A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WORK MOTIVATION BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WORK MOTIVATION BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

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I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a research paper for the degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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Organizations and human resources are two important aspects. Organizations require employees to be productive as to have a positive impact. Organizations have their goals to achieve and they need individuals to fulfill those goals. In order to achieve their goals, organizations use different tools, techniques, and strategies. One of the tools is leadership. Leadership is important because it affects individuals' performance and productivity. Leadership can be effective in achieving a positive impact for organizations as well as for employees. This research is an attempt to explore the different leadership styles and their impact on employees.

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I hereby declare that this research is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Signature

Date: 24/9/02

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ABSTRACT

Organizations and human resources are two important aspects both to Western and Islamic perspectives. Human resources are people with certain capabilities required to perform a particular function. Still, these employees need to be well motivated and guided so as to boost their interest in the implementation of their daily responsibilities. Motivation is important so as to embark the fundamental changes and the nature of work in the work force. With well-motivational programs, the productivity will increase. Taking this into consideration, this project paper will try to elucidate what work motivation really means to both the Western and Muslim perspectives and what are the means for the employers to boost the employees work motivation according to both perspectives.

Problems tend to occur when administrators failed to integrate the views of both the Western and Muslim. Highlighted problem like “low productivity” were emphasized as workers tend to focus too much on the Western motivation and paying less attention to Muslim perspectives, although work was considered as an ibadah in Islam. To discuss this problem in great detail, a few methods had been brought forward. This research paper was based on qualitative analysis, which primarily employed an inductive research strategy. Besides, the ideas of the “Grounded Theory” proposed by Glaser and Strauss were added as a flavor as inductive method built abstractions, concepts or theories rather than testing existing theory. No statistical findings were discussed as the paper will be on exploratory basis as the writer hopes to find a theory that explained the data.

The prior discussions related to the differences and similarities of work motivation according to Western and Islamic perspectives were based on few focal headlines – definitions, rewards/appraisals and punishments, evaluation of prevailing theories proposed by Maslow, Herzberg, McClelland, McGregor and Locke were compared as well. Basically, based on the findings, Western perspectives were more towards achieving the monetary rewards in their daily work basis.
Contrary to Islam, motivation was to treat everybody in the organization (regardless of the status) equally and the implementation of mutual consensus (As-Syura) with the hope to achieve the spiritual rewards from the Al-Mighty. Whatever intention (niyyah) a Muslim had, that should benefit others as work was an amanah and considered as an indication of faith to Allah s.w.t. Consequently, the implications of work motivation to management according to the means of Western and Muslims views were highlighted as well to become the cream for the overall project paper.

In the last section of the study, recommendations were raised up particularly to the policy makers and managers of an organization. Topics for further research like penetration of syura (mutual consensus) and ways to settle organizational conflict in Malaysian organization were too discussed so as to see whether a combination between the Western and Muslim perspectives were not just a babble of tongues but could be implemented in reality. Hence, work motivation was considered to be an important discussed topic to ensure that the workers act in accordance to the fundamental principles. With the combination between Muslim and Western perspectives, an organization would not only gain profits in the monetary manner but in the spiritual manner as well because whatever intention (niyyah) that we have, that would transform into what Islam called as Ahsanu Amalan and to penetrate in our minds that work, according to Islam, is Ibadah.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of The Study

An organization is nothing without human resources. When we think about the millions of organizations that provide us with goods and services, any one or more of which will probably employ us during our lifetime, how often do we explicitly consider that these organizations depend on people to make them operate? It is only under unusual circumstances, such as when the clerks go on strike at a local supermarket or the teachers walk out in our school district, that we recognize the important role that employees play in making organizations work. How do we know that employees are performing adequately? Will today’s employees be prepared for the work the organization will require of them in ten, twenty or thirty years? These are the questions that Human Resource Management (HRM) needs to answer.

HRM is concerned with the ‘people’ dimension in management. Since every organization is made up of people, acquiring their services, developing their skills, motivating them to high levels of performance, and ensuring that they continue to maintain their commitment to the organization are essential to achieving organizational objectives. This is true regardless of the type of organization – government, business, education, health, recreation or social action. Getting and keeping good people is critical to the success of every organization, whether profit or nonprofit, public or private.
In the Islamic perspective, HR too refers to and means people at large. They could also be equated with the term manpower or labor in the sense of being a factor of production in organizations. It may be defined as the process by which people (or employees in organization) are helped to acquire certain capabilities required to perform a particular function. Such capabilities can be classified as technical knowledge, technical skill, managerial skill or managerial knowledge, behavioral skills and conceptual skills.

HR can be developed in many different ways. One is by formal education, beginning with primary education continuing through various forms and levels of higher education. Secondly, HR can be developed through acquiring technical and managerial capabilities through classroom training. Some managerial skills and behavioral and conceptual capabilities can be acquired more effectively through guided and reflective experience on the job. A third way is through self-development, as persons seek to acquire greater knowledge, skills or capacities through preparation on their own initiative. This learning becomes faster if the individual is interested or is motivated and guided by somebody or some organizational policy.

Motivation is probably one of the most frequently and extensively studied psychological concepts. The utility of motivation theories has been incorporated into other areas, such as learning, personality, and employees’ behavior and job satisfaction. In these situations, motivation has advanced beyond theory to become a useful managerial resource for shaping behavior.

The theoretical framework of motivation focuses on understanding and predicting the rationale underlying human behavior. The applied aspect of motivation emphasizes active intervention for the purpose of changing; improving and developing desired behavioral responses. Parents and teachers continually expend great energy searching for means to motivate children, while managers use motivation theory and research as a resource to improve the quantity and quality of worker productivity and job satisfaction.
Additionally, this ability to motivate employees will be even more important in the future, since fundamental changes are taking place in the nature of work and the work force. Productivity is down. Workers are becoming better educated and more concerned with their life-styles. There is a shift from blue collar to white collar workers. And a multitude of new laws alter the techniques through which managers can ensure high production. (Dessler: 19) It seems apparent that the days of the purely Theory X manager are numbered; managers will need new tools for tapping employees’ higher-level needs – for motivating them.

The question of how to motivate someone is a complex one, and one for which there are no quick answers. Yet one ‘law’ of motivation seems to apply quite consistently: People are usually motivated or driven to behave in a way that they feel leads to rewards. (Dessler: 19). So as rough-and-ready rule, motivating someone requires two things: first, find out what the person wants and hold it out as a possible reward; and second, see to it that he feels that effort on his part will probably lead to obtaining that reward.

Yet, motivation is a complex process composed of physical, psychological, social and cultural needs, which operate both individually, and interactively to energize human behavior. Needs activate the motivation process to direct the action of the behavior, to determine the strength of the response, and to sustain the duration of the effort involved. Since this is so, motivation is multi-faceted psychological process, which energizes individuals’ behaviors toward a desired goal or objective.
Islam too has its own views on the connotation of motivation. Though there were not many types of formal organizations during the initial years of Islam, strong evidence exists concerning the application of various techniques of motivation so as to enhance morale and commitment of followers. In pre-Islamic times, worldly rewards in the form of war spoils, sense of chivalry, respect of the tribe and self-respect were practiced.

However, the advent of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula has changed the whole concept of war and combat motivation. The believers of Islam were encouraged and motivated to fight against the enemies of Islam and Allah; and not to gain the war spoils, or sense of pride. It is mentioned that motivation based on Islamic precepts is better practiced on the sense of humility and respect toward subordinates (Iqbal: 6). Islam attaches great importance to respect and self-esteem of human beings, irrespective of their age, gender, caste, color or status in the organization / society.

According to Islamic injunctions, ‘Ameer’ (ruler) should be humble and respectful toward the poorer sects of population. The practice of enhancing self-respect of subordinates through humility and respect mainly helps in increasing their level of motivation and commitment. In this regard, the following verse should be an eye-opener for all Islamic believers:

‘All will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of any blamer’. (al-Maidah: 54)
Therefore, the main focus of this study will rely on work motivation in Human Resources, the means of motivation according to Western and Islamic tenets, theories related to motivation given by all the vast knowledge scholars as well as the attributes and values that should be inculcated among the Muslim executives / administrators in an organization.

1.2 Problem Statement

A problem in a problem statement is anything that perplexes and challenges the mind so that it makes belief uncertain. Same goes with work motivation. Work motivation, although is regarded as an important topic, still problems tend to occur when administrators failed to integrate both the Western and Muslim perspectives. Such highlighted problems prevailed include – “low productivity” skill mentioned by Prof. Kamal Hassan in a monograph entitled Moral And Ethical Issues because the workers tend to emphasize more on the Western concept and taking less consideration on the spiritual aspects. Based on his views, the integration of the concept with holistic knowledge is vital to get outstanding ethics and spiritual values among the workers. Although this is so, there are certain inadequacy or flawed discussion in some important ways as well.

There tend to be a misunderstanding on the concepts of work motivation. Some employees tend to focus too much on the notion of work motivation based on the Western perspectives rather than combining the practice with Islamic work motivation. This is what Dr. Faridi mentioned in his writing, Islamic Principles of Business Organization and Management (1995) as “concentration on the inner concept of Western work motivation”.
In other ways, the Muslims only understand and emphasize more based on the Islamic perspectives without taking into consideration what the Western really have to say. This evidence is supported from the article presented by Prof. Dr. Abu Sin entitled, *Islamic Administrative Institutions in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (1989) when he mentioned, “in order for the Muslim organizations to achieve success in the world and the Hereafter, it is compulsory for every Muslims to share and compare knowledge with others, and here I mean those from other Muslim areas.” Hence, the purpose of this study is to determine why and how this ‘knowledge-gap’ can be overcome particularly in organizations so as to drive the administrators to become the excellent workforces.

1.3 Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of this project paper are to:

1. Elucidate the prevailing concepts of work motivation in term of its definitions and theories in Western perspectives.

2. Elucidate the prevailing concepts of work motivation in terms of its definitions and theories in Islamic perspectives.

3. Study the similarities and differences of work motivation in the perspectives of Western and Muslim in terms of definitions, rewards / appraisals and punishments, evaluation of both Western and Islamic theories, and the implications of work motivation to management.
1.4 Significance Of Study
This study is mainly focusing on the comparative analysis of work motivation between the Western and Muslim perspectives. It is to subscribe the attributes suggested by both perspectives accordingly. The main idea of writing the research is to bring about the ideas of work motivation to be penetrated in the organizations of the Muslims by combining the two views. Not only the administrators will know the concepts based on the prevailing theories but the applicability in day-to-day basis. The research will as well help the workforces to boost their motivations in achieving an end-result.

1.5 Limitations Of Study
Most documentary data have not been developed for research purposes. The information offered may not be in a form that is useful (or understandable) to the writer. Such data “may not fit present definitions of the concepts under scrutiny; they may lack correspondence with the conceptual model”. This is of course more of a problem when documents used as secondary data sources to verify findings based on other data. If documents are used as part of the process of inductively building categories and theoretical constructs as in qualitative case studies, then their “fit” with pre-established concepts or models is less of a concern.

Another limitation from the study is the authenticity and accuracy of documentary materials. Certain documents are subject to purposeful or non-purposeful deception. The writer of those documents might be unaware of the bias in their writings.
1.6 Sources Of Data And Methodology

Methodology is important as it contains few important parts:

**Sampling Design**

This research paper has no sampling because the examples given are adapted from relevant documents so as to compare between the perspectives of work motivation between the Western and Muslim organizations.

**Research Design**

With regards to this paper, qualitative research is designed to inductively build rather than to test concepts, hypotheses and theories. The framework of the study will draw upon the concepts, terms, definitions and theories of a particular literature base and disciplinary orientation. This framework in turn will generate the “problem” of the study, data collection and analysis techniques and the interpretation of findings. The study is focusing on the thematic analysis between the Muslim and Western perspectives. This method is used as qualitative research makes the researcher to creatively describe phenomenon rather than giving attention to hypotheses to guide the investigation. (Merriam: 1998) Hence, the findings will be more comprehensive, holistic, expansive and richly descriptive.

The underlying principle of qualitative research is not statistical method, but problem solving through the use of a wide number of data collection methods and the application of diverse conceptual frameworks. Moreover, in qualitative research the attitudinal stance is as important as the intellectual approach used.
Consequently, it is believed that qualitative research method is said to solve the creative evaluation. Taking this into great consideration, the means of writing the chapters will begin by describing the Western views of work motivation in Chapter Two. The writing will begin with introduction, definitions and scope of work motivation and theories of work motivation. The same pattern is followed suit in Chapter Three whereby the descriptive writing for Islamic work motivation will be specified. Chapter Four will inclusively be the comparisons between work motivation according to Western and Muslim towards a few aspects. Chapter Five will be the ‘dessert’ for the whole writing whereby implications will be brought forward so as to draw conclusion. This method is used so as to provide a better understanding and easy reference for the study.

**Data Collection**

This part of the report describes the specifics of gathering the data. External sources are created outside the organization and are more varied than internal sources. There are also better-defined methods for finding them. This project paper is restricted to published sources, although other sources of information may be useful.

Computerized databases from EBSCO concerning human resource management are used to address the topic of work motivation. The files are sets of record grouped together for storage on some medium. Access may be through online search and CD ROMs.

The second source used is books, particularly the past and recent publications as well as the complete works by the renowned scholars in the fields of work motivation. The third source is from monologues that provide the ideas of generating work motivation in the perspective of Muslims. The forth is from journals; particularly written so as to compare the theories of work motivation between Westerns and Muslims.
The last major source of published information consists of other diverse material from special collections. Within this category there are many reference books, each a compendium of range of information. A second group includes university publications, of which there are seminar papers, and research records.

Data Analysis

This project paper places the concern in the qualitative analysis. The reason of choosing this method as the writer is interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed before. Besides, it is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible.

Qualitative analysis primarily employs an inductive research strategy. It builds up abstractions, concepts, hypotheses or theories rather than tests existing theory. No statistical findings will be presented as compared to deductive research method. As is true in other forms of qualitative research, the investigator as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis assumes an inductive stance and strives to derive meaning from the data. The end result of this type of qualitative research is a theory that emerges from, or is “grounded” in the data – hence, grounded data (proposed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967).

1.7 Organization Of The Chapters

This study is divided into five leading chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. The topics highlighted include the background study of the comparative analysis, problem statement, objectives on conducting this study, significance and limitations of the writing, sources of data and methodology and finally how the chapters are organized.
The second chapter explains the scope of motivations in lieu of the Western perspectives. Some of the issues being discussed include the definitions on the concept of motivation according to different scholars, two vital components of work motivation, the main differences between the meaning of motivation and reward and finally the theories related to western work motivation.

The third chapter deals very much on the connotations of Islamic views on work motivation. Muslims are ordained to follow strictly the Laws of Allah and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. The highlights will encompass the work motivation in accordance to the Islamic framework and precepts. Different definitions are stated. The components related to Islamic motivation are also well taken care for in an attempt to establish an exemplary work culture among the Muslim executives and administrators. The ethical theories / values are provided to see the relevancy between Western and Muslims views on work motivation.

The forth chapter is the essence of the whole study. Here, a clear picture between the main differences and similarities of work motivation in lieu of both Western and Muslims are revealed. This can be seen in terms of few underlying definitions and theories. By so doing, it provides a clear picture on the basic standing points for both Western and Muslims perspectives.

The final chapter is the concluding remarks as well as writer’s recommendations towards the whole writing. It is hoped that this writing will become the stepping stone towards conducting an intensive research of the same field, particularly to find out the best means of motivating Malaysia’s workforce generally and Sarawak’s administrators comparatively. Recommendations are included as well. Whether the practicality of work motivation in every day life is available awaits the test of time!
CHAPTER TWO: WESTERN PERSPECTIVES ON WORK MOTIVATION

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, the study begins to describe work motivation according to Western perspectives based on few focal points – namely the definitions and scope of work motivation and the related theories of work motivation. Popular theories of work motivation are brought forward like the ones from Abraham Maslow, Alderfer’s Existence-Relatedness Growth (ERG) Theory, Herzberg Motivator-Hygiene Theory, McClelland Learned Needs Theory, McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y and Locke’s Goal Setting Theory. These theories will be discussed in length due to their own specialties and applicability in day-to-day work basis.

2.2 Definitions And Scope Of Work Motivation

A definition given by DeCenzo and P. Robbins (1988) is referred to outward behavior. Motivation is the willingness to do something and is conditioned by this action’s ability to satisfy some need for the individual. A need means some internal state that makes certain outcomes appear attractive. This is basically described in this model:

- Unsatisfied needs → tension → drives → search behavior → goal achievement → need satisfaction → reduction of tension

These writers argue that an unsatisfied need creates tension, which stimulates drives within the individual. These drives generate a search behavior to find particular goals that, if attained, satisfy the need and lead to the reduction of tension. Simply, the greater the tension, the greater the activity to bring about relief.

In R. Newton (1998) definition, the word motivation comes from the Latin verb "movere", which means to move. In terms of HRM, motivation has been described in a number of ways:

1. Motivation represents an employee's desire and commitment and is manifested as effort.

2. Motivation is a set of forces that cause people to behave in certain ways.

3. Motivation is a process that starts with a physiological or psychological deficiency or need that activates behavior or a drive that is aimed at a goal or incentive.

4. Motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of efforts toward organizational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need.

Lindner (1998) and Singer (1990) shared the same definition. Motivation is a complex process composed of physical, psychological, social, and cultural needs, which operate both individually, and interactively to energize human behavior. It is a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific and unmet needs. It is these needs that activate the motivation process to direct the action of the behavior, to determine the strength of the response, and to sustain the duration of the effort involved.
When individuals must decide between alternative actions, motivation forces determine their responses. When drives are aroused, motivated individuals not only direct their behavior toward a particular goal, but also expend considerable energy in achieving it.

Still, a definition given by Dessler (1988) is a little bit different because he said that someone is motivated if an incentive awaits. Hence, people are basically motivated or driven to behave in a way that they feel leads to rewards.

French (1990), Comstruck (1994) and E. Seta et al. (2000) agreed on one definition on work motivation. Motivation is described as an internal force or process that energizes, guides and maintains behavior toward a goal. It is somewhat to say that motivation refers in part to the force or energy that gets the "motor" of behavior running. Most of our behavior is directed toward specific goals as well. This is configured in three elements:

Diagram II: Elements of Behavior

Needs and desires: Some are short range and some are long range. All these needs and desires are not the same for all persons.

Goals: This is the second element. When people have needs or desires, they established goals or objectives that will satisfy them. For example, a person who has a felt need to be recognized will establish goals, which if achieved, will result in recognition.

Actions: It is an end result of motivation if a person has a need to attain a goal.
As a whole, work motivation according to those scholars can be seen as a process/force that will make humans behave in such a way so as to achieve a goal.

2.3 Theories Related To Work Motivation

For this section, the discussion will focus on six theories of work motivation – Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer’s ERG Theory, Herzberg Motivator-Hygiene Theory, McClelland Learned Needs Theory, McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y and Locke’s Goal Setting Theory. The fundamental reason for such focus is due to their practicality and has been well said in most writings related to work motivation.

2.3.1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

“...we must construct a profoundly different psychology of motivation for self-actualizing people, e.g. expression motivation or growth motivation, rather than deficiency motivation. Perhaps it will be useful to make a distinction between living and preparing to live. Perhaps the concept of motivation should apply only to non-self-actualizers. Our subjects no longer strive in the ordinary sense, but rather develop. They attempt to grow to perfection and to develop more and more fully in their own style. The motivation of ordinary men is a striving for the basic need gratifications that they lack. But self-actualizing people in fact lack none of these gratifications; and yet they have impulses. They work, they try and they are ambitious, even though in an unusual sense. For them motivation is just character growth, character expression, maturation and development; in a word, self-actualization”.

(Maslow, Motivation and Personality, 1970 as in Edward L. Lawler III, 1995)