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Evaluation of the role of Islamic values in improvement of spiritual health among Iraqi Muslims

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Given that most of the adults' life is spent in the workplace, and because the quality of working life has a significant effect on family life and community health, it is crucial to study the components involved in the improvement of the workplace and people's health in the work environment. Therefore, by examining the common literature of Islamic values, spirituality and spiritual health, an attempt has been made in this research to explain organisational values and spiritual health in the management of organisations and to analyse the relationship of these variables with each other in Iraq using an Islamic approach. Similar to any other community, an Islamic community requires management proportional to its specific circumstances. In fact, an Islamic community needs a type of management that intertwines with divine and Islamic values and ethical principles and prioritises Islamic ideals. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the role of organisational values in the improvement of Islamic values of Iraqi Muslims. To this end, 2800 employees selected from 30 oil and chemical compound manufacturing organisations are examined. According to the results, the Islamic values governing the Iraqi organisations play an effective role in the improvement of employees' spiritual health.

Contribution: Divine and religious values and Islamic ethics have always been considered in Islamic communities, where formal and informal procedures are taken into consideration. An Islamic approach to management is combined with Islamic values, behaviours and ethics, and these values affect Islamic administration. Therefore, a proper understanding of Islamic values will help develop the right plan for human resource management, as well as the maintenance of organisational and community health.

Keywords: values; Islamic values; organisational values; spirituality; spiritual health.

Introduction

Managers are currently struggling to encourage productivity in their affiliated organisations by means of the resources at hand, particularly human resources, among the most influential ones. Now that employees have been respected as the valuable resources in organisations, it is better to address the factors contributing to the productivity of human resources as well as their health status (Ngwenya & Aigbavboa 2017). Organisational values are thus among the topmost issues in the field of management, underlying all organisational activities. Such values help establish and maintain numerous standards that can put people on the right track towards useful actions in organisations. Above all, organisational success redoubles once organisational values are shared among members (Askeland et al. 2020).

Considering the prevailing religious atmosphere in Iraq, identifying and then illuminating organisational success components call for much more reflection; thus, the mere application of Western models and their translations in this regard will not suffice. Of note, an Islamic community requires management styles related to their human and religious values as well as moral principles, wherein Islamic ideals are often appreciated (Ratten et al. 2017). Moreover, the typical views of social scientists and scholars in the Western world are largely assumed as being instrumentalist towards concepts and qualitative factors, but generally deficient in spiritual and sacred values, and even outside the realms of the monotheistic and divine systems. Therefore, Western models have no roots in individuals, their error rates are sometimes very high, and even their robustness, constancy, effectiveness and use in human societies with a divine and religious

nature, including Iraq, are captivating. As a result, trusting Islamic teachings and being moved by them can pave the way for settling conflicts and leading communities, organisations and institutions in the path of divine growth and perfection, which in turn can strengthen and multiply social capital in human resource management. Accordingly, it is important to shed light on the given concepts and qualitative factors with an Islamic approach.

The governing values in organisations should substantiate their health. In today's highly competitive world, the need for progress and survival in healthy organisations is unquestionable. In this line, organisational health, in the process of ever-increasing changes in socio-economic conditions, has become a big challenge. Besides, employees' spiritual health is assumed as one of the important aspects of benefiting from healthy organisations. In Iraqi organisations, this type of health is mainly linked to some religious components. Of note is that spiritual health is among the four dimensions of human health, next to the physical, mental and social dimensions, which promotes general health in individuals and organisations, and even shapes other health dimensions. This also enables individuals to find their feet and improve their mental functions. Spiritual health is thus characterised by personal stability; peace of mind; as well as a sense of closeness to oneself, God, the society and the environment; and the harmony between meaning and purpose in life. Accordingly, spiritual health has two dimensions: religious health and existential health. Here, religious health manifests human's relationship with God or an infinite power, and existential health describes human's relationship with others, the environment and the ability to establish internal communication in order to integrate the different dimensions of existence, and have access to different choices (Rahimi, Asadollahi & Afsharipoor 2016). In summary, organisational values seem to be one of the components contributing to the improvement of spiritual health in employees. Therefore, the present study aimed to evaluate the role of Islamic values in the improvement of spiritual health among Iraqi Muslims in 2022.

Theoretical foundations
Values in Islam

Various definitions have thus far been proposed for the term 'value' in different disciplines. For example, in economics, value refers to the expenses of goods or services. Some scholars have further explained 'value' as acceptability, that is, whatever is agreed that can be at the individual, group or community levels, and what is acknowledged as the norm for them is valued. Some scholars also see values as moral imperatives. In fact, values do not mean do's and don'ts, so that the desirability and acceptance go back to good or bad (Najjari 2008). Values are good and anti-values are bad, and thus individuals are praised or reprimanded if they behave in accordance with or against values. In addition, a good phenomenon can have some effects and a bad phenomenon brings bad effects, which should be investigated practically. The main point here is the criterion for good and bad and the

way in which some behaviours are deemed valuable or not (Mesbah Yazdi 1997). In sociology, values represent the beliefs of individuals or groups about what is desirable, appropriate, and good or bad. Various values also speak about the fundamental aspects of diversity in human cultures, and values generally develop from habits and norms. According to Islamic philosophers, values are a series of general, fixed and absolute principles that do not change under any circumstances, but their application is changeable. From this perspective, the general criterion of moral value is the public interest of the individual and society and the real interest of humans, that is, everything that causes the true perfection of humans, not something that is desired by people and their pleasure. Of course, if the main criterion of value in Islam is ultimate perfection, then the example is nearness to God. In the Islamic system, the goal is to gain God's pleasure. In this system, values are not completely absolute and fixed that do not change in any temporal and spatial conditions, and not always subject to temporal and spatial conditions, but its principles are constant and its instances are variable (Mesbah Yazdi 1997). According to Islamic philosophers, a value-oriented organisation is an organisation in which theism is institutionalised in the goals and plans of the organisation and in the thinking of managers and employees. Accordingly, it was formed to serve the people and grow the material and spiritual excellence of human beings. A value-based organisation is an environment that is full of spirituality, cooperation, theism, philanthropy, honesty, effort and jihad. People hold themselves accountable to God and achieve self-control with the element of piety. People pursue consultation and teamwork with their colleagues in the form of a belief team. The most basic and essential principles of Islamic management are that its currencies and anti-values are based on and rely on the life-giving school of Islam. Basically, management has always been based on a school, even in different systems of the world. The difference between Islamic management and other forms of management in capitalist or communist societies or any other type of society in which the management of people's affairs is in the hands of some heads of government is not that other management systems have a school or in fact a specific ideology or method of management. They are not their own social system, but the distinguishing feature of the current management system and the reliance and basis of this system based on the changing principles of revelation (right-centeredness, heresy, justice, spirituality, honesty, God-centeredness and revelation). It is by God Almighty and the Prophet (PBUH) and the atheism of the Western schools of management is based on fascism, humanism, liberalism and utilitarianism.

Overall, values are things that are of utmost importance to group members and are considered as their common aspirations. In reality, values exist in a dual form. Firstly, they manifest themselves as ideals that demand continuity and justify more respect. Secondly, they are revealed in objects or behaviours that express themselves objectively or precisely in a symbolic manner (Rafi-Pour 1998).

Value-based management in Islam

As underlined by Islamic philosophers, values stand for a series of general, fixed and absolute principles that do not vary under any circumstances, but their applications are unpredictable. From this perspective, the general criterion for moral values is the public interest as well as the real interest in humans, that is, value is everything that leads to true human perfection, not something that is desired by individuals and their likings. In this sense, nearness to God can be a manifestation if the main criterion for values in Islam is ultimate perfection. In the Islamic system, the goal is to attain the pleasure of God. Within this system, values are not entirely absolute and fixed, so that they do not change in any spatiotemporal conditions, nor are they always bound by such conditions, but their principles remain constant and the manifestations are flexible (Mesbah Yazdi 1997). According to Islamic philosophers, value-based organisations are those organisations in which theism has been institutionalised in their goals and plans and even in the mindset of managers and employees, to serve the public and help in the material and spiritual excellence of human beings. Value-based organisations are thus environments alive with spirituality, cooperation, theism, humanity, honesty, energy and jihad. People also hold themselves accountable to God and reach self-control via religiousness, and even consult and practise teamwork with their colleagues with core beliefs for team effectiveness. With regard to such explanations, the goals of value-based organisations are to attain perfection, promote dignity and meet material and spiritual needs of human beings. One of the arguments raised in the domain of management today is that management is a value-based activity, that is, management cannot be thought without values (Shirvani 2010). Obviously, no school devalues the work of managers because management principally means decision-making and selection. It is also difficult to prefer one over the other without valuation, and therefore management all together is based on values (Najjari 2008).

Spirituality

The term 'spirituality' is often utilised in a wide variety of situations and it has been defined as an energetic, motivating and inspiring force in life (Abdul Mutalib, Rafiki & Wan Razali 2022). Spirituality is frequently applied with reference to individuals' feelings, attitudes and behaviours, and is synonymous with 'honesty', 'optimism', 'tolerance', 'thoughtfulness' and 'chastity'. Spirituality is thus about more attention to oneself and others in order to achieve happiness and satisfaction. In the organisational milieu, happiness is defined as productivity and fulfilling individual and organisational goals, which has been recently examined by researchers. Spirituality in organisations has been further regarded as a necessity during interactions with employees, customers and the society. Spirituality in the workplace is accordingly a framework of governing organisational values and cultures that provide a sense of excellence and perfection for employees (Wahab 2022). Spirituality is closely related to God as well as the whole world and living beings, so it is

not the same as religion. In this sense, spirituality is a reflection of the connection with a higher power rather than the official religion with its own certain principles and teachings. Spirituality is accordingly assumed as a source for giving meaning to life and establishing communication with others (Zainuddin 2017).

Therefore, it is important to take account of spirituality from the Islamic perspective. In Islam spirituality denotes having transcendent values, such as faith in God, respect for others, piousness, sacrament, optimism and honesty, which are often universal. Spirituality in the Iraqi communities is based on religion, in the sense that Islamic teachings shape spirituality. The main source of Islamic spirituality is the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the Imams as his successors. Islamic languages accordingly make use of various terms for the Western world spirituality, which brings in meanings like esoterism, truth, a world of meaning, position, divine grace, moral perfection, beauty, soul and remembrance of God. According to Muslims, spiritual life is based on the fear of God and his love, as well as surrendering to God's will and seeking to know him, as the ultimate goal of creation. Islamic spirituality is thus related to the Islamic norms that are made and paid for by the pillars of religion. The heart of Islamic spirituality is linked to monotheism and the nature of Islam is the key to understanding its various aspects (Naghavi, Asadi & Mirghfouri 2015). In the Holy Qur'an, spirituality is so intertwined with the human soul and existence that its negligence equals with forgetting God, and the point here is that human may disregard and lose one's right through forgetfulness. The goal of Islamic and God-centred spirituality is not to attain extraordinary powers, but desirable mental status and transcendental truths beyond all manifestations of existence, to give a special meaning to all existence. The belief in the existence of truth, which has absolute goodness and infinite perfection, as the endless source of mercy, beauty and needlessness, accordingly, gives glory and meaning to existence and life. How Islam views spirituality is different from Western interpretations. Islamic spirituality is rooted in religion, which is not necessarily a Western perspective, because Islam believes that the soul always strives to be closer to God and tries for divine pleasure. In addition, Islamic spirituality differs in the way it is expressed, facilitated and maintained. In this deceptive world, it is thus impossible to show consistent behaviours. Some westerners also try to provide a high level of spirituality by engaging in yoga or meditation to achieve happiness and satisfaction, increase concentration, and maintain health and well-being, but Islam supposes that one must rely on the teachings founded in a religion in order to maintain a high level of spirituality. As an act of worship, God rewards the deeds completed for the benefit of others in the hereafter (Adawiyah & Pramuka 2017).

Spiritual health

Today, the spiritual dimension of health has been considered in many definitions of health, and there are even some

suggestions for the inclusion of spiritual health in health dimensions in the definition of health provided by the World Health Organization. There is no distinction between spiritual health and spirituality in many sources by itself. Although overlaps occur between the definition of spiritual health and spirituality, equating them with each other or using them in different texts, at least without making distinction between them, has been so far a challenging phenomenon (Taheri & Fath Ali Beigi 2010).

Spiritual health in Islam refers to having a sense of acceptance, positive feelings, morality, as well as interactions with a ruling superior holy power, others and oneself, which is usually achieved through a dynamic and harmonious process of cognition, emotion, action and personal consequences. Among these, respecting the concept of spiritual health, according to Islamic teachings, is of particular importance. In the following, some examples of the spiritual health components are presented according to Islamic teachings, derived from the Holy Qur'an:

Trust and good faith in God

Relate to them O Prophet the story of Noah when he said to his people, O my People! If my presence and my reminders to you of Allah's signs are unbearable to you, then know that I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods, and you do not have to be secretive about your plot, then carry it out against me without delay! (Surah Yunus, Ayat 71)

Attention to divine satisfaction

Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there forever, and splendid homes in the Gardens of Eternity, and – above all – the pleasure of Allah. That is truly the ultimate triumph. (Surah At-Tawbah, Ayat 72)

Pure motivation and intention

Even though they were only commanded to worship Allah alone with sincere devotion to Him in all uprightness, establish prayer, and pay alms-tax. That is the upright way. (Surah Al-Bayyina, Ayat 5)

Humility

The true servants of Allah the Most Compassionate are those who walk on the earth humbly, and when the foolish address them improperly, they only respond with peace. (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 63)

Patience

O believers! Patiently endure, persevere, stand on guard and be mindful of Allah, so you may be successful. (Surah Al Imran, Ayat 200)

Piety

O humanity! Worship your Lord, Who created you and those before you, so that you may become mindful of Him. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 21)

Justice

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. (Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 90)

Prayer

Establish prayer, and pay alms-tax. Whatever good you send forth for yourselves, you will certainly find its reward with Allah. Surely Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 110)

Remembrance of God

O believers! Always remember Allah often. (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 41)

Repentance

As for those who repent, believe, and do good deeds, they are the ones whose evil deeds Allah will change into good deeds. For Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 70)

Thinking and reasoning

It is not for any soul to believe except by Allah's leave, and He will bring His wrath upon those who are unmindful. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 100)

Self-knowledge

O believers! You are accountable only for yourselves. It will not harm you if someone chooses to deviate – as long as you are rightly guided. To Allah you will all return, and He will inform you of what you used to do. (Surah Al-Ma'idah, Ayat 105)

Belief in the afterlife

Never think of those martyred in the cause of Allah as dead. In fact, they are alive with their Lord, well provided for. (Surah Al Imran, Ayat 169)

Denying jealousy

And those who come after them will pray, Our Lord! Forgive us and our fellow believers who preceded us in faith, and do not allow bitterness into our hearts towards those who believe. Our Lord! Indeed, You are Ever Gracious, Most Merciful. (Surah Al-Hashr, Ayat 10)

Denying pride and arrogance

Allah asked, what prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you? He replied, I am better than he is: You created me from fire and him from clay. (Surah Al-A'raf, Ayat 12)

Denying indecency spread

Indeed, those who love to see indecency spread among the believers will suffer a painful punishment in this life and the Hereafter. Allah knows and you do not know. (Surah An-Nur, Ayat 19)

Research methods

This research employed a descriptive method and utilised field studies for data collection. The study sample included 2800 Muslims from 30 Iraqi oil and chemical compound companies, who were selected by simple random sampling in 2022. To collect the data, the Islamic Values Scale developed by Safdel (2014) was used, which included 18 items and eight components of faith in God, obedience to divine command, God-fearing, justice, belief in the hereafter and accountability. In addition, the Spiritual Well-being Survey Questionnaire designed by Sharifi et al. (2008) was utilised to measure spiritual health. This questionnaire contained 15 items to measure the four components of spiritual beliefs, feelings of spirituality, tendency to spiritual self-fulfilment and spiritual behaviours. The validity of the given questionnaires was also confirmed through construct validity using the Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) software and their reliability was evaluated by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient using the SPSS Statistics software. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Islamic Values Scale was 0.85, and this value was 0.82 for the Spiritual Well-being Survey Questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire items were based on a five-point Likert-type scale (from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated for these questionnaires was 0.78, wherein the values above 0.7 indicated adequate reliability. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, the minimum sample size for this study was estimated to be 338 people. A total of 370 questionnaires were distributed among the statistical population, of which 358 questionnaires were returned and found appropriate. Data analysis was consequently done by the structural equation modelling in LISREL.

Research findings

The study results regarding the demographic characteristics of the statistical population demonstrated that 84% of the employees were men and 16% were women. In terms of the level of education, 59% of the employees had a bachelor's degree, 28% had a master's degree and 13% had a PhD degree. Considering the age range, 32% of the employees were under 35 years of age, 45% were between 35 and 45 years, and 23% were over 45 years of age. The mean and standard deviation of the Islamic values in this study were 3.9875 and 0.4534, respectively, and such values for the spiritual health were 4.01245 and 0.3854, respectively, which were calculated using the SPSS statistics software. In addition, the relationship between the research variables was investigated by the structural equation modelling in the form of path coefficients and t-values in LISREL (see Figure 1). The model fit indices also revealed the adequate validity of the questionnaires implemented here as the Chi-square or degree of freedom (df) = 2.3475, p = 0.000, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.079 were obtained.
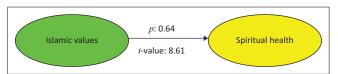

FIGURE 1: The relationship between Islamic values and spiritual health.

TABLE 1: The results of testing the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis	p	t-statistic	Results
Islamic values play a significant positive role in the spiritual health of Iraqi Muslims in 2022	0.64	8.61	Significant and positive

Table 1 displays the relationships between the research variables based on the p-value and t-statistic in LISREL. Given that the p-value was positive and the t-statistic was higher than 1.96, the Islamic values could play a significant positive role in the spiritual health of Iraqi Muslims in 2022.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the role of Islamic values in the spiritual health of Iraqi Muslims who were working in oil and chemical compound companies. Over the last two decades, industrialised countries have reflected on a strategic determinant, namely, organisational values, in the success or failure of organisations and the ones that have not been given much attention in the past. Successful organisations operating across the world, particularly those with high levels of safety, accordingly maintain that such successes have been realised by strengthening organisational values as well as the organisational culture (Hill 2002). In addition, accomplishment in implementing new management practices and techniques demands support by organisational values. In view of that reaching the goals in organisations is influenced by the coordination between organisational values and the goals and strategies developed. Given that the dominant culture in Iraqi organisations is prompted by the religious and Islamic atmosphere in the society, values endowed with Islamic themes should be respected in organisations to guarantee their health. Unlike Western schools, spiritual health in Islamic organisations is thus grounded on religious beliefs and teachings.

Today, organisations are in need of quite a few factors to grow and succeed, including organisational health as an influential factor. Here, organisational health not only involves the ability of an organisation to perform tasks in an effective manner, but also improves the capacity to prosper. The concept of organisational health also creates a big picture of a healthy environment inside the organisation. In this sense, employees working in healthy organisations are committed and conscientious, have high spirits and good performance, and use open and useful communication channels. A healthy organisation is thus a place where individuals like to get to work and feel proud to be there. Such organisations are born as dynamic phenomena, and grow by providing the necessary facilities, offering healthy and valuable products and services, meeting environmental

needs, and facilitating development and prosperity in the society. However, augmenting their health is not a one-dimensional and one-step action, but demands continuous efforts, influenced by the key components that help create organisational health. Given the conditions prevailing in Iraqi organisations, dominated by religious components, it is worthwhile to survey organisational variables from a religious perspective. Therefore, spiritual health was underlined in this study. One of the founders of organisational spirituality, Charles Hill, also puts emphasis on God's presence in the workplace. With spirituality, managers and employees can not only improve productivity, but also achieve peace of mind and inner satisfaction. On the other hand, no meaning for work can be deeper than that for the sake of the good pleasure of God.

Conclusion

If organisations plan to progress, they must go back in time and rediscover their values. This is based on ethical foundations, and is even controlled by personal spirit. The belief that the promotion of moral principles and the strengthening of spiritual culture lead to strategic benefits for organisations is also deepening all at once. Values are a set of perspectives to differentiate between good and bad, which can shape the selection and achievement of goals, strategies and even the valuation of their positive and negative outcomes. On the other hand, values can be considered as moral norms, ideals and duties that are effective in social groups, and are formed by the strengths and weaknesses of the group and its members, that is, what they do or abandon creates internal unity in the group. Organisational values are thus of considerable importance in knowledge management. Following new theories and research in the field of management, organisational values have become increasingly notable as one of the central issues of management. More recently, demographers, sociologists and psychologists have given much attention to this important issue in management, have further identified many theories and studies in terms of identifying its role and significance, and have applied them in dealing with management problems. In addition, values lead to the development of one of the basic layers of organisational culture. As highlighted in the study results, the significant positive relationship between the Islamic values and the spiritual health was confirmed ($p = 0.64$, t-statistic = 8.61). Considering that organisational values play a leading role in human perfection, promote dignity, and meet their material and spiritual needs, they guarantee organisational health and spiritual health in organisations. The results also indicated that the prevailing values in organisations, which are founded on Islamic teachings, tie organisational spirituality with religious components, and unlike Western schools, spirituality is not distinct from religion. Therefore, Islamic organisational values can significantly contribute to the strengthening of spiritual health with an Islamic approach.

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