ISLAMIC AND WESTERN APPROACHES TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS: A PRACTICAL APPROACH.

AISHA SALIM JUMA ALARIMY¹

¹Department of Educational Management and Leadership, Faculty of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia.
Email: prettymum1@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates human resource management from both the Islamic (based on Al-Quran and sunnah) and western (based on classical and humanistic theories) perspectives. This paper has been written based on the following objectives; (a) to compare the western and the Islamic perspectives to human resource management; and (2) to highlight the best human resource approach that can bring about effectiveness and efficiency in managing human resources in Muslim organizations. A purely qualitative approach of literature review was done to compare the two (western and Islamic) approaches of human resource management. The Islamic human resource management is derived from Islamic principles which are guide by Al-Quran and sunnah. In this line, the general understanding is that human beings cannot be guided by what they think is right but they need Divine guidance from Allah SWT in the management of their organizations. Today, most organizations are adopting the western approaches to human resource management than the Islamic approaches. It should be noted that Western approaches to human resource management are just a component of the Islamic approaches. It is recommended that modern organizations need to use more of the Islamic approaches in managing human resource than the western approaches.

Key words: Human Resource Management, Western and Islamic Approaches, Muslim Organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource refers to individuals, personnel or a workforce within an organization accountable for accomplishing responsibilities assumed to them with the purpose of attaining organizational goals and objectives [13, 60]. Human resource and issues concerning human resource management are pertinent in any organization to be successful in the modern time [25]. Human resource Management is one of the major aspects considered if an organization would like to improve and also promote its administration [34, 12, 21]. The western approach to human resource management are based on theories which are based on the understanding of man while the Islamic approach to human resource management is a gift given by Allah (SWT) to His people to be able to leave and also manage happily their societies. The importance of human resource management in organizations has been explained as coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success [20, 60, 27, 65]. It has been noted that any organization to register success effective human resource management is critical in ensuring quality of the employees [27].

LITERATURE REVIEW

In studies made on human resource management it has been observed that the quality of the organizations’ human resources, fair treatment and satisfaction of employees with their jobs might affect the organizations’ efficiency, clientele service, status and their existence [10]. A good human resource
manager is that who has the ability to manage employees adequately to achieve organizational goals and also ascertain that good practices are adhered to by the same employees [13, 19, 28, 33, 9]. Appropriate human resource management in an organization is attained through suitable recruitment and selection, giving suitable induction, training, skill developments, and through proper performance appraisals [62]. Having a proper human resource might require organizations to put in place appropriate compensation and benefits, proper labour relations and ultimately maintaining safety, and welfare and health concerns of employees [52]. Human resource management is defined as a social and economic process involving a sequence of coordinated events such as planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling or leading in order to achieve the desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way [61].

On the other hand human resource management is the basic strategic intent for human capital development for excellence [3]. Human resource management is defined as a process of managing people well to achieve organizational goals [13, 15, 39, 51]. Human resource management has major functions in organizations that involves; hiring, performance management, organization development, safety, wellness, benefits, employee motivation, communication, administration, training and compensation, among others [35, 14, 40, 17, 58, 47]. In the management of organizations today a span of people takes part in the process. During the process there are very many management challenges that can be evidenced as many people participate as employees and managers in the management of the organizations [30]. In ‘modern’ organizations the managers only look at making profits and do not cogitate on the employees’ wellbeing. This has led to low production in many organizations due to the fact that managers do not effectively and efficiently handle the human resource [10, 13, 15, 30]. It has been highlighted in many studies that improper and unfair handling of human resource is likely to lead poor productivity of organizations. There is need for a good and trusted understanding between the employers and employees [50, 53, 30].

With many organizations adopting either the western or Islamic approaches to human resource management there is need to highlight the most appropriate approach to human resource management in Muslim organizations [26, 23, 11, 56, 30, 1]. In this interest, the paper seeks to make a comparison between the Islamic and Western approaches to human resource management.

OBJECTIVES

The paper has been written to achieve the objectives below to; i) compare the western and the Islamic approaches to human resource management; ii) highlight the best strategies that can bring about effectiveness and efficiency in managing human resources in Muslim organizations.

METHODS

A purely qualitative approach was used to write this paper. Qualitative methods such book review and analyses were conducted in order to compare the Islamic and western approaches to human resource management. Both the literature on the theories of human resource management and from Al-Qur’an, hadith and sunnah used.

WESTERN APPROACH TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The western approach to human resource management is based on theories to see that human resources in organizations are managed efficiently and effectively [26, 56, 1]. There are various theories which explain human resource management in organizations. The most commonly used theories of human resource management include; (1) classical theories which comprises of the (a) Weber’s theory of bureaucracy, (b) Taylor’s theory of scientific management, and (c) Fayol’s administrative theory. On the other hand, there are (2) humanistic theories which comprise of (a) human relations theory and (b) McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y that can explain human resource management in organizations.

Weber’s theory of bureaucracy (1864-1920) highlights that the structural model for organizations that contains a hierarchical structure in making decisions flowing from higher levels to lower level of management [37]. The Weber’s theory of bureaucracy has much concern for the structural arrangement of the organization. The employees in
higher positions control and supervise those in lower positions [18]. In this suit organizations do not think about employees’ individual needs [44]. In most modern organizations today, there is no relationship between the managers and employees; employees are completely separated from their employers [4], and there is great control within official sphere. Furthermore, this type of work atmosphere tries to maintain rational decision making, avoids the influence by favoritism and prejudice which guide employers in hiring competent employees. Critics of the Weber’s bureaucratic theory highlight that there is high domination of authority which produces unresponsiveness and lack of effectiveness [8, 41]. This leads to personal frustration in the employees because the theory has less passion for responding to human needs [22].

According to the Taylor’s theory of scientific management (1856-1915) it is highlighted that there are four principles of scientific management which can be used in human resource management to improve on productivity and efficiency of the organizations [54]. According to Taylor the four principles include; (a) analyzing task scientifically, (b) choosing workers and training them according to their needs, (c) manager need to follow-up the employees to be sure that they use scientifically developed methods [7], and (d) the job should be divided equally between the employers and the employees [22]. Also, the Taylor’s scientific management theory contains ways of guiding, supporting and supervising employees. These suggest the best ways of performing jobs which emphasize the use of empirical research to find out solutions for human resource management. Taylor’s theory of scientific management has been criticized because of the increase in monotony of work. Taylor did not take into consideration of many important variables such as autonomy and task identity among others.

Fayol’s administrative theory indicates that management is a skill which is like any other skill human beings possess [64]. The management skills can be in form of human relations, production, efficiency or administration. Fayol suggested three main principles that are divided into fourteen sub-principles [4]. These include; (a) dividing and distributing work according to different specializations, (b) authority and responsibility which gives managers power to manage and support in making decisions while employees have to follow the decisions, and (c) discipline to divide work fairly between employees. To this, rules, policies, procedures and regulation are provided to all employees and employers, and also there is (d) unity of command in which employees needs to receive orders from their supervisors, and (e) unity of direction in which one plan and authority is used for organizational activities [22]. There should also be (f) subordination of individual interest to general interests where the most important thing in the organization is to achieve its goals, (g) remuneration of personal salaries where employers and employees’ salaries should be fair and due to their tasks and responsibilities, and (h) centralization where by all organization activities are centrally coordinated. There is also (i) the hierarchy in which the hierarchy in the authority from the highest to the lowest, (j) organizational order in which good personnel to get the best productivity from the employees, (m) initiative which is concerned with creative thinking, out plan and ensures organizational success, and (n) esprit de corps which are terms to work and effective communication [22].

Critics of the Fayol’s administrative theory have highlighted that the theory has the following drawbacks; (a) it is focused on how to operate the organization but it ignores the well-being of the workers, (b) it is clearly proved that the principles of classical theory make the work environment formal, defines tasks and procedures which might lead to a conflict in the relationship between managers and employees. (c) It uses money to encourage the workers and (d) employees are taken to be products of production or cogs on the wheel. In general, the classical theory supports the management ability to control the employees’ behaviour but it also ignores the importance of relationship between the employer and employees in an organization [64].

The human relations theory which started in 1920 gives some attention to the employees’ well-being component. The human relations theory states that human beings’ social interests need to be taken into consideration during human resource management [49]. According to the human relations theory organizations are social systems of interpersonal and
inter-group relationships [16, 36]. Human beings need recognition and appreciation as well as financial gains which managers need to provide in support and appreciation to failing employees because they are not machines [45]. The relationship between employees and managers is very important to which misunderstandings between managers and employees should be restricted. Employees might need freedom in the organizational environment which means lesser strictness in supervision and more independence [59].

McGregor’s theory X and theory Y critically analyses the condition that makes a person join an organization, stay in it and work towards the goals of the organization [42]. According to McGregor, there are two basic tenets that explain these conditions; (1) theory X and (2) theory Y. Theory X tends towards the use of force and manipulation by managers towards their employees. Four key assumptions are underlined in theory X: (a) an average employee hates work and will avoid it whenever possible, (b) employees do not like to work and they need close supervision, direction, monitoring, coercion, intimidation and punishment to get them work adequately towards the attainment of organizational goals, (c) an average employees will deluge task and wait for formal direction from people in authority, and (d) most employees place job security above other job-related factors and have little ambition [42]. On the other hand, theory Y emphasizes a cordial relationship between the managers of organizations and their employees. Theory Y also builds on four important assumptions; (a) if workers are satisfied with their work, they see their works as natural and acceptable as play, (b) and if people are committed to the goals of the organization, they are more likely to display their self-initiative, self- direction, self-control, and self-discipline on the job. (c) Under a proper and conducive environment an average employee learns not only to accept responsibilities on the job but also to request for them, and (d) an average worker is creative and has the ability to make good decisions and seeks opportunities to be creative at work [42].

ISLAMIC APPROACHES TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Islamic approaches to human resource management have been applied in many organizations to manage their employees whether directly or indirectly [26, 23]. The Islamic human resource management approaches are derived from Quran and sunnah of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The Quran and sunnah have a wealth experience of the principles which are good to manage human resource in any modern organization [26]. Islam has a set of ideas, principles and theories that dominate the field of management which have stood for ages and times [24]. The legislation of Islamic human resource management from these views, principles and theories is based the guidance of the Holy Quran and sunnah [56, 26]. The Islamic management principle is against materialistic thinking which might give rise to corruptive tendencies among employees [11]. Use of the Islamic approach to human resource management is adopted to achieve a balance and harmony between the interests of the individual and the group not like the western theories which are focused on the leadership, productivity of the work force, working environment and sustainable work [11]. Prophet Mohammad PBUH gave a comprehensive model on how to develop and also built good and sustainable human resource, as well as managing it. In the recent times there has been a noted increase in the adoption of the western approaches to human resource management which seem to contradict with the Islamic approaches [26]. This has cut across all nations in the world including countries in the Muslim world. Adoption of western human resource management approaches has also been attached to the financial and economic crises which have attacked most of the Muslim countries in the world today [43]. Also, the western approaches to human resource management have been attached to most of the problems traversing in the Muslim organizations.

Human activities are not only about the physical world but should also be reflected to Hereafter. The Hereafter plays a great role to human actions as people do deeds to be pardoned by Allah SWT on the Day of Judgment. The western approaches to human resource management look at managing human resources as an end goal to this world (al-duniya) whereas the Islamic approaches looks at both the world and Hereafter (al-akhirah) (Khalid, 2012). It is paramount that when conducting human resource management to consider both al-duniya and al-akhirah (The encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. XII)

There are several good human resource practices which can make human resource managers effective
and efficient in managing human resources in organizations. Generally, the Islamic approaches to human resource management are based on three major aspects; (1) Taqwa which can be explained as piety, uprightness, devotions, God-fearing among others. A person who is pious does righteous deeds, fears Allah SWT, and does everything in his life for Allah. (2) Itqan which means that the person does things in the right order and of the desired quality. Allah SWT talks about itqan in surat an-Naml in which he says that:

“And you see the mountains and think them firmly fixed, but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away. (Such is) the artistry of Allah, who disposes of all things in perfect order, for He is well acquainted with all that you do.” (Al-Qur’an, 27:88)

And (3) akhlak refers to attitudes, feelings, dispositions among others which employees possess. Akhlak are morals which need to be portrayed in human resource management. Human resource managers ought to have good morals from which their subordinates could copy. The best model for good practices is the last Prophet of Islam, Muhammad PBUH to whom Allah also acknowledged that:

“And you (stand) on an exalted standard of character” (Al-Qur’an, 68:4).

From the three major aspects (Taqwa, itqan and akhlak) good Islamic practices to human resource management that are disintegrated into various components which include;

Trust (Amanah): All human beings in Islam are accountable for their actions. A good human resource manager and employees should be accountable for what they do to one another. This would make human resource manager better in managing employees. Allah SWT says in Al-Quran that:

“O ye that believe! betray not the trust of Allah and the Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you’’ (Al-Qur’an: 8:27).

Also, trust is a good characteristic to a human resource manager; a manager should portray honesty to his employees as stressed in Islam. In Qur’an (28:26) Allah states that:

“Oh my (dear) father! Engage him on wages: truly the best men for you to employ is the (man) who is strong and trusty” .... (Al-Quran: 28:26).

Though trust is emphasized in Islam there are organizations today where managers are dishonest in undertaking their obligations as human resource manager to cause injustice (11). The Prophet PBUH when educating his companions and teaching them, he took into account the conditions of the people and appreciated them. Trustworthiness might take two forms; when rewarding or punishing employees. It is important that when decisions to ensure justice are made to either reward or punish employees it is done in faith to save people from the hell fire. Allah says that:

“Whoever does wrong, him shall we punish; then shall be sent back to his Lord, and He will punish him with a punishment unheard of (before). But whoever believes, and work righteousness, he shall have a greatly reward, and easy will be his task as we order it by our command.” (Al-Qur’an, 18:87-88).

Trust in human resource management leads to consultation and delegation of authority to employees by their employers [56]. This is instrumental in any human resource management system as human resource managers are able to delegate part of their work to their subordinates. The employees need to have trust in their employers as well as the employers having trust in their employees [50]. Trustworthiness in human resource management might be reflected in terms of contracts made between the employees and employers. According to Islam both the employers and employees have to fulfill their obligations in the contracts. Allah SWT stresses this in Al-Qur’an (7:85) that:
“...Given just measure and weight nor withhold from the people the things that are their due......” (Al-Qur’an, 7:85).

Also, the last Prophet PBUH of Allah stated that:

“God says that I will act as a plaintiff, on the Day of Judgment against the person who engages some worker on work and takes full work from him but does not give him (full) wages” (as narrated by Abu Huraira, (Sahih Bukhari, 3:34:430).

Giving full wage to someone after he/ she has accomplished work is a good practice in human resource management which Prophet Muhammad PBUH recommended to his followers.

Sincerity (Ikhlas): It is good for any person conducting business to be sincere in undertaking transactions [2]. A good human resource manager in business should be able to keep promises to his employees. Sincerity in human resource management gives trust and confidence to employees and creates a culture of trustfulness and cooperation [11]. One of the prophet PBUH characteristics was sincerity which all Muslims should adopt. In Al-Quran Allah SWT say that:

“O you who believe! fulfill (all) obligations’ (Qur’an, 5:1).

Appointment of leaders: According to Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri, the Messenger of Allah PBUH said: If three people are travelling together one of them should be a leader as narrated by Abu Dawood. The prophet PBUH emphasized this because a group must have a leader so as to attain its goals. This highlights that human resource management and leadership are good practices of Islam.

Justice (Adl): Being just is a quality a human resource manager should develop in order effectively and efficiently manage his subordinates [63]. In organizations where justice prevails, employees are treated and rewarded equally and fairly [11]. Managers treat their subordinates with respect and courtesy, and never look down to them, or ignore their views and suggestions. The laws and regulations, policies and procedures are clearly followed and effectively implemented [11]. Also, Allah SWT says that:

“O you who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do” (Al-Quran: 5:8).

In Al-Quran Allah SWT again says that:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted” (Al-Qur’an, 4:135).

Again, in line with justice Allah SWT clarifies to the followers of Prophet Muhammad PBUH that:

“God doth command you to render back your trust to those to whom they are due; and when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice; verily how excellent is the teaching is the teaching which He giveth you! For God is He who heareth and seeth all things.” (Al-Qur’an, 4:58).

As part of justice in Islam, Allah SWT commands that there should be respect of agreements between parties (employer and employees), which clarifies true justice. Allah SWT mentions in Qur’an that:

“Be that (the agreement) between me and you: whichever of the two terms I fulfill, let there be no, ill-will to me. Be Allah a witness to what we say” (Al-Qur’an 28:26-28).
Equality: As a principle to human resource management all people should have equal treatment if they are at the same level. The almighty Allah says:

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor does a black have any superiority over white except by piety and good action" (from the sermon on farewell Pilgrimage).

This teaches Muslims that every Muslim is a brother to another Muslim, and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. So, discrimination should not be practiced among employees. Allah SWT says that:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (Al-Qur'an, 49:13).

Accountability: Umar Ibn Al-Khattab may Allah be pleased with him stated that: “evaluate yourselves before you are evaluated and be estimated before others estimate you. It is sligher for you evaluating yourselves today (life) than tomorrow (Hereafter). Almighty Allah says that:

"O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow - and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what you do" (Al-Qur'an, 59:18).

Consultation (Shura): Any manager is advised to seek guidance when undertaking decisions on human resource. Decisions in Islam are paramount and they have effect onto other people. That is why they might require extensive consultations before they are undertaken. Allah SWT states in Al-Qur'an that:

"Those who listen to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance" (Al-Qur'an 42:38).

Again, Abu Hurairah may Allah be pleased with him said that:

"I never saw anyone more than the advice of his friends from the Messenger of Allah for his friends" (Abu Hurairah).

Consultations in human resource management bring justices and fairness in all human resource management dealings [2]. There should be no coercion or forcing people to work in an Islamic working environment but mutual agreements between the employer and employees should be used to resolve problems.

Patience (Sabar): As patience is part of faith (Iman) it should be part of good human resource management practices a manager should possess. The last Prophet (PBUH) of Allah was a highly patient person most especially with regard to making decisions. This helped him to reduce on the possibility of making mistakes and increasing chances of success in his negotiations.

Safety and security: It was narrated by Ubayd-Allaah ibn Muhsin Al-Ansari that the Prophet PBUH said that:

"From who is secure in his property, healthy in his body, he has strengthened his day, as if his world has entirety" (as narrated by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah).

Humbleness: This is the submission and acquiescence to the right away from self-pride and admiration. Humbleness to human resource management can estimate the rights employees have from their employers [5, 55]. Almighty Allah says that:

"the home of the Hereafter we assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the best outcome is for the righteous" (Al-Qur'an: 28:83).
Humility: This means that the leaders take care of themselves and others create intimacy, affection, cohesion between them (manager) and employees, and a strong influence of compassionate leadership towards the desired goal. This was one of the characteristics of the Prophet PBUH which should also be good for human resource managers. Almighty Allah says that:

“So by mercy from Allah, O Muhammad, you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude in speech and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely upon Him” (Al-Qur’an, 3:159).

Kindness and care (Ihsan): Ihsan means perfection and amelioration, forgiveness, completeness of faith, and most important of all doing good deeds. This is a continuous struggle to work towards attaining Allah’s blessings and satisfaction, and to also worship Him whole heartedly. Using this approach in human resource management employers and employees undertake their duties without or with less supervision by believing that Allah SWT is supervising them. Ihsan in a crucial aspect in terms moral and characters building of managers and also leads to a wealth generation, ownership, spending, equality and social justice among the same managers and employees. Referring to sincerity the Prophet PBUH was greatly kind and caring person to his family and the people he ruled.

On sincerity and readiness to serve, Islam imposes on all those entrusted with positions of leadership be able to do all the work. Abu Dharr Ghaffari asked the Prophet PBUH why state forbade him from leadership positions. Prophet PBUH said that “Abu Dharr, I see that you are weak, and I love you the same things that I love for myself. Therefore, never become an amir [a leader], not even over two persons, and never manage the property of an orphan.” (Sahih Muslim, Adu Dawood and An-Nisa’i in their Sunan through Abi Dhar Al-Ghaffari). According to the prophet PBUH strong people are those who know exactly what they should do. They are the people who put their ideas into words and their words into actions which is a true reflection of sincerity. Such people are strong enough to apply Allah’s orders in their daily lives, whereas the weak ones can never apply His orders, justify the truth, or face the powerful because they are satisfied with their weaknesses. http://www.nabulsi.com/en/print.php?art=11931. To the same the almighty Allah SWT says stated that:

“One of the women said.”O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy” (Al-Qur’an, 28:26).

Delegation of Authority (Tafweedah Al-sulitoh): Prophet PBUH started administrative organization through the appointment of rulers in the States, cities and tribes to explain the Al-Quran, Islamic laws (like prayer and collection of Zakat to the humanity) and to establish justice among the people. He gave a salary of thirty dirhams was allocated as the first salary to the employees. The Prophet PBUH appointed Al-Harith ibn Nawfal al-Hashemi to do certain tasks in Mekka. He chose after the battle of Honayn Abu Musa and Maa Bin Jabal to rule Yemen. The Prophet PBUH appointed the princes to rule when he left Al-Madina city, including Al-Saeb bin Osman, who commanded people when he came out to battle (Boat) in the second year of migration (http://islamstory.com).

Division of Labor: When prophet PBUH immigrated with our saydina Abubakar from Makkah to Al-Madinah he asked Ali bin Abi Talib to sleep on his bed, Asma bint Abubakar to supply them with food and Abdullah bin Abubakar to follow them and erase the traces of their footsteps.

Hierarchical distribution of leadership: The almighty Allah says that:

“He could not have taken his brother within the religion of the king except that Allah willed it. We raise in degrees whom We will, but over every possessor of knowledge is one [more] knowing” (Al-Qur’an, 12:76).

Also the Prophet PBUH believed in the existence of gradients and alternatives when leading armies (Prince - Khalifa - Vice Khalifa)
On recruitment, Islam has the best practices which human resource managers can use. In the best book of all books (Al-Qur’an) Allah SWT says that:

“Allah does command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when you judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice” (Al-Qur’an: 4:58).

The above verse (Al-Qur’an 4: 58) indicates that in Islam recruitment should done to people who merit for those particular positions. Also, all the candidates should be given an equal opportunity to compete for the jobs so as the best candidates to be selected. Selecting the best candidates during the selection process also should be based on the truth. Allah SWT says in Qur’an 2: 42 that:

“And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when ye know” (Al-Qur’an: 2:42).

The characteristics and the life of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (1454-1128AD-858-626): The characteristics and the life of Prophet Muhammad PBUH have brought changes in people’s lives and in the operations of businesses all over the world. As human resource managers one needs to understand that sunnah are derived practices from Prophet Muhammad PBUH who has inspiration characteristics to Muslims and Muslim organizations in relation to human resource management. Some of the best practices derived from the characteristics of the last prophet of Islam PBUH are; (a) fluency in Arabic language to which Ibn Isaac said: The Messenger of Allah PBUH says to his companions that: “I am Arabian, Qureshi and I was breast fed in Bani Sa’id bin Bakr” which gave him an upper hand to use the language to manage people. Also, Prophet Muhammad had Charisma and he was honest too [5, 55]. It is highlighted in Al-Quran by Allah SWT that:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character” (Qur’an, 68: 4).

Also, Prophet Muhammad had mercy and compassion which are great attributes in human resource management. This can be evidenced when Zaid bin Haritha lost his father as a child and the Prophet PBUH raised him. When he grew up and found his father he preferred to stay with Prophet PBUH. In another attribute which can be coined on as a good Islamic practice of human resource management is love and trust the Prophet (PBUH) had for his people. The last prophet PBUH of Islam loved his people and they also paid trust in him as he was the Prophet and also their leader.

Prophet PBUH ruled his people justly and fairly, and he never fronted his personal interests over his people’s considerations [48]. He considered that people are equal regardless of their sex, colour, race, wealth, prestige, profession, status and knowledge [11]. He supported the weak and stood against the strong until he would get what is right. He did not distinguish between poor and the rich in application of justice. It happened when one day rich women from a great family in Makkah (Makhzom family) stole. Her relatives knew that prophet PBUH will not apply the punishment. They went to one of his companions Osama bin Zaid to request the prophet to forgive her. When he (Osama bin Zaid) asked the prophet PBUH, he became angry and said: “do you mediate in one of Allah’s laws?” Then he stood up and gave a talk to the people that the nations before them were destroyed because they did not punish the eminent but punished the weak when they committed crimes. The Prophet PBUH told people that if her daughter Fatumah stole, he would cut her hand (www.rasoullah.net).

WESTERN AND ISLAMIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

According to classical theory, management of human resources gives more attention on how to operate the organization and ignores needs of employees. In the humanistic theory there is a provision of controlling staff behaviour while concentrating on the needs and relationship between the employees and managers. The Islamic approach on the other hand offers significant attention to the needs of the organization and concerns of the employees. The Islamic approach builds up amicable relationship with all the categories of employees in an organization. From this point of view of a productive work force in respect to responsibility and employment strategies, the classical theory advocates for organizations to be bound by the rules, employees in higher positions to control and supervise those in lower positions,
distribute work according to different specialization, to choose the workers and train them according to their needs, and the managers to follow-up the achievable targets of employees [57]. The humanistic theory regards the organization to run through informal relationships and good supervision with respect for worker’s attitudes between employees and managers. The Islamic approach to human resource management consists of both the classical and humanistic theories. The Islamic approach to human resource management advocates job description, motivation, accountability at the two levels (managers and employees), incentives, morals of the employees, deliberations (Shura), and delegation of authority (Tafweedah Al-salitoh).

With respect to the working environment, the classical theories involve a formal environment where the managers and employees are completely separated from the owner whereas in the humanistic theory the employees are highly secured within an informal environment. In this situation the employees have freedom in the organization environment with less strictness on what they do and how they do it. The Islamic theory besides including all the above features has a trust-worthy environment as for the relationship between employees and managers. In the Islamic approach employees are highly secured with justice and fair dealing [6]. It offers freedom for the employees to express their opinions and greater partnerships in the management process, supervision and guidance of the organization [38].

In respect to a sustainable workforce, human resource planning and analysis and workload management, the classical theory involves planning from top to bottom this all allows rational decision making and division of work between the employers and the employees. It also considers employees as the heart of the organization who participates in the decision making in the organization. The Islamic approach to human resource management considers all the above features of both the classical and humanistic theories with special emphasis on consultation, for example, Sulaiman Al-Farith during the battle of the trench and high level of wisdom application in decision making. In an Islamic organizational context the moral and spiritual dimension should always part of the most important aspects when handling human resource [32, 11]. This should be different from the western approaches to human resource management which considers materialistic objectives in achieving the organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, Islam is a perfect way of life in which human resource management practices components are well catered for. Islam comprises of systems of governance and also control measures to human behaviors. Human resource management is an aspect well described and catered for in in the Holy Quran and sunnah. Human resource management should be a moral, spiritual and physical aspect which should have Divine guidance because if it is not guided it is likely to be driven by earthly objectives. Good human resource management practices are those which should put the concept of rewards in the Hereafter when being implemented. Worldly benefits in human resource management are short term whereas the benefits in the Hereafter are long term objectives. Employers in organizations should base on Al-Qur’an and sunnah than restricting themselves to written theories and psychological contracts between them (employer) and the employees. The religion (Islam) of Allah SWT talks about the political and socio-economic relationships of individual which can be related to the relationships in human resource management [30]. To all Muslim and Muslim organizations with great concern in the Muslim countries there is need to implement the Islamic approach to human resources management in organizations. This is because it has integrated benefits to which the western theories are part of its package. Organizations should adopt more of the Islamic human resource management approaches than the western approaches. It should be noted that the Islamic approaches to human resource management are the best for managers to have effective and efficient systems in managing their employees for best results [27, 29, 31].

REFERENCES


