Prophet said:

- Once a man died and was asked: "What did you use to say (or do) (in your life time)?" He replied, "I was a business-man and used to give time to the rich to repay his debt and (used to) deduct part of the debt of the poor." So he was forgiven (his sins). Abu Mas'ud said: "I heard the same (Hadis) from the Prophet". (Bukhari. Sahih Bukhari. Volume 3, Book 41: #576) [55]

G. Concern for the Welfare

The Islamic social welfare system or *Zakat*, in which everyone is obligated to give a percentage of their excess goods to community, is just one example of such mercy between community members. Many texts in *al-Qur'an* and *al-Hadis* encourage Muslims to offer charity in different forms. Allah SWT says:

- O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good that you may succeed (Al-Hajj 22: 77) [22].

To encourage the faithful to love to spend from their money, land, and other possessions they treasure, Allah SWT says:

- Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend from that which you love. And whatever you spend indeed, Allah is Knowing of it (Ali 'Imrān 3: 92) [22].
- The ones who establish prayer, and from what we have provided them, they spend (Al-Anfāl 8: 3)[22].

Prophet Muhammad was exemplary as an initiative social entrepreneur. The revelation given to Prophet Muhammad was about the establishment of radical forms of social justice in which tolerance, equity, and charity were at the heart of the Islamic ideology [56]. Therefore, they were necessary characteristic for Islamic community to spring in its name. Prophet Muhammad SAW translated these characteristics into action, and his influence will continue for all time.

Prophet Muhammad SAW demonstrated ethnic and religious tolerance, and established social welfare based on an Islamic social entrepreneur system. The Prophet SAW

believed that the ancient Jewish prophet and Jesus proclaimed that Allah SWT demands justice and mercy. Prophet Muhammad SAW encouraged people making donations on specific occasions. For example, he encouraged on-going charity with the following advice:

- When the son of Adam dies, his actions are cut off except for three – an ongoing charity (*sadaqa jāriah*) and knowledge which brought benefit and a virtuous son who makes supplication for him. (al-Nawawi. Chapter 12, Book of Knowledge: #1383) [57]

During the era of caliph Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, poverty was eliminated from the Islamic community and prosperity has reached all individuals Muslims or non-Muslims. In addition, *al-Waqf* (or suspension), is a type of charity involving property, which constituted a cornerstone in the Islamic economical welfare system, and was a crucial element in building the Islamic civilization. By participating in *al-Waqf*, faithful Muslims donate property, including money, buildings, land, wells, trees, and other possessions, strictly for the sake of Allah, as a form of worship, thanking Allah for His bounty and in anticipation of a reward in the hereafter.

Al-Waqf donations provide long-term benefit for many. Orphans, the poor, sick, and students are allowed to use this charity. While meeting the economic needs of society, *al-Waqf* eliminates selfishness and promotes a sense of responsibility towards current and future generations [58].

H. Knowledgeable

The first *Qura'nic* verses reveal to the prophet Muhammad SAW manifest the important of knowledge in Islam. Allah says:

- Proclaim! (or read!) In the name of Thy Lord and Cherisher, who created-; Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed Blood; Proclaim! and Thy Lord is Most Bountiful; He who taught (the use of) the pen; Taught man that which He knew not. (Al-'Alaq. 96: 1-5)

Prophet Muhammad SAW was also committed to education to ensure the importance of knowledge and emphasise the risk of neglecting it. He SAW particularly encouraged his followers to obtain knowledge of religion and law. He SAW taught his followers that his educated companions taught the ignorant, and many of his followers during his time and after who followed this attitude of sharing knowledge are successful entrepreneurs, who played a significant entrepreneurial role in other communities beyond Arabia.

I. Caring for the Society and Environment

In Islam, environment and animals are sacred and valuable. Allah says:

- But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the home of the Hereafter, nor forget Thy portion In This world: but do Thou good, As Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief

In the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief. (Al-Qashash. 28: 77)[22]

In addition, Prophet Muhammad cared for the health of the society, and encouraged women to participate in this sector, enhancing the role of women society. He also encouraged his followers to care for their aged parents and the elderly people in society. He played with children, talking and listening to them, which gave them self-confidence and influenced their future.

Prophet Muhammad educated his followers to be kind to all living souls and to protect the environment. Narrated by Sahl ibn al-Hanzaliyyah, The Prophet SAW came upon an emaciated camel and said:

- Fear Allah regarding these dumb animals. Ride them when they are in good condition and feed them when they are in good condition. (Abu Dawud. Book 14: #2542) [59].

Narrated by Abu Huraira: The Prophet SAW said: While a man was walking on a road, he became very thirsty. Then he came across a well, got down into it, drank (of its water) and then came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. The man said to himself "This dog is suffering from the same state of thirst as I did." So he went down the well (again) and filled his shoe (with water) and held it in his mouth and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him. The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He said, (Yes) There is a reward for serving any animate (living being). (Bukhari. Volume 8, Book 73: #38) [55].

V. CONCLUSION

The concept of *fard kifayah* (collective obligations) in Islam is based on the ability of society to meet its minimum and basic needs from a specified activity or meet national challenges and obligations. An appropriate share of the Muslim population should undertake entrepreneurial activities by their own choice and according to their own initiative to ensure the continuity of the nation's economic viability. Failure to achieve such a level of performance means that the Islamic Government has to step in and assume it's legal and moral obligation to compensate for any shortfall of the private sector.

Having Islamic characteristic could cause someone to be closely related to Allah and the people. This relationship is based on the concept of 'taqwa' which needs the entrepreneurs totally recumbence to Allah and also have a good relationship with other people. Generally, it can be concluded that the characteristics of entrepreneurs studied in this research is a dynamic foundation for individual relationships between the entrepreneurs with both Allah and other people.

In conclusion, the relationships between the Muslimpreneurs and the concept of *taqwa* will give them the ability and capability in developing their characteristic based on the Islamic needs which is derived from al-Qur'an and

al-Sunah. The Muslimpreneurs characteristic is an important asset to obtain high achievement in the field of entrepreneurship.

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