

INSIGHTS: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING THE WORLD CLASS GOOD GOVERNANCE ETHICS

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ABSTRACT – Good governance without ethics is a corpse. Both must coexist to define morality of behavior be it in individual self or group of people or an organization. The Renaissance gave birth to schools of thought that adopted secularism to define humanity and rights even though the teaching of religions are still an essence for personal aspects of life. Hence, this paper introduces the conceptual framework for building the World class good governance ethics as articulated from the conduct of Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has been recognized as the most influential people in history by Michael H Hart. This conceptual framework will help individual as well as private and public enterprises to seek the essence of moral principles as guidance for good governance ethics. In conclusion, the World class good governance ethics is the conduct of management and behavior within an organization or individual that comply with the principles of faith, accountability, disruptive leadership, integrity, trustworthiness underpinned with the practice of consultation towards the achievement of justice.

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INTRODUCTION

During the age of renaissance, the World had seen the emergence of new schools of thought. The schools of thought founded by Petrarch (Italy, 1304-1374), Michel de Montaigne (France, 1533-1592), Niccolo Machiavelli (Florence, 1469-1527), Leonardo da Vinci (Italian, 1452-1519), Galileo Galilei (Italy, 1564-1642) and William Shakespeare (England, 1564-1616) gave birth to new ideas of secularism, humanism and scientific rationale thus separated the religious dogmas from public life as long embraced by the Europeans. The old Christianity was blamed as superstitious belief and against science. In the same premises, the claim for divine authority by the absolute monarchies had been increasingly disputed since it became the impetus in legalising tyranny acts against humanity.

To the contrary with the other parts of the World, since the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, Islam had re-emerged and played a vital role in cultivating good culture, equitable economic system, good governance practice as well as the development of science. The period from the 8th to the 16th centuries evidenced the golden area of Islamic civilisation aftermath the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The big names such as al-Zahrawi (936-1013), Abbas Ibn Firmas (810-887), al-Biruni (973-1048), Ibn Sina (980-1037), Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), Ibn al-Nafis (1213-1288), Ibn Musa al-Khawarizmi (780-850), Al-Hazen (965-1040) and Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) in the World history are the gurus for the renaissance in Europe until the modern era as to date.

ETHICS

Ethics is the moral philosophy about traits and acceptable norm to govern an individual or organisational behaviour. Cambridge English Dictionary defines ethics as a system of accepted beliefs that control behaviour, especially such a system based on moral. Ethics is very important to control the way of thinking and behaviour. Islamic scholars concluded that Muslims could regain the glory of the previous golden era of Islamic civilisation should they follow the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as *qudwah hasanah* (the best exemplary leadership model). The decline of Muslim communities in many worldly aspects today is due to their lackadaisical attitude to embrace Islam as the way of life. Some bad attitudes and malpractice among Muslims have increasingly tampered the excellent image of Islam itself.

On the other hand, the leadership prominence of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH continues to be acknowledged by non-Muslim scholars. Michael H Hart, a respected Western scholar after making an in-depth study among the great leaders in many centuries, concluded that the Prophet Muhammad PBUH was the most influential figure in human history. Such recognition is not the first time and only accorded to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Therefore, this paper introduces the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the conceptual framework for building the world-class good governance ethics.

The above conceptual framework is also fit to everyone who takes responsibility as a leader at any level whatsoever, either for himself or towards a nation in defining world-class good governance ethics. The leadership prominence of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH was due to the role that he played as a caliph. He was the best example of a caliph who

manifested the World-class good governance practitioner. He brought in him as the caliph with the following characteristics;

1. trustees of Allah (God)
2. promoting good and preventing evil
3. avoiding destruction
4. accountable
5. faithful

The above characteristics are the personality traits and attitudes that one should have in order to cultivate good governance practice in life.

GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH is an example of the best figure in family, community and nationhood management. Allah SWT commanded him to uphold justice and practise syura. He did not preach based on lust and desire but through revelation by the Maker of humankind and all creatures.

The principle of justice is found in verse al-Nahl (16: 90) where Allah SWT says, *"Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as courtesy to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful"*. In order to be a just person, one must adopt the attributes of mahmudah (praiseworthy) and leave mazmumah (disgraceful). Justice is the end-goal of our deed or the desired outcome when dealing with oneself and other people as well. It must be seen, perceived and done. The critical aspects emphasised by Islam to achieve justice are as follows;

1. A trust shall be returned to the right owner. The same principle is applicable when dealing with assigning an obligation, it must be placed in the right person; only the right person is able to perform his duty well and sincerely. Through this practice, it will promote justice and preserve integrity. Allah SWT says in verse al-Nisa' (4: 58), *"Indeed, Allah commands you to return trusts to their rights owners; and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. What a noble commandment from Allah to you! Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing"*.
2. Accountability; defined as the obligation to explain, justify and take responsibility for one's action as well as the nature of the accountability of an individual, leader or organisation entrusted to carry out any planning, policy, action or decision-making for the public at a large or private entity. No one is above the law, and a doer shall be held responsible as well as answerable to his action. Allah SWT says in verse al-Ahzab (33: 66-68), *"On that Day when their faces shall be turned around in the Fire, they will say: "Would that we had obeyed Allah and obey the Messenger". They will say: "Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they turned us away from the Right Way. Our Lord, mete out to them a double chastisement and lay upon them a mighty curse"*.
3. Compliance with the principle of promoting good and preventing evil or harmful acts; any policy, execution, as well as action plans, should be based upon such principle in order to preserve public tranquillity and safeguard the interest of every inhabitant or member of any entity or society. In verse Ali' Imran (3: 110), Allah SWT says, *"You are the best community ever raised for humanity-you encourage good, forbid evil, and believe in Allah. Had the people of the Book believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them are faithful, but most are rebellious"*.
4. Prudence; practice wisdom, caution and care about practical matters and thoughtful towards matters in future. In verse al-Maidah (5:42), Allah SWT says, *"They eager listen to falsehood and consume forbidden gain. So if they come to you 'O Prophet': either judge between them or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, they cannot harm you whatsoever. But if you judge them, then do so with justice. Surely Allah loves those who are just"*.
5. The practice of self-examination, a person shall always evaluate his action as to keep the practice of right-doing and avoiding evils. Allah SWT says in verse Yunus (10: 14), *"Then We made you their successors in the land to see how you would act"*.

Syura is a practice of consultation emphasised by Islam in any form of the decision-making process, be it for one's, family's, organisation's or government's affairs. In verse al-Imran (3:159), Allah SWT says: *"It was thanks to Allah's mercy that you were gentle to them. Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would surely have scattered away from you. So pardon them, and pray for their forgiveness, and take counsel from them in matters of importance. And when you are resolved on a course of action place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)"*.

Through the practice of syura, transparency prevails because anyone in a consultation process could share his information, queries, views, arguments and justification before any decision is taken. In a more formal consultation process, every member of a consultative council can contribute fruits of mind, and when there is a voting process, each one has one vote. Everybody is free to express his opinions according to his understanding, expertise and thoughts. In

practice, members of a consultative council indeed represent some communities or professions or at least expertise that undoubtedly provides the right platform to communicate views or criticism.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of world-class good governance ethic is built on the leadership characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad as well as the principles laid down by Islam both in the attaining for justice and the objectives of consultation (syura). The leadership characteristic of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH contributes moral principles of ethics such as trustworthiness, integrity, constructive leadership, accountability and faith.

The relationship between the moral principles of ethics and the leadership characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad is shown in Table 1. The elements of the moral principles of ethics associated with justice and the practice of consultation become the good governance ethics as shown in Table 2, thus underpins the instrumental values to be a good governance practitioner as shown in Table 3. The practice of consultation is embedded in Figure 2 and Figure 3. The practice is to safeguard the transparency, which is a crucial factor to combat corrupt practice and conflicts of interests. In addition, thereto, a consultation could combine diverse expertise into a single forum, thus bring added value for the ultimate result in any decision making process.

Table 1: Moral principles

No	Characteristics of a Caliph	Values
1	Trustee	Trustworthiness
2	Promoting Good and Preventing Evil	Integrity
3	Avoiding Destruction	Constructive Leadership
4	Accountable	Accountability
5	Faithful	Faith



Figure 1: Good governance ethics

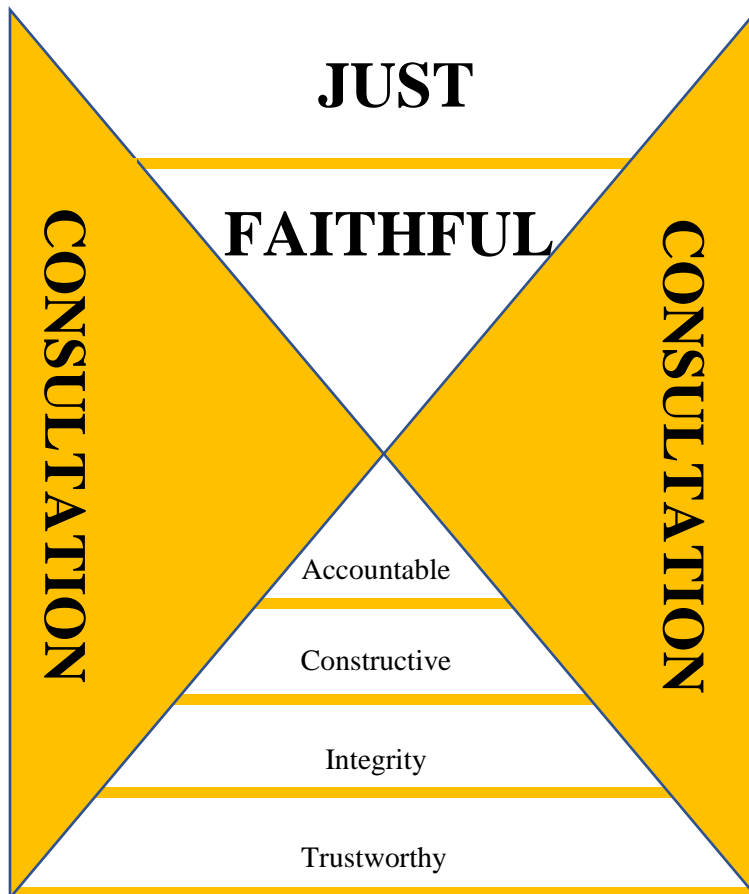


Figure 2: Good governance practitioner

CONCLUSION

The conceptual framework as promoted above would be able to achieve the World-class good governance ethics since the same has been tested and proven via the practice of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Being recognised as the most influential figure in human history, hence, it is legitimate to present the conceptual framework for the World-class good governance ethics based on the principle morals of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH associated with his practice of justice and consultation.

Thus World-class good governance ethics is the conduct of management and behaviour within an organisation or individual that comply with the principles of faith, accountability, constructive leadership, integrity, trustworthiness underpinned with the practice of consultation towards the achievement of justice.

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