

Thesis Summary

Quality, Sustainability, and Corporate Social Responsibility: An Islamic Perspective

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The Idea behind the Research

My professional aim is to enhance quality of life, through the implementation of corporate social responsibility and total quality management in order to achieve organisational sustainability, within a context of instability and rapid change. In my thesis I would be drawing on culture by attempting to re-conceive the Islamic context in which I believe and work within; and at the same time look for new means of unification between individuals and organisations with a view to serving our societies with the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR). I am taking into consideration my own personal and business journey as a consultant in developing a theory of management based primarily on culture, including values and alignment between individuals and groups, and rooted in a newly developed local-global approach to total quality management.

Methodology and Method:

I used Co-operative Inquiry, developed by John Heron, as a Methodology. This approach focuses on democratic participation of an individual in a group. The methodology is distinct both in its co-operative approach and its encompassing four ways of knowing: Experiential, Imaginal or Presentational, Propositional and Practical. These were applied on the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in Jordan as a case study of this thesis.

Research and Participation:

Co-operative research is a form of participation, such as person-centred inquiry, which conducts research with people. In fact, from the outset of this thesis, I have been co-operatively engaged with my colleague Professor Assaf, who created the Islamic Theory (I. Theory) in management, as an academic professor and senior management consultant.

Research Method / The Case Study Approach:

My case study covered the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN): a non-governmental non-profit organisation related to the service sector. It is dynamic, growing and developing partly through its involvement with the transformation programme, as a civic organisation.

The research method I followed is the “Robert Yin’s” approach that is compatible with Heron’s co-operative inquiry methodology.

Research Questions:

My thesis focuses on two major questions:

1. How can we develop a management theory based on our culture towards quality and social responsibility?
2. What is the role of Islamic theory (I. Theory) in supporting the development of quality management to take into account social responsibility and sustainability?

Research Objective:

The objective of this research is as follows:

To apply a management theory based on Islamic culture within Jordanian organisations rather than western management theories, with a new view to quality and social responsibility.

Literature Review:

The thesis focuses on quality, sustainability and corporate social responsibility, being three essential dimensions to achieve quality of life. Sustainable development as defined by UNEP (UNEP, 1987) “Satisfying present needs without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.” All definitions of sustainability focused on the management of resources and their just distribution, where each organisation should practice a new paradigm towards sustainability. From an Islamic point of view, sustainability means a good life; it is about adding value to life through good deeds and knowledge as part of human role in the universe. Where helping others, bringing up good children, living lightly on earth and elimination of waste and over consumption is the rule to achieve better quality of life.

But quality is not a new concept in modern business, as Prophet Mohammad said one thousand and four hundred years ago, *"God loves to see one's job done at the level of itqan"*. (ITQAN) means mastery or best practice. Although the Islamic religion and culture are profusely rich in portraying the essence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), *"as operating a business in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial, and public expectations that society has in business."* (BSR, 2005), also CSR means *"Open and transparent business practices that are based on ethical values and respect for employees, communities and environment. It is designed to deliver sustainable value to society at large,"* (IBLF, 2005). In this thesis, I discuss these concepts and show that Islam as a religion and I. Theory as a management theory based on the teachings of Islam can provide a suitable framework for implementing sustainability and CSR. Accordingly, I propose that I. Theory can be the necessary framework to guarantee quality of life.

Summary of the I. Theory / Management by Values:

The Islamic (Ideological) Theory is based on a number of principles, including:

1. The need to build human organisations, socially and politically as well as commercially. Such organisations would be comprised of many elements; most important among them should be the human being. Related to that would be a value system forming the moral basis for the organisation. I. Theory considers Justice as the ultimate value. It is one thing every organisation cannot do without.
2. The need to identify the managerial value systems that comply with the model's core value. Such compliance of values is necessary to guarantee harmony and avoid conflicting interests between owners and workers.

I. Theory management model stresses on effectiveness, which is efficiency plus two things:

- ❑ Unifying the organisation's objectives with those of employees and society.
- ❑ Making sure that continuation of improvement is seen through a total strategic view and for the long run.

For Muslims, the Justice Value in the life of any organisation is the ultimate value. It brings balance between the individual's soul and spirit on the one hand, and the group's soul and spirit on the other.

Another Islamic doctrine relevant to I. theory is that of *Tawheed* (oneness). At the human level, this concept can be translated into "unification or oneness" or the bringing together of paradoxes to create harmony. The unification process allows for genuine compatibility between the group's or organisation's goals and the individuals' goals in this unit. This cannot be achieved without real and total unification of this dual phenomenon (individual and group) through the renewal and development process.

Achieving unification at all levels requires building systems according to specific norms and regulations. In all universal phenomena, there are a lot of regulations and rules adopted for building it with precision and accuracy. Likewise, there are flexible and dynamic elements for building systems and regulations in society to achieve quality of life within the context of sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

In conclusion, there is a definite potential to implement systems based on I. Theory within Jordanian organisation, as derived from our Islamic culture, as the successful implementation at RSCN has proven so far. It was very enticing case to start promoting organisational sustainability and to build societal awareness, where their role in social responsibility is highly recognized regardless of the many limitations and hurdles they may face while effecting the change.

Finally, I tried to re-visit the I. Theory philosophy and the systems which are based on quality of life and the resulting outputs, as quality and sustainable development on the societal level. In order to generalise and deploy "I. Theory", we need total support and commitment from the powers that be, from top management and also from individuals themselves, and only then we can achieve quality, sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

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