

An Islamic Version of Employee Training for Contemporary Organizations

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Abstract

The prime objective of the study is to examine interplay between two paradigms, training & development in the Islamic management context and the traditional organizational management context. This exploratory study aims to reveal the inter connection of Islamic teachings and western management in the context of training & development in the organizations. Findings of the study shed light on the use of Islamic principles of human development in the organizational structure. This study may provide the basis for development of Islamic model of training and development of the employees of the contemporary organizations.

Keywords: Islamic Management, Management, Training & Development, Organizational Structure

Introduction

Training is becoming the most approaching intervention in order to solve the work related issues. Therefore, today's managers, employees and organizations are trending extensively towards training and development of employees. Successful training programs make its incumbents to learn skills, knowledge abilities, attitude and aptitude that are necessary for performing the work-related task effectively. These learned behaviors are crucial in order to gain competitive advantage.¹ Further, the investment in

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training and development is considered as central strategy to attract the competitive pool in an organization. This investment in human capital brings satisfaction to employees and increases their capabilities. Employees are considered to be the prime resource; therefore, organizations spend on the upgradation of this important resource. This also increases the organizational attract ability which exert a pull on the finest human resource of the market. Contemporary organizations, now a days, are very considerate about upgrading the skills of their human capital. Through the help of training and development, the human capital is refined, polished, upgraded, and refreshed time to time so they can meet up with necessary challenges. Going one step deep in the area of employee development, it is very important to incorporate the Islamic teachings in the training model as Islamic management model is getting success all over the world especially dealing with the human resources as Islam focus the development and wellbeing of the people. Islam is a complete code of life, which provides guidance in every sphere of life including human resource practices and organizational behavior. Moreover, it is worth studying the association between Islam and modern training and development as Islam is the second largest religion of the world therefor it is equally important and relevant to study the training and development concept under the lights of Islamic teachings. These teachings are globally relevant as Muslims are residing and working in many countries other than the Islamic countries. Moreover, Islamic work behaviors and generally accepted work behaviors in the world are quite similar in the nature.² Mostly, non-Muslims' organizational cultures encompass ethical values similar to those taught by Islam.³

Although from last decade Islamic management is receiving the great importance due to the success of interventions of Islamic management model. However, little attention is paid towards implications of the Islamic model of training and development in the organizational context. The present research strives to bridge this gape by exploring the two streams the traditional training and developing methods and Islamic guidelines of developing the human resources.

The Concept of Training and Development in Islam and Traditional Management

Training is considered to be an area of applied psychological research that helps to enhance human well-being, overall organizational performance and work settings. Training is a deliberate and planned practice of human resource management that results in enhancing employee performance.⁴ Moreover, training can help organizations achieve competitive factors like flexibility, permanence and adaptability.⁵ It helps organization to cope with change.⁶

Training and development have several indirect effects too which passes through the performance of employees as training enhances the confidence by skill learning which drives the performance which in turn makes employees satisfied, reduces the turnover and ultimately decreases the cost of recruiting the new employees.⁷ Training helps in ultimate motivation to achieve.⁸ Moreover, training that result in high self-efficacy is more likely to lead to positive outcomes.⁹

It is also suggested that low performance is a possible result of the skill deficiencies. The most practical solution to enhance the employee's capabilities is to indulge them into training programs that nourish and develop them.¹⁰ Training and development opportunities can equip employees with the ability to grow professionally and non-professionally. It enhances individual and physical capabilities of employees by skill development.¹¹

Developing human resource and acquiring knowledge is considered as very important pursuit in Islamic theology. The Holy Quran declares man's basic qualification for being the representative of God on earth is possession of knowledge. As mentioned, Islam is the complete code of life not limited to worship only. It provides the complete guidelines regarding every field of life. Islam regards developing human beings as one of its supreme moral values. Individuals are expected to seek learning from the cradle to the grave.

Knowledge acquisition is mandatory for all under Islamic system. This acquisition of knowledge is not limited to Islamic teachings rather it expands its scope to the worldly knowledge

which includes all the skill needed to fulfill the organizational obligations. Islamic teachings focus on moral and spiritual development of employees at all levels of organizational hierarchy.¹² Islam provides a cumulative approach of human development which includes material and spiritual development.¹³ Thus, Islam emphasizes on dual obligation of the workforce, the moral obligation and the professional obligation.¹⁴ Knowledge and wisdom are characteristics of Allah, and Allah categorically directs human beings to seek and apply knowledge for development of human potential.¹⁵

Islam proposes training and development to increase the knowledge of workers of all levels. Islamic teachings suggest the employers to develop the employees through training, assignments and mentoring and these opportunities should be provided to all regardless of their race, color, gender and religion.¹⁶ Islamic concept of training and development consist of acquiring the knowledge, skills and personality development through purifying the soul. Islamic concept of development of employees imposes the two-fold responsibility of acquiring knowledge. One is for the employees as they themselves should strive to improve their skills and the other is for the manager; as managers should keep an eye for forthcoming opportunities and means for improving knowledge and skills of those under their charge.¹⁷

Islamic perspective of training and development includes three basic dimensions: (1). Tarbiyah: it signifies the spur growth (2). Ta'dib: It represents the discipline and refining of the soul (3). Ta'lim: which is instructing and educating.¹⁸ In nutshell all of these three can be regarded as Islam emphasis on the growth and development by disciplining and refining of the soul through education and instructions. Islamic teachings do not limit to the acquisition of the knowledge only, rather emphasize on the use of knowledge practically. Which may be referred as transfer of training. For example, Abu Darda, a companion of the Prophet (PBUH) said: "None of you can be pious unless he is knowledgeable, and he cannot enjoy knowledge unless he applies it practically".¹⁹

Several Islamic concepts are directly related to training and professional development. For example, Islamic concepts of Al

Etqan, Al Falah and Al Ehsan are directly related to western training and development.²⁰ Al Etqan means the consciousness of self-improvement, it signifies the continuous effort for self-improvement to accomplish the task in a better way. Al Falah is virtue linked to a state of passion for excellence and perfection. The concept of Al Ehsan in Islamic teachings includes the directions, which suggests that conducting the business requires spiritual obligations.

Hassi²¹ also discussed three methods of Islamic training, which have their roots in western model of training and development. These methods include (1) Discursive approach (2) Halaqa, and (3) Probation. Ali²² argued about two methods (1) Probation (2) Apprenticeships. In short, an in-depth review of Islamic literature reveals five distinctive method of training which are incorporated in western training model of the organizations. These methods are (1) Persuasive communication approach (2) Learning Circles (3) Test case appointments (4) Apprenticeships (5) Orientation.

First method of training was persuasive communication approach which suggests to train and educate with the effective communication tools. Effective communication may include all hall mark of communication. The Holy Quran explains this effective communication as

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them with that which is best”.²³

Al Shareef²⁴ discussed following instructions about effective communication for teaching which are founds in ahadiths: (1) Do Not Bore the Listeners (2) Speak at the Intellectual Level of the Listener (3) Use Questions and Debate (4) Use Analogies (5) Use Gestures While Talking (6) Answer Questions Before They are Asked (7) Allow Others to Answer the Questions (8) Repeat, Repeat, repeat (9) Use Playful Fun (10) Making Physical Contact When Speaking (11) Using Cliff-hangers (12).

The second mode of teaching was informal in its nature and called as circle of learning that was termed as Halaqa²⁵. This Halaqa was a circle of a group learning from an instructor. This method of training became the basis of modern days collaborative

learning. These circles encouraged the direct involvement of the trainees and trainers to increase the understandings of the trainees. The third method which was introduced in the Islamic teachings is test case appointments which is closely linked with on the job training and Hassi's²⁶ probationary appointments. This method suggests the appointments of the potential individual on test basis and provide on job training by actually doing the task if they succeed their appointment is made confirmed.²⁷ Fourth method of training found in Islamic teachings is apprenticeship this mode of training allows the mistakes and learning under the supervision of the seniors.

Chances of mistakes decreases when a senior is attached to a trainee who guides the trainee to improve the skills. The fourth Caliph, Ali (RA) said, "Monitor the behavior of your assistants and use them only after probation." The fifth mode of training which have its foot prints in modern days' management is pre-job orientations. It is found in the early Islamic era that the officials were sent to jobs after orientation about the task and the area where they were posted.

Conclusion

This study has several important implications. It reduces the knowledge gap in the field of training and development with reference to Islamic teachings. This study provokes the use of Islamic teaching in developing the training content. Although this concept is still in its infancy, its nature and scope of consideration of Islamic modes of teaching is very large. Interplay of Islamic development techniques and western training methods will be the solution to many management dilemmas particularly in contemporary organizations. The two-fold responsibility of Islamic development concept may encourage the employees and employers both to strive for the excellence and perfection and acquire the knowledge that will escalate the organizational performance.

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