Developing Management from Islamic Perspectives (MIP) as a Formal Academic Discipline

Shamas-Ur-Rehman Toor

Abstract

Management from Islamic Perspectives (MIP) is an emerging field that has begun to attract scholarly attention. However, the research undertaken so far has been rather fragmented and lack a clear agenda. This paper presents a literature review of the field and the areas of current focus. Although the field has a huge growth potential, I argue that it faces several challenges and problems as it develops further. I outline these potential pitfalls, suggest how to develop MIP as a formal discipline, and explain how to integrate it within real-life business practices. The article closes with a call for research to be conducted in a more organized fashion through an international consortium of researchers as well as recommendations for future research directions.

Introduction

The Muslim world lags behind in contributing toward scientific and technological advancement. In fact, the relevant statistics reveal that it has produced only two Nobel Laureates, contains only two universities ranked among the world's top 500, has fewer than 600 universities in the member states of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and that the forty-one predominantly Muslim countries (20 percent of the world's population) produce less than 5 percent of its scientific achievements and knowledge.[1] Segal laments

Shamas-ur-Rehman Toor earned his Ph.D. in project management from the National University of Singapore. He will join the University of New South Wales (Sydney) as a lecturer in March 2009. His research interests include organizational behavior, leadership development, project performance management, and management from Islamic perspectives.

that the Muslim world produces a disproportionately small amount of scientific output, and that what it does produce is relatively very low in quality.[2] This is an alarming situation. There seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel, however, for many attempts are underway to improve the situation in various academic disciplines so that Muslims can contribute to knowledge domains – and sometimes from a specifically Islamic perspective. Management from Islamic Perspectives (MIP) is one such knowledge domain that has attracted the attention of Muslim scholars.

Conventional management is a well-established field; however, it is the West, rather than the East, that has made the major contribution to the extant body of knowledge on management in the form of theories and frameworks. Although some references are made to Middle Eastern, Chinese, and Indian practices, western perspectives continue to dominate. Also, most western perspectives are primarily secular and capitalistic in nature and have been criticized by many.[3] Such underlying convictions of contemporary management theories have resulted in a growing incoherence within eastern societies, which are more religious and socialistic.

In addition to the Muslim world's scanty contributions, there is hardly any literature related to Islamic viewpoints on management.[4] Others note that Islamic Management (IM) or MIP is almost unknown.[5] At the individual or small-group levels, works on MIP can be traced back to such authors as Siddiqi (1981), Bani-Sadr (1980), Ezzati (1982), Ahmad (1986), Fariduddin, Sharfuddin (1987), Shirazi (1988/1408), Kassem and al-Buraey (1989), Chapra (1992), Rahman and and Al-Buraey (1992), Al-Khafaji (1994), Jabnoun (1994), Faridi (1995), Abdel Rahman (1996), Beekun (1997), Beekun and Badawi (1998), Rice (1999), Jamal Uddin (2003), Al-Buraey (2003), and Kazmi (2003). Among the more recent authors are Ather (2005), Ali (2005), Ahmad (2005), Abuznaid (2006), Beekun (2006), and Ata al-Sid (2007),[6] all of whom have explored the field of management in a direct or indirect relation to Islamic teachings.

In addition, some rare Ph.D. dissertations have addressed management from Islamic perspectives, such as those by Gahein (1986), Khalifa (2001), and Mohiuddin (2004).[7] On a relatively larger scale, some notable endeavors have included the convening of a Seminar on Islamic Management held by IRTI (Islamic Research and Training Institute) in 1987 and an International Conference on Management from Islamic Perspectives (ICMIP) in 2007.

Overall, the field is still in its infancy.[8] Noordin and Othman observe that the relevant body of knowledge seems to be emerging rather gradually, in contrast to Islamic economics, which emerged quickly and led to the estab-

lishment of Islamic banking. This activity is currently widely acceptable and being researched in depth.[9] A recent exploratory study by Sobhani and Ather shows that the development and practices of IM in predominantly Muslim Bangladesh are quite insignificant and incommensurate with the population and that the very concept is largely unknown.[10] In contrast, conventional management practices are widely known and practiced. This example shows that many Muslims remain entirely unaware of MIP as a discipline. Although some organizations like to say that their management practices are "Islamic," such claims cannot be considered valid without an explicit recognition of MIP as the established set of principles driving their everyday operations.

Due to the spreading awareness of the important roles played by different cultural norms, language, spirituality, religiosity, social values, literary expressions, and symbolic modes in the business environment, researchers are trying to focus on understanding businesses in an entirely different way. Known as *postmodernism*, this movement accepts the possibility that several theories, even if they conflict with each other, can still have a legitimate place in a social discourse.[11] Under the influence of postmodernism and, more importantly, a soaring interest in Islamic banking and finance around the world, the doors for Muslim scholars to think about how other management disciplines can complement the developments in Islamic economic systems have opened.

Toor observes that the spreading awareness about Islam, the escalating demand for Islamic-style management, the growing focus on Islamic banking systems, the emerging concept of Shari`ah compliance, the evolving notion of dispute resolution in an Islamic way, and the prolific wave of Islamic revival are some of the factors that have accentuated a need for formulating, testing, and validating an Islamic leadership construct and steadily integrating it within Islamic management practices.[12] As a result, and particularly during the 1990s, there has been a notable rising interest in MIP in the form of debates and discussions in literary circles (particularly in Muslim nations) as to how management can be viewed through the lens of Islamic teachings and how modern management practices can be transformed to synchronize with Islam's philosophy of life.[13]

This paper reviews the extant body of MIP knowledge and draws attention to certain issues with the hope that further initiatives will contribute to its development and growth as a formal discipline. I argue that MIP scholars must be cognizant of the field's history, the motives driving its development, contemporary issues that need priority attention in terms of research, directions in which future research can be directed, and issues and chal-

lenges that are likely to emerge along the path to developing an "Islamic Management Theory." As research expands, the existing body of knowledge will mature, new subdisciplines will emerge, and the entire field will grow. However, if MIP is to become a true discipline, researchers will have to find a way to avoid potential pitfalls and problems that can hinder its growth after it has gained a certain momentum. The recommendations made herein are designed to initiate a dialogue that will highlight more potential issues, problems, challenges, and areas of general focus, priority, and caution.

Why Management from Islamic Perspectives?

Describing the challenges of modern business enterprises, George observes that such measures of business development as growth, cash flow, and return on investment are fading away and being replaced by the new criterion of success: meeting the expectations of security analysts.[14] To reach the projected earning targets, investments are being cut back to ensure the company's growth potential. To achieve the targets of profit maximization and satisfying shareholders, CEOs take extreme measures and often forget about human and social capital, which earn long-term success for the companies. In other words, they pursue profit maximization at the expense of their employees and organizational values.

Contemporary businesses are undoubtedly going through a tumultuous era, and markets have become more challenging than ever. This situation is no less than a business management and leadership crisis vis-à-vis its foundational model: capitalism. The apparent divorce of spirituality from the workplace is due to the implicit or explicit assumption that workplaces or other social institutions are secular[15] and that religion, an individual matter, belongs in one's personal sphere. George goes even further, claiming that capitalism has become the victim of it own success.

Modern organizations seem to suffer from "management crises" due to ongoing corporate scandals, where leaders betray their own people and strive for worldly benefits. Their overriding concern with shareholder satisfaction leads them to forget about their moral and ethical obligations to their organizations, followers, and society at large. This focus engenders a very materialistic approach to management and leadership in the secularist and capitalistic systems, which have penetrated Muslim countries as well. This is largely due to the various academic curricula in the Muslim world that teach modern western arts and sciences that are largely alien to the Islamic perspective and have injected a large dose of secularism into the mind of

countless Muslims.[16] However, Yom argues that secularism is increasingly less relevant in a globalizing world, for religious identities have strengthened and believers are actively perpetuating and sharing their narrative visions of the past, present, and future.[17] Weary of the secular models, a widening circle of scholars is now considering religion as a viable alternative.[18] In this respect, MIP becomes more relevant.

Abuznaid argues that although Islam does not provide a comprehensive management theory,[19] it nevertheless does provide a set of general guidelines that can achieve those management goals that are not fundamentally materialist.[20] Islam's primary goals are based on the concept of human wellbeing and the good life, which stress brotherhood/sisterhood as well as socioeconomic justice, and require the balanced satisfaction of humanity's material and spiritual needs.[21] The Islamic ethical system contains specific guidelines for achieving the moral filter and for conducting business.[22] Toor observes that "Islam provides the most comprehensive understanding of leadership through its highly developed and modern ethical system that seeks guidelines from Quran, Sunnah, and sayings of Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]."[23] Others note that Islam provides comprehensive guidelines for all facets of life – be it religious, moral, ethical, socio-cultural, economic, political, or legal – to underpin the foundations of a strong Islamic society built upon complete submission to Allah and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)."[24]

In this respect, Islam does not regard spirituality and religion as two separate entities, but rather as branches of the same tree. Scholars have argued that many of the characteristics of spirituality in the workplace are basic Islamic themes, such as building community, a concern for social justice within the organization and its vision, and equality of voice.[25] "The values of service, surrendering self, truth, charity, humility, forgiveness, compassion, thankfulness, love, courage, faith, kindness, patience, and hope, in the workplace spirituality literature[26] are to be found not only in the Qur'an, but also in popular Islamic wisdom literature, philosophical debates and the mystical guidance of esoteric Islam, Sufism."[27]

From Islamic perspectives, therefore, management is all about practicing positive norms and bringing self-transcendent values into everyday life while seeking God's pleasure and following the Prophet's Sunnah. The goals of Islamic leadership and management are not merely worldly and money-oriented; rather, they seek a long-term intrinsic reward: God's pleasure. Islam holds all leaders and followers responsible for building their society and spreading God's rule on Earth. Both sides are equal in His eyes and, there-

fore, should perform their roles with the greatest personal integrity, dedication, and responsibility toward themselves and humanity at large.

One may argue that all religions teach ethical values and emphasize the importance of self-transcendence. But Islam offers both the guidance for personal conduct as well as a comprehensive socio-political framework in which individuals can practice self-transcendence through practical means in their daily lives. Islam views religion and life as being one and the same thing; most other religious traditions, on the other hand, tend to treat religion as a separate entity and do not endeavor to integrate it with everyday life. As a result, they cannot gauge whether a particular social, political, cultural, economic, or other notion conflicts with their core teachings. This is surely not the case with Islam.

Under such a management system, where only positive organizational behaviors are encouraged and implemented in everyday life, there is a high chance that a positive organizational scholarship can be obtained when

> organizations are typified by appreciation, collaboration, virtuousness, vitality and meaningfulness. Creating abundance and human well-bring are key indicators of success … members of such organizations are characterized by trustworthiness, resilience, wisdom, humility, and high levels of positive energy … social relationships and interactions are characterized by compassion, loyalty, honesty, respect, and forgiveness. Significant attention is given to what makes life worth living."[28]

The above vision, which Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn presented in their *Positive Organizational Scholarship*, is fully in line with what I refer to as MIP.

Review of the Literature

Despite being an emerging field, very recent endeavors in MIP have focused on diverse subjects. In particular, the ICMIP event attracted rich perspectives from around the world and resulted in a significant number of works on various MIP subjects. Although a large body of knowledge exists on Islamic banking and finance, literary attempts have been made in other directions, such as leadership,[29] workplace motivation,[30] human resource management and development,[31] the concept of management without punishment,[32] organizational decision making,[33] corporate governance,[34] entrepreneurship,[35] stress management,[36] quality management,[37] administrative theory,[38] administrative responsibility,[39] enterprise design,[40] the management style of some of the prophets,[41] spirituality for entrepreneurs,[42] the manage-

ment of non-profit organizations,[43] management modeling,[44] and managerial and business ethics.[45]

Kazmi states that most of the writings on leadership and MIP are not aimed at formulating an Islamic theory of leadership, but seem to advocate that Islam has sufficient resources to formulate such a theory.[46] He also criticizes those approaches that merely seek to prove that western achievements in this field are rooted in Islamic principles, classifying them as apologetic in nature and unhelpful to formulating a proper Islamic theory of leadership. Perhaps responding to Kazmi's call, Toor and Saleh first used the expression "Islamic leadership theory" or the "Islamic theory of leadership" to explain this concept from Islamic perspectives.[47] Although Saleh makes many recommendations for developing a comprehensive framework that can explain the leadership process from an Islamic perspective, Toor actually presents a framework comprised of spiritual variables, mediating variables, attributes of Muslim leaders and followers, and leadership outcomes. In addition, he called for further development of a construct that could lead to constructing and testing such a theory.

This literature review illustrates that MIP has triggered discussions that have resulted in a wide range of works, all of which have tried to view some disciplines from an Islamic viewpoint. Although this literature is just beginning to explore various dimensions of management, it has so far been rather promising. MIP-related frameworks, constructs, theories, and proposals, although existing in a very nascent form, are being pursued relentlessly by their proponents, who have numerous plans for future research. However, before this research can achieve its full momentum, these pioneers need to pause and discuss those issues that can have long-term repercussions.

Developing MIP as a Formal Discipline

Scholars have emphasized the development of MIP as a formal academic discipline.[48] This aspiration, however, has to be based upon an in-depth analysis and pragmatic considerations. The following sections elaborate on the challenges that are likely to emerge while working to realize this goal.

Definition

Sobhani and Ather note that Islamic management's aims, objectives, operational activities, and results are determined according to Islam's belief system and sacred law.[49] Kazmi defines Islamic management as an emerging discipline that "deals with the management of organizations from the per-

spective of the knowledge acquired from the revealed and other Islamic sources of knowledge, and results in applications compatible with the Islamic beliefs and practices."[50] According to Ahmad, it "looks at the management of organization from the perspective of the knowledge obtained from the revealed and other Islamic sources, which lead to managerial applications that are compatible with Islamic beliefs and practices."[51] In their analysis of fifty-five source documents, Noordin and Othman defined management from ten different aspects without actually defining MIP.[52]

Researchers exploring several of MIP's subdisciplines try to define key terms (e.g., leadership, motivation, human resource management, quality management, stress management, and corporate governance); however, it seems that MIP itself still lacks a formal definition. In fact, most researchers seem to have added "Islam" or "Islamic perspective" to the conventional definitions of management, which itself seems to have no agreed-upon definition. Nevertheless, since MIP is just beginning to emerge, it seems plausible to have a formal and agreed-upon definition to achieve coherence in ideas and to direct the efforts in one direction.

In the view of Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim:

> A refined definition must include a specification of the nature of the dimension (e.g., trait, behavior, attribution, etc.), the observer/perspective of the person(s) providing the report (e.g., self, subordinate, peer, etc.), the level(s) of analysis involved (e.g., individual, dyad, group, organization, etc.), the response category measurement units to be employed (e.g., frequency, magnitude, extent of agreement, etc.), and the dimension's content domain (including whether there are sub-dimensions involved).[53]

To establish a formal definition, researchers need to specify a full set of MIP's dimensions, underlying concepts, and subdivisions. For this purpose, the use of qualitative procedures and approaches is recommended: case studies of those organizations that claim to be implementing Islamic ways of management, as well as interviews of those practitioners, entrepreneurs, leaders, and managers who appear to be following a more Islamic approach toward management. The input of Muslim religious scholars and management experts can also provide useful insights to develop and sharpen MIP's definition.

Distinguishing MIP from Conventional Management

After researchers have defined and sharpened this definition, they need to take a clear and elaborate stance on how it differs from conventional or

emerging forms of the management deriving their inspiration from spirituality and servant leadership. If they cannot do so, this would imply that MIP is either equivalent to conventional management with an add-on of spirituality or a redundant concept. Moreover, they must be able to identify and focus on points of divergence and accentuate these when conceptualizing and measuring MIP.

Although some scholars have paid attention to distinguishing between MIP and conventional management concepts and techniques, many others note a large number of similarities. For example, Toor observes that the Islamic perspective is very close to the new concepts of "positive organizational scholarship" and "positive organizational behavior."[54] Likewise, Loqman and Bulbul write that Fayol's fourteen principles of conventional management are similar to those of Islamic management.[55] Interestingly enough, Kennedy has made a similar assertion and compared Fayol's principles to those of the sixth-century works of Saint Benedict of Nursia, who established guidelines to run monasteries.[56] He argues that the "Rule of Saint Benedict" and Fayol's rules bear striking similarities as far as the process of management is concerned. These comparisons of Islamic and Christian perspectives with modern management principles reinforce the belief that one can draw certain parallels across various religious traditions and their practical implications in everyday life.

Some assertions, however, show that the Islamic perspective offers a distinct way of management. Loqman and Bulbul call these points of distinctions "additional principles of management."[57] Among them are vicegerency, honesty, truthfulness, promise keeping, moderation, sincerity, timeliness, efficiency, patriotism, exemption, accountability in this world and the next, and depending upon God. These principles, which are not present in conventional management approaches, make MIP a unique perspective. Toor upholds this stance, arguing that Islam provides "extra dimensions" that are likely to enhance the positive nature of Islamic leadership and followership.[58]

The most important "extra dimensions" in this regard include surrendering to God, the trusteeship of God, accountability to God, obedience to God and the Prophet, following the Shari`ah, virtuosity, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, social justice and consideration, serving humanity, righteousness, humility, positive firmness, inner struggle against the self, honesty, truthfulness, and positive organizational scholarship (e.g., hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resiliency) from an Islamic viewpoint. Noordin and Othman assert that Islamic management seems to differ on management's worldview, concepts, and issues.[59] They further note that the Islamization of man-

agement is basically the need for a unified (*tawhidi*) approach based upon social justice, fairness in managing people, and seeking God's good pleasure.

There is, however, yet another reason to distinguish MIP from existing forms of management, one that will have a favorable impact upon furthering related research, help people understand the work that has been done up to this point, and help send the message that MIP offers something unique and extra from which organizations can develop a sustainable competitive advantage. On a practical level, any misunderstanding or confusion of MIP with conventional management might hinder the former's development as a discipline. If researchers consider it a new discipline that differs substantially from conventional management, clear boundaries will have to be set between both fields, although they may complement each other in many ways. These boundaries will have to include not just definitional differences, but also the conceptual distinctions and functional divergences between the two disciplines, such as the behavioral differences between a conventional manager and/or an MIP manager or leader.

Measuring

This is probably the biggest challenge confronting any MIP proponent. The current body of knowledge on MIP bases itself upon integrating spirituality and religiosity with modern management practices. Mainstream researchers, however, are still debating whether spirituality and religiosity represent just one construct or two constructs that cannot be combined. Some researchers claim that religiosity is a very complex construct and is extremely hard to measure[60]; others have sought to develop and validate such measures.[61] Researchers have similar views about spirituality,[62] although some measurements have been proposed and tested.[63]

Given that all such measures of religiosity and spirituality have been established outside the Muslim world, researchers need to establish these measures from Islamic perspectives. As MIP researchers currently argue that MIP is an integration of religiosity and spirituality, they need to establish valid assessment measures. For this purpose, it is important to develop two separate standardized quantitative measures that can assess MIP in the workplace. This involves designing extensive labor and collaborative projects in order to develop and validate these measures across different cultures. Researchers also need to use qualitative approaches to formulate quantitative measures. To establish such measures, they have to consider the different interpretations. Although the core Islamic teachings and sources of wisdom

(the Qur'an, the hadith literature, and the Sunnah) are everywhere the same, there are differences among the various legal schools due to their founders' understanding of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

Implementation

Establishing a new discipline is a difficult task. After setting it up, its proponents have to sell it as a legitimate field and then implement and further develop MIP practices in organizations. This will require a fundamental shift in many organizations' management styles and methodologies, a shift that will depend upon their preparedness and ability to accept and move quickly to an entirely new system of practices. How this process can be facilitated and how the desired results can be obtained obviously must be addressed. For this purpose, case studies can be conducted on organizations that claim or are reputed to be close to realizing MIP's objectives.

Several such studies have been conducted.[64] For example, in their exploratory study of Bangladesh, Sobhani and Ather ascertained several factors that are perceived as causing the lack of MIP awareness: a lack of knowledge of Islamic management; the absence of true practicing Muslims, research on Islamic management, an Islamic environment and culture, teaching and practices of the Qur'an and hadith, institutional support, and media coverage of Islamic management issues; the effects of western education and culture, globalization, and secular NGOs; and environmental bottlenecks.[65]

For MIP to become a principal method of management in Muslim societies, a macro-scale movement is required. MIP cannot find its sterling routes unless there is a supportive societal and organizational context, for its implementation depends upon the readiness of everyone in the system to embrace it. Sobhani and Ather's study highlights these issues in their order of preference for making Muslims people aware of MIP: the Islamizing knowledge and education, creating public consensus, reforming the government; adjusting globalization with Islamic values and norms; and restricting NGO activities, Islamizing educational models and procedures, removing corruption, establishing Islamic management research centers, formulating rules and regulations that follow Islamic values and norms, establishing a Shari`ah-based administration, and communicating Islamic management through all available media outlets.[66] These recommendations provide useful insights for policymakers in Muslim countries who are serious about studying the issue and formulating adequate strategies that will benefit the people.

It will be relatively easy to convince Muslims of MIP's inherent benefits and implications. However, this will be a much harder task in non-Muslim lands. In order to promote MIP as a viable alternative, therefore, researchers have to present it as a source of competitive advantage and highlight why and how it is a unique, more sustainable, long-term, hard to imitate, cumulative, valuable, and non-substitutable source of competitive advantage. In addition, they must provide empirical evidence to prove their assertions. Thinking about these challenges is a first step, one that likely will result in the formulation of a comprehensive long-term strategy to build MIP as a competitive and sustainable discipline.

Research

From a methodological point of view, researchers will need to consider which methodologies are suitable for research. The choice of research methods is often shaped by the goals, epistemological concerns, and norms of practice, as well as organizational, historical, political, ethical, evidential, and personal factors – all of which typically are treated as problems to be overcome.[67] In addition to the nature of the research question, Bryman claims that other reasons, such as disciplinary requirements (e.g., what should pass as acceptable knowledge, policy issues, expectations concerning the kind of knowledge required for making policy, and funding expectations of funding bodies) also play a role in choosing the research methodology.[68] Yet another possibility is personal interests, preferences, biases, prejudices, and creativity in addition to the researcher's technical skills, knowledge, and competence.

Current research on management is dominated by positivist or quantitative approaches. These methodologies, which assume that human behavior can be explained by social facts, employ the deductive logic of the natural sciences. They were widely used for management studies during 1960s and 1970s. Many reviews of leadership research ascertain that empiricism or positivism is a predominantly American attitude toward the field of leadership research. Proponents of qualitative research, however, argue that their methodology allows richer descriptions, sensitivity toward ideas and meanings of the individual concerned, increased likelihood of developing empirically supported new ideas with practical relevance, and increased interest among practitioners.[69] Qualitative approaches also help discover new ideas and phenomena, rather than just verifying old and existing theories.[70]

Bryman suggests that the more abstract philosophical issues be linked with questions of research practice, for doing so will provide a better and

sophisticated way of treating the comparability of different methods of investigation than the direct juxtaposition in terms of relative superiority.[71] Rocco et al. argue that "mixing methods that bring together the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods will enhance research in the field."[72] However, as MIP is a discipline in-the-making, it first needs to establish its epistemological grounds and constructs, which can be tested and validated at a later stage. Therefore, I state that researchers need to use all of the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches with a maximum amount of methodological inventiveness.

According to Buchanan and Bryman,[73] organizational research is a meeting point for numerous disciplines, including psychology, social psychology, sociology, economics, public policy, history, anthropology, and business areas (viz., strategy, finance, marketing, human resources, and operations management). Research on MIP also sees the integration and interplay of many disciplines within its scope. Therefore, a debate on the methodological issues to research can be beneficial in choosing the appropriate research methodologies. This will help researchers avoid any methodological dilemmas at a later stage, a development that could result in another paradigm war. Furthermore, they will need to consider the intertwining effect of local cultures and norms in different countries. Current debate in management research continues to highlight cross-cultural issues and remains alert to cultural consequences. MIP-related measurements and conceptual issues will be most crucial in cross-cultural settings.

Priority Areas of Focus

Recent MIP-based research attempts seem to have highlighted such issues as leadership, motivation, human resource management, corporate governance, and quality management. Existing research on MIP also appears to have no explicit intention to develop the constructs, theories, and frameworks that can lead to developing a comprehensive "Theory of Management from Islamic Perspectives." In order to establish MIP and its subdisciplines, organized efforts, as opposed to random choices of the research areas, must be undertaken. The existing body of knowledge on conventional management has developed organically for almost a century. Even today, many more disciplines continue to emerge and attract scholarly attention. However, researchers of MIP need to prioritize the knowledge areas on which they would like to focus until the field is relatively established. Currently, a substantial number of qualified and established academics are

working in the field. If MIP research continues to grow organically and at random, due to the researchers' choices of subdisciplines, there is a likelihood that many of them will be distracted, duplicate each other's efforts, or explore areas that do not contribute to a coherent effort of developing MIP as a discipline.

There is also a possibility that researchers on MIP in different lands are unaware of each other and thus have no opportunity for a mutual sharing and complementing their ideas and perspectives. Therefore, MIP proponents need to organize their efforts and, more importantly, prioritize what they want to research and what subdisciplines should be explored after establishing the necessary constructs for the prioritized themes. Only then can the lessons learned from the initial phase of the research be taken forward to address other issues that will arise during later stages. Among those that can be explored at the beginning are leadership, corporate governance, human resource management, and business ethics. To develop and grow these subdisciplines, researchers have to assemble the existing body of knowledge, write inclusive literature reviews, conduct dialogues and debates, and establish research agendas for approaching these disciplines from Islamic perspectives. Further subdisciplines can then be explored.

Lastly, the ongoing global recession provides another opportunity for MIP to make a significant impact as an academic discipline. Recent events in the financial industry and the ensuing impact in other sectors of the global economy have revealed a need for an overhaul not only of financial and accounting practices, but also of how organizations are managed.

Potential Opportunities

Several steps need to be taken while establishing MIP as a formal academic discipline and producing useful and rigorous research. Preceding sections detailed the achievements that have been made within the context of MIP. I have highlighted the many challenges facing MIP research and development. In the midst of these challenges, however, lie numerous opportunities. It is very timely for Muslim social scientists and management scholars to contribute their efforts to developing MIP as a formal discipline and cause it to flourish. Their efforts, however, need to be well planned, systematically organized, thoroughly thought out, and, overall, pragmatic.

Since much needs to be accomplished in this regard, I propose the formulation of an international consortium on MIP comprising the established researchers in Islamic studies, management, basic sciences, sociology,

anthropology, statistics, and other relevant disciplines to establish and drive an organized research effort. The consortium can establish the priority themes for research, develop a detailed research agenda, decide upon the methodologies to be used, and establish various task groups and working commissions on the subdisciplines. These research groups can then pursue their own agendas under the consortium's guidelines. Such an approach decreases the burden of this undertaking's being shouldered by just one group and also ensures that there is no duplication of research endeavors.

In addition, this body can organize an annual congress at which participants can debate and dialogue among themselves, thereby sharing their knowledge and achievements and planning their future goals. Independent and joint conferences and symposia also facilitate the knowledge-sharing process. Dialogues and knowledge exchanges between experts in MIP and conventional management should be a part of this overall endeavor so that MIP can gradually become a mainstream discipline. Organizing such activities worldwide will help spread awareness of it both within and beyond the Muslim world.

The consortium could publicize its members' research achievements by issuing journals and magazines and also establish research centers to consolidate and streamline the research process. The forum could be established independently or under the research arm of an already existing international organization, such as the OIC. Such an arrangement would help attract capable researchers as well as help establish the credibility of its members' research. Moreover, a large-scale consortium-based effort would help attract the necessary funds to develop MIP. Given the soaring interest in Islamic banking and finance, and well as Shari`ah-compliant investing, I hope that both industry and government funding will be forthcoming.

As part of this effort, universities across the Islamic world could offer joint courses on both Islamic and management studies to establish and grow this discipline. The consortium, which would function as an overall accrediting body for such academic efforts, would oversee the ensuing research endeavors. Several universities are already offering relevant undergraduate courses. For example, the Universiti Utara Malaysia offers a B.A. in Islamic finance and banking (BIFB, Hons). More graduate-level classes need to be offered, and Ph.D. research projects and post-doctoral fellowships would be instrumental in accelerating the research output and establishing various subdisciplines. Given the current drive in MIP research, it has a significant potential to grow as a formal discipline. This aspiration will be realized more effectively and efficiently, however, if researchers of

MIP would join hands for larger collaborative research endeavors instead of engaging in fragmented attempts that could slow down the momentum considerably.

Implications

In Islamic societies, religion profoundly affects how administration and organization evolve and how everyday matters are approached.[74] Although knowledge generation and exchange was central to Muslims during the sixth to sixteenth centuries, the Muslim world's contribution to the modern literature on management and science has been meager. During the period of industrialization in the early twentieth century, when management emerged as a formal discipline, there was hardly any contribution from Muslim scholars, as most of them were still colonized and thus could not thrive in terms of technological advancement, commerce, and trade. A century later, however, the situation is different, for most of the Muslim world is independent and undergoing socio-political and economic reform. The oil-rich Middle East has made a significant economic progress over the last three decades. Egypt, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Iran have huge pools of talent. The entrepreneurial spirit is also emerging. A number of Muslim banks, oil companies, telecommunication firms, real estate developers, and manufacturers are becoming major global players.

These developments in commerce and trade have boosted the demand for Islamic banking. During the last two decades, more than 250 Islamic banks have opened their doors, in addition to Islamic banking divisions in such major banks as ABN Amro, Standard Chartered, and Citigroup in America, Europe, and Asia. In 2005, the World Bank issued its first Islamic bonds. These trends clearly show that Muslims are interested in conducting business in an Islamic way as much as possible and thus are exploring new ways to develop the necessary theories and tools.

The 1.3 billion Muslims constitute the world's second largest religious population cluster. The popularity of Islamic banking and Shari`ah-compliant investments clearly show that they want to conform to Islamic teachings. It is, therefore, ironic that many of the organizations that adopt Islamic banking for financial matters are still designed on capitalistic and consumerist models and are still applying those management tools and theories that encourage profit maximization and shareholder value. For an organization to operate entirely on Islamic principles, all facets of its operations must be designed

and run according to Islam's fundamental beliefs and values. MIP fulfills this very need.

The recent surge of interest in MIP also reveals a concern in business circles as to whether business and management can be conducted within the framework of Islamic teachings. The literature review presented above clearly shows that MIP has the potential to emerge as a formal academic discipline that can produce professionals who are conversant with both Islamic teachings and MIP practices, able to carry out the usual management functions (e.g., planning, organizing, leading, and controlling) from an Islamic perspective, and can formulate acceptable solutions for modern realities to transform the field of management, which currently suffers from greed, antipathy, and self-interest.

The world has not forgotten the corporate scandals of Enron, World-com, Arthur Anderson, Tyco, and Adelphia – and especially the latest one involving Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities of New York, a fund management company that was little more than an old-fashioned Ponzi scheme. The list of investors and banks hit by this alleged Madoff-directed $50 billion fraud continues to grow and is likely to affect major banks, investment groups, and even charities around the world. To avoid such management malfeasances and corporate meltdowns, the whole system of financial management, accounting, corporate governance, and management practices needs to be revamped and adhere to a strict ethical code governed by a set of checks and balances. MIP can provide a suitable framework for this undertaking.

Since various organizations in the Muslim world are interested in Islamic banking and Shari`ah-compliant investing, they are likely to find MIP practices useful before their non-Muslim counterparts elsewhere do. MIP professionals who are well versed in Islamic teachings and jurisprudence, as well as MIP practices, would serve as change agents in reforming the business world, which is now characterized by distrust, selfishness, and hunger for power and money. Being based on Islam's belief system, values, and culture, those Muslim organizations that adopt it would reduce the conflict between resource acquisition (through Islamic banking) and resource utilization (through MIP practices). In other words, MIP is a channel to changing management's horizons, one that offers an entirely new way of doing business to the global Muslim community. Not only will this new approach be in line with the community's religious practices, but will also serve as a cure to the ills that capitalism has brought upon society at large.

Conclusion

Management from Islamic perspectives (MIP) is a nascent discipline with considerable promise. The extant body of knowledge, however, is largely fragmented and research efforts are apparently disorganized. In order to develop MIP as a formal and accepted discipline, various challenges and opportunities must be confronted. To ensure the discipline's healthy growth and expansion, researchers need to integrate and streamline their efforts to ensure that there will be a constructive growth of knowledge in the discipline before any significant split or divergence of focus can find its roots. This paper summarized the literary achievements that have been made so far in the field and both listed and discussed what MIP proponents will face in the future. A proposal for establishing an international consortium to conduct organized research and establish MIP as a mainstream discipline was presented briefly.

More papers that analyze the above issues in general and in specific detail need to be prepared and presented. After a long halt of research conducted by Muslims, there finally seems some light in the end of the tunnel. This provides Muslim scholars with a historic opportunity to revive and contribute to the grand tradition of knowledge generation and sharing that Islam encourages. It also provides an impetus for their counterparts in all other disciplines to start thinking about how we, as Muslims, can contribute to the well-being of humanity.

Endnotes

1.   See A. Segal, "Why Does the Muslim World Lag in Science?" *The Middle East Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1996); Ata-ur-Rahman and A. Nassim, "Time for Enlightened Moderation: A Call for Islamic Nations to Renew and Reaffirm Their Commitment to Science," *Nature* 432 (2004): 273-74; and H. Schopper, "Where Are the New Patrons of Science? Islam and Science," *Nature* 444, no. 2 (2006): 35-36.
2.   Segal, "Why Does the Muslim World Lag in Science?"
3.   See, for details, E. Jay and R. Jay, eds. *Critics of Capitalism: Victorian Reactions to "Political Economy"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987).
4.   A. Kazmi, "A Proposed Research Agenda: From Islamic Perspectives to Management Studies," *IIUM Journal of Economics and Management* 11, no. 2 (2003): 197-228; Y. Ismail and S. M. Sarif, "The Coverage of Islamic Management Materials in the Internet Search Engines," proceedings, International Conference on Management from Islamic Perspectives (ICMIP), May 15-16, 2007, Kula Lumpur, Malaysia (hereinafter "proceedings, ICMIP").

5. Y. Ismail, "A Proposed Approach to Development of Islamic Management as a Discipline," proceedings, ICMIP.

6. M. N. Siddiqi, *Muslim Economic Thinking: A Survey of Contemporary Literature* (Leicestershire, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 2007); A. Bani-Sadr, *Work and the Worker in Islam* (Tehran: Hamdami Foundations, 1980); A. Ezzati, "The Concept of Leadership in Islam," *Al-Nahdah* 2, no. 2 (1982): 24-29; Z. Ahmad, "Employer-Worker Relationship in Islam," *Islamic Order* 8, no. 4 (Fourth Quarter: 1986): 29-41; M. Fariduddin, *Workers Right in Islam* (Bangladesh: Islamic Foundation, 1987); I. O. M. Sharfuddin, "Towards an Islamic Administrative Theory," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1987): 229-44; A. N. M. Shirazi, "Management and Leadership in the Life of the Prophet (S)," *Al-Tawhid* 5, no. 2 (1988): 157-65; M. Sami Kassem and M. A. al-Buraey, "Prophet Muhammad as a Change Agent" (paper presented at the eighteenth conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, Brackfort, NY, 1989); M. U. Chapra, *Islam and the Economic Challenge* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992); M. Rahman and M. Al-Buraey, "An Islamic Perspective of Organizational Controls and Performance Evaluation," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 9, no. 4 (1992); A. F. Alkhafaji, "Toward a Better Understanding of Islam. ... Facing the Challenge," *International Journal of Commerce and Management* 4, nos. 1&2 (1994); F. R. Faridi, *Islamic Principles of Business Organisation and Management* (New Delhi: Qazi Publishers and Distributors: 1995); A. R. A. Abdel Rahman, "Administrative Responsibility: An Islamic Perspective," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 13, no. 4 (1996): 496-517; R. I. Beekun, *Islamic Business Ethics* (USA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1997); R. Beekun and J. Badawi, *Leadership: An Islamic Perspective* (Beltsville, MD: amana publications, 1999); G. Rice, "Islamic Ethics and the Implications for Business," *Journal of Business Ethics* 18 (1999): 345-58; Syed Jamal Uddin, "Understanding the Framework of Business in Islam in an Era of Globalization: A Review," *Business Ethics: A European Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 23-32; M. A. Al-Buraey, *Management and Administration in Islam* (Bangalore, India: Iqra Welfare Publications, 2003); and Kazmi, "A Proposed Research Agenda." Among the more recent authors are S. M. Ather, *Islamic Management & Business* (Chittagong, Bangladesh: International Islamic University, 2005); A. J. Ali, *Islamic Perspectives on Management and Organisation* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2005); K. Ahmad, "Management Modeling from Islamic Perspective: Some Reflections," *Ulum Islamiyyah* 2 (2005): 43-60; S. Abuznaid, "Islam and Management: What Can Be Learned?" *Thunderbird International Business Review* 48 (2006): 125-39; R. A. Beekun, "Is Muhammad (s) a Transformational Leader?" proceedings, ICMIP; and M. Ata al-Sid, "Contemporary Attempts at Overcoming Decadence and Revitalizing Qur'anic Thought," *Business Review* 2, no. 1 (2007): 56-75.

7.   M. Gahein, "Marketing Strategies of Small Companies with particular reference to the Textile Industry in Egypt as an Islamic Developing Country," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of Strathclyde, 1986); A. S. Khalifa, "Towards an Islamic Foundation of Strategic Business Management" (Ph.D. diss., International Islamic University Malaysia, 2001); and M. G. Mohiuddin, "Islamic Management and Its Present Applications in Bangladesh" (Ph.D. diss., Islamic University, Bangladesh, 2004).

8.   A. Kazmi, "Managing from Islamic Perspectives: Some Preliminary Findings from Malaysian Muslim-Managed Organizations," proceedings, ICMIP.

9.   M. F. Noordin and R. Othman, "Islamic Management: A Citation Analysis," proceedings, ICMIP.

10. F. A. Sobhani and S. M. Ather, "Islamic Management in Bangladesh: Status, Issues, and Solutions," proceedings, ICMIP.

11. C. Goulding, *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide for Management, Business, and Market Researchers* (Berlin: Springer, 2003).

12. S. R. Toor, "An Islamic Leadership Theory: Exploring the Extra Dimensions," proceedings, ICMIP.

13. Kazmi, "Managing from Islamic Perspectives."

14. B. George, *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

15. D. A. Hicks, "Spiritual and Religious Diversity in the Workplace: Implications for Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 379-96.

16. S. H. Nasr, "Religion and Secularism," *The Islamic Quarterly Review* 6, no. 3 (1961): 124-25. Cited in Ata-al Sid, "Contemporary Attempts."

17. S. L. Yom, "Islam and Globalization: Secularism, Religion, and Radicalism," *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 5, no. 4 (2002): 84-109.

18. S. Rae and K. Wong, *Beyond Integrity: A Judeo-Christian Approach to Business Ethics* (Michgan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996).

19. Abuznaid, "Islam and Management."

20. Rice, "Islamic Ethics."

21. M. U. Chapra, *Islam and the Economic Challenge* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992). Cited in Rice, "Islamic Ethics."

22. Rice, "Islamic Ethics."

23. Toor, "An Islamic Leadership Theory," 1. "PBUH" is an acronym used by Muslims for "peace be upon him," a traditional blessing upon the Prophet.

24. Ibid.; I. S. Beik and L. D. Arsyianti, "Islamic Paradigm on Leadership and Management: A Conceptual Analysis," proceedings, ICMIP.

25. See M. Kriger and Y. Seng, "Leadership with Inner Meaning: A Contingency Theory of Leadership Based on the Worldviews of Five Religions," *The Leadership Quarterly* 16 (2005): 771-806.

26. See L. W. Fry, "Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003): 693-727.

27. Kriger and Seng, "Leadership with Inner Meaning."

28. K. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, and R. E. Quinn, *Positive Organizational Scholarship* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003), 3.

29. Beekun and Badawi, "Leadership," 1999; Ezzati, "Concept of Leadership"; Toor, "An Islamic Leadership Theory"; Beik and Arsyianti, "Islamic Paradigm on Leadership and Management"; A. K. Ahmad, "Leadership and Work Motivation from the Islamic Perspective," proceedings, ICMIP; K. Randeree, "Leadership Lessons for Contemporary Managers from Early Islamic Literature," proceedings, ICMIP; and A. M. Saleh, "Leadership: An Islamic Perspective," proceedings, ICMIP.

30. N. S. Mohamed, "Styles and Strategies of Motivation in Islamic Organizations," proceedings, ICMIP.

31. Mohiuddin and Amin, 2007; M. R. Amin, "Motivating People in Organizations: The Islamic Way," proceedings, ICMIP.

32. M. K. Dewi and H. Tanjung, "Discipline without Punishment: Is it Possible?" proceedings, ICMIP.

33. Y. Ismail and B. B. H. Ibrahim, "Leadership Prerogatives and the Role of Advisors in Organizational Decision-Making," proceedings, ICMIP.

34. A. Amer, "Corporate Governance from an Islamic Perspective," proceedings, ICMIP; I. Mat and Y. Ismail, "Corporate Governance: A Theoretical Analysis of Triangular Relationships between the Shareholders, the Board, and Chief Executive," proceedings, ICMIP; and A. W. Dusuki, "The Application of Shariah Framework to Stakeholder Management," proceedings, ICMIP.

35. R. Fontaine, "Islamic Entrepreneurship: An Exploratory Study," proceedings, ICMIP.

36. R. Muhamad, "A Study on the Influence of Education Stream and Religiosity on Ethical Awareness of Malay Muslim Students in Malaysia," proceedings, ICMIP.

37. M. A. Youssef and M. A. Al-Buraey, "From TQM to Quantum Quality: An Islamic Perspective," proceedings, ICMIP.

38. Sharfuddin, "Towards an Islamic Administrative Theory."

39. Ahmad, "Leadership and Work Motivation."

40. K. A. Chatha, "Islamic Perspective to Enterprise Design," proceedings, ICMIP.

41. Shirazi, "Management and Leadership."

42. R. Fontaine, "Islamic Entrepreneurship: An Exploratory Study," proceedings, ICMIP.

43. O. Kadi, "Managing Islamic Non-Profit Organization (INO): The Islamic Perspective in North America," proceedings, ICMIP.

44. Ahmad, "Management Modeling from Islamic Perspective."

45. K. O. Kamaruzaman and A. R. A. Hashi, "Managerial Ethics of Public Administrators from the Qur'anic Perspective," proceedings, ICMPI; R. I. Beekun, "Islamic Business Ethics," University of Nevada and Islamic Training Foundation, November 1, 1996.

46. Kazmi, "Managing from Islamic Perspectives."

47. Toor, "An Islamic Leadership Theory"; and A. M. Saleh, "Leadership: An Islamic Perspective," proceedings, ICMIP.

48. Y. Ismail, "A Proposed Approach to Development of Islamic Management as a Discipline," proceedings, ICMIP.

49. Sobhani and Ather, "Islamic Management in Bangladesh."

50. A. Kazmi, "Probable Differences among the Paradigms Governing Conventional and Islamic Approach to Management," International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy 1, no. 4 (2005): 216.

51. Ahmad, "Leadership and Work Motivation."

52. Noordin and Othman, "Islamic Management."

53. C. D. Cooper, T. A. Scandura, and C. A. Schriesheim, "Looking forward but Learning from Our Past: Potential Challenges to Developing Authentic Leadership," Leadership Quarterly 16, no. 3 (2005): 475-93.

54. Toor, "An Islamic Leadership Theory"; Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn, Positive Organizational Scholarship; and F. Luthans and B. J. Avolio, "Authentic Leadership Development," in Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline, eds. K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, and R. E. Quinn (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003), 241-58.

55. M. Loqman and A. Bulbul, "Convergence and Divergence between Conventional Approach and Islamic Approach to Management," proceedings, ICMIP.

56. M. H. Kennedy, "Fayol's Principles and the Rule of St. Benedict: Is There Anything New under the Sun?" Journal of Management History 5, no. 5 (1999): 269-76.

57. Loqman and Bulbul, "Convergence and Divergence."

58. Toor, "An Islamic Leadership Theory."

59. Noordin and Othman, "Islamic Management."

60. J. Hashim, "Religion as a Determinant in Self-Directed Learning at the Workplace," proceedings, ICMIP; and Muhamad, "A Study on the Influence."

61. For example, C. M. Renzetti and D. J. Curran, Living Sociology (United States: Allyn & Bacon: 1988); M. Saeed, Z. U. Ahmed, and S. M. Mukhtar, "International Marketing Ethics from an Islamic Perspective: A Value-Maximization Approach," Journal of Business Ethics 32, no. 2 (2001): 127-42; and D. Caird, "Religiosity and Personality: Are Mystics Introverted, Neurotic, or Psychotic?" British Journal of Social Psychology 26 (1987): 345-46.

62. For example, L. W. Fry, "Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership," The Leadership Quarterly 14 (2003): 693-727; L. W. Fry, S. Vitucci, and M. Cedillo, M., "Transforming the Army through Spiritual Leadership," The Leadership Quarterly 16, no. 5 (2005): 835-62; and E. B. Dent, M. E. Higgins, and D. M. Wharff, "Spirituality and Leadership: An Empirical Review of Definitions, Distinctions, and Embedded Assumptions," The Leadership Quarterly 16 (2005): 625-53.

63. For example, R. Barrett, "Culture and Consciousness: Measuring Spirituality in the Workplace by Mapping Values," in Handbook of Workplace Spirituality

and Organizational Performance, eds. R. A. Giacalone and C. L. Jurkiewicz (New York: M. E. Sharp, 2003), 345-66; D. Ashmos and D. Duchon, "Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure," *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9, no. 2 (2002): 134-45; D. A. MacDonald, J. G. Kuentzel, and H. L. Friedman, "A Survey of Measures of Spiritual and Transpersonal Constructs: Part 2: Additional Instruments," *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 31, no. 2 (1999): 155-77; and D. Elkins, L. Hedstrom, L. Hughes, and C. Saunders, "Toward a Humanistic-Phenomenological Spirituality: Definition, Description, and Measurement," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 28, no. 4 (1988): 5-18.

64. M. M. Hossain, "Case Studies of Muslim Managed Organizations in Bangladesh," proceedings, ICMIP; M. G. Mohiuddin and M. R. Amin, "Human Resource Management: An Islamic Perspective," proceedings, ICMIP; B. Y. M. Barhem and R. Muhamad, "Religiosity and Work Stress Coping Behavior among the Muslim Employees," proceedings, ICMIP; and Kazmi, "Managing from Islamic Perspectives."

65. Sobhani and Ather, "Islamic Management in Bangladesh."

66. Ibid.

67. D. Buchanan and A. Bryman, "Contextualizing Methods Choice in Organizational Research," *Organizational Research Methods* 10 (2007): 483-501.

68. A. Bryman, "The Research Question in Social Research: What Is Its Role?" *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 10 (2007): 5-20.

69. P. Y. Martin and B. A. Turner, "Grounded Theory and Organizational Research," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 22 (1986):141-57.

70. A. Bryman, "The Debate about Quantitative and Qualitative Research: A Question of Method or Epistemology," *The British Journal of Sociology* 35, (1984): 176-92.

71. Ibid.

72. T. S. Rocco, L. A. Bliss, S. Gallagher, and A. Perez-Prado, "Taking the Next Step: Mixed Methods Research in Organizational Systems," *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal* 21, no. 1 (2003): 19-29.

73. Buchanan and Bryman, "Contextualizing Methods Choice."

74. Ali, *Islamic Perspectives*.