

ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES IN PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT: ASSESSMENT OF ITS  
APPLICABILITY AND STRATEGIES FOR THE PUBLIC  
WORKS DEPARTMENT OF MALAYSIA

BY

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## ABSTRACT

Government construction projects that are implemented by the Public Works Department of Malaysia henceforth referred as Jabatan Kerja Raya Malaysia (JKR) have been continuously tarnished with underperformance and failures to meet clients' expectations as evidenced by high percentages of delayed projects, completion with extension of time, extra costs and unsatisfactory quality of works. Effective leadership by the project manager is fundamental and one of the crucial factors to achieve successful project delivery. Previous empirical studies have indicated the positive impacts of Islamic leadership on organisational performance and produced positive outcomes in various sectors such as business, banking, etc. However, studies on the construction-related and project management fields are found to be rare. This triggered the motion that imbuing Islamic leadership principles (ILP) is an alternative to improve project delivery and to improve the rate of project success in JKR. This research is specifically intended to obtain empirical support on the assessment of the applicability of Islamic leadership principles in project management thereby in enhancing project success. Primary data were collected in four (4) stages in a sequence consisting of two (2) rounds of Modified Delphi survey, followed by a validation interview and finally an acceptance survey. The findings indicate that ILP are applicable to JKR project management hence guaranteeing project success. High level of consensus was achieved in all the constructs attributing to the ILP and its strategies. This research is therefore contributing to the academic and industry sectors in the following ways. Firstly, it is the first research of its kind in terms of empirical research on Islamic leadership in project management. Secondly, it provides empirical data that ILP are applicable and has positive impacts on enhancing the chances of project success. Thirdly, as JKR is the lead technical agency for project implementation, this study provides the basis for other related agencies to embrace ILP as an alternative to better manage their projects. Finally, this research is a breakthrough that opens up the door for wider similar researches in the future.

## خلاصة البحث

مشاريع التشييد الحكومية التي تنفذها إدارة الأشغال العامة في ماليزيا والتي يشار إليها من قبل باسم Jabatan (Kerja Raya Malaysia) (JKR) لطخت باستمرار بسبب ضعف الأداء وفشلها في تلبية توقعات العملاء كما يتضح من النسب المئوية العالية من المشاريع المتأخرة ، مع الانتهاء من تمديد الوقت ، تكاليف إضافية وجودة غير مرضية للأعمال. القيادة الفعالة من قبل مدير المشروع أمر أساسي وواحد من العوامل الحاسمة لتحقيق إنجاز المشروع بنجاح. لقد أوضحت الدراسات التجريبية السابقة التأثيرات الإيجابية للقيادة الإسلامية على الأداء التنظيمي وأسفرت عن نتائج إيجابية في قطاعات مختلفة مثل الأعمال التجارية والمصرفية ، إلخ. ومع ذلك ، فإن الدراسات المتعلقة بمجالات البناء وإدارة المشاريع نادرة. أدى هذا إلى اقتراح أن تطبيق مبادئ القيادة الإسلامية (ILP) هو بديل لتحسين تنفيذ المشروع وتحسين معدل نجاح المشروع في JKR. يهدف هذا البحث على وجه التحديد إلى الحصول على دعم تجريبي لتقييم مدى قابلية تطبيق مبادئ القيادة الإسلامية في إدارة المشروع ، وبالتالي تعزيز نجاح المشروع. تم جمع البيانات الأولية في أربع (4) مراحل متتالية تتكون من جولتين (2) من مسح دلفي المعدل ، تليها مقابلة التحقق من الصحة وأخيراً مسح القبول. تشير النتائج إلى أن ILP تنطبق على إدارة مشروع JKR وبالتالي ضمان نجاح المشروع. تم تحقيق مستوى عالٍ من الإجماع في جميع البنى المنسوبة إلى ILP واستراتيجياتها. يساهم هذا البحث بالتالي في القطاعات الأكاديمية والصناعية بالطرق التالية. أولاً ، إنه أول بحث من نوعه من حيث البحث التجريبي حول الريادة الإسلامية في إدارة المشاريع. ثانياً ، توفر بيانات تجريبية تفيد بأن ILP قابل للتطبيق وله تأثيرات إيجابية على تعزيز فرص نجاح المشروع. ثالثاً ، نظراً لأن JKR هي الوكالة الفنية الرائدة لتنفيذ المشروع ، فإن هذه الدراسة توفر الأساس للوكالات الأخرى ذات الصلة التي تشارك في مشاريع لتبني ILP كبديل لإدارة مشاريعها بشكل أفضل. أخيراً ، يعد هذا البحث بمثابة اختراق يفتح المجال أمام المزيد من الأبحاث المشابهة في المستقبل.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

(Muhamad Rosdi Bin Senam)

Signature .....

Date .....

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Praise to Allah, the Almighty and the most Merciful

A PhD journey in my perspective as I have been experienced means and contributes in the following ways:

A meaningful rediscovery the followings; of myself and finding the true strengths I have, of inner support lies in the hearts of my family of life, its purpose and the right worldview that brings me closer to the Creator, Allah, discovery of appreciation that makes me sees how priceless is every breath and minute of this life, of managing people, emotions and relationships in the context of Supervisor-supervisee, of divine guidance and lights of the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet S.A.W. that initially I explored to support my research eventually become real exploration for references for life, that this research is not only about building and developing academic and intellectual capacity, but more than that it covers in finding the emotional and spiritual strenghts with the presence of Allah to maintain preserverance all the way towards the end;

Above all, somewhere along the way, I found the true understanding and meaning, the fact that I am His Khalifah that have missions to accomplish in this wonderful life He gives with this PhD is part of my little contribution of this role to Ummah.

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'Only to Allah we all put our hope and surrender'

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## **DIAGRAM**

1.1 Overview of the Research Methodology

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIPM	Australian Institute of Project Management
CIDB	Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia
COC	Conditions of Contract
CMG	Construction Manager
CL	Conventional Leadership
HODT	Head of Design Team
HOPT	Head of Project Team
IKIM	Institute Kefahaman Islam Malaysia ( <i>Institute of Understanding Islam Malaysia</i> )
IIUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
ILP	Islamic Leadership Principles
JAKIM	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia ( <i>Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia</i> )
JKR	Jabatan Kerja Raya ( <i>Public Works Department of Malaysia</i> )
JPM	Jabatan Perdana Menteri Malaysia ( <i>Prime Minister's Department of Malaysia</i> )
JD	Jurutera Daerah (District Engineer)
LPM	Leadership in Project Management
LAD	Liquidated and Ascertained Damages
MDSR1	Modified Delphi Survey Round 1
MDSR2	Modified Delphi Survey Round 2
PMBok	Project Management Body of Knowledge
PMI	Project Management Institute
PM	Project Management
SO	Superintending Officer

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, the Government of Malaysia had geared its administration to instil the principles of Islam. It started with the Islamic banking, finance and insurance (*takaful*) system as well as other Islamic mechanisms in the commercial market place (Preece and Khairuddin, 2009; Siti Nora Hayati, 2010). In terms of the Islamic education and knowledge system, two (2) Islamic-based institutions were set up. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was established in 1982 and the Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (IKIM) ten (10) years later (1992). The latter institutions had helped spearhead concerted efforts in promoting the true understanding and practice of Islam in Malaysia.

The latest initiative is the launching of the Malaysian *Maqasid Shari'ah* Index (MSI) by the Prime Minister on the 10th February 2015 (JAKIM, 2015). This index covers eight (8) main sectors namely law, politic, economy, education, health, culture, infrastructure and environment and social. The administration of government agencies are assessed on their *Maqasid Shari'ah* compliance and given scores. MSI is a kind of Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the respective government machinery.

Meanwhile, in the construction sector assessments on Islamic compliance are also important to be monitored. This industry falls under the economy sector. The increasing application of project management to drive organisational and business endeavours, has been identified as one of the key drivers in meeting project success in the present challenging project environment (Pinto, 2010; Kloppenborg et. al, 2003; Toor, 2008; Morris et. al, 2006; Tyssen et. al, 2014). Indeed, construction project successes are determined by proper usage and application of project management knowledge, skills, tools and techniques (Wan

Maimun and Ahmad, Ramly, 2006; Pollark, 2007; Thomas and Mengel, 2008; Yang et. al, 2011; Zarita et. al, 2012). However, Islamic assessment is yet to be established.

In Malaysia, as far as public infrastructure projects are concerned, the main government body that is in-charge used to be called the Public Works Department (PWD) but now more popularly known as JKR (Jabatan Kerja Raya). Henceforth this thesis uses this acronym -JKR. In fact, JKR had existed long before the country's independence in 1957. The British had started to build roads and government buildings and PWD was the main agency that built them. Hence, JKR is renowned as one of the few oldest agencies in Malaysia and it is the premier and the largest technical implementation agency for government physical and infrastructure projects (Judin, 2010; Hazimul-Din, 2010; Hannerita, 2012; JKR Strategic Framework, 2012-2015).

JKR seems to be lagging behind in terms of adoption of Islamic principles and values system especially in its project management guidance and practice. On the contrary, JKR should be the role model for other agencies to emulate in embarking the application of Islamic approaches to leadership in managing government projects. This is the intended focus of this research.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH**

Project management is a combination of both the science and the art as the combination of the term 'project' reflects technical knowledge, skills and competencies while 'management' refers to human-related components such interpersonal and leadership capabilities (Jamilus, 2008; 2015; Tan, 2005; Unit Penyelarasan Pelaksanaan (ICU), Jabatan Perdana Menteri (JPM), Pengurusan Projek Awam, 2015).

Project management can be considered as a business and an organisation, and the need to have effective project leadership is salient to ensure successful project outcomes (Verma, 1995; Camilleri, 2011; Kliem, 2003; PMBoK, 2008; 2013; Zarita et. al, 2012). Project management comprises both the 'hard' part and the 'soft' part. The former refers to the well-defined technical and mechanistic procedures and guidelines whereas the latter concerns about project leadership and interpersonal skills.

Meanwhile, Leadership is identified as central and core to successful business outcomes and constitute as crucial in any group or collective tasks. Leadership is recognised as one of the core factors to drive project success in JKR project management (Daud Harun, 2015; JKR Strategic Framework, 2012-2015; JKR Competency Model and Dictionary, 2010; Dzariff , 2012; Hurolaine,2013; Rozian, 2014; Rumes Kumar, Sharma Management International, 2014; Norfaizal, 2014; Roslan Taha, 2016). Leadership simply means the process of influencing others to get things done towards achieving the desired goals or objectives. It involves a leader and a group of followers in a specific set up that can be an organisation or context (Lussier and Achua, 2007; Yukl, 2013; Northouse, 2007; DuBrin, 2010).

JKR views leadership as an essential component for organisational survival and performance. JKR also perceives that leadership is a strong force behind every project success because it involves project vision and direction, inspires people to work to their best ability, establishes effective communication in a project team, and resolves conflicts. These are currently featured in the department's published document i.e. JKR Competency Standards for Project Management, 2010 which certainly accentuates on traits of conventional leadership.

In contrast, Islamic leadership principles differ from the conventional leadership as it contains a wider dimension of leadership traits to include God-consciousness, divine trust and

responsibility that leaders should be dutifully accountable for. Indeed, staunchly all their actions should be guided by the divine revealed texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet S.A.W. (Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Ismail Noor, 2002; Adalat, 2007; Ali, 2007; Khaliq and Ogunsola, 2011; Khaliq and Fontaine, 2011b; Beekun, 2012a; Beekun, 2012b; Fontaine et. al, 2017).

From the historical point of view, Islamic leadership has a great history of success from the era of the Prophet S.A.W. and the caliphs after him who came many hundred years later after the demise of the Prophet S.A.W. Two great examples of Islamic leadership was Sultan Salahuddin Al-Ayubi who led the reconquest of Jerusalem in Palestine from the Crusaders in 1187 and Sultan Muhammad al Fateh who led the reconquest of Constantinople (now Istanbul) from the Byzantine in 1453. They had conquered almost one third of the world territory during the time of the great Islamic empire that spread as far as Spain in the West (Andalusia) and China in the East, and North Africa. Their leadership was a paragon of excellence that adhered to the leadership principles in the religious text, to the spirits and teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Syed Omar et. al, 2007; Ismail, 2000; 2002; Naji et. al, 2014; Aidil Adha, 2015; Mohd. Sani Badron and Nor Hartini, 2016).

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Despite JKR's significant role as the leading technical agency for the implementation of government projects in Malaysia, as well as the efforts and a series of increasing the project management competency and various strategies, it still continues to face issues of poor project delivery i.e. failure to complete projects within the stipulated time, within the cost limits and achieving the desired quality (Hizamuldin, 2010; Khair, 2010; Dzarif, 2012; Hannerita, 2012). Based on official records, in 2009 JKR did not complete more than 80% of its projects and in 2010, 82.9% of its projects was also not completed within the original

contract period. This was admitted and highlighted by the then JKR Malaysia Director General, Dato' Ir. Annies Md. Ariff, that as at April 2014, 30% of JKR projects were late more than two (2) months and he considered the situation as high and alarming.

Data that were recorded in 2015 also continued to show the same pattern of poor performance in project delivery. Based on the JKR project monitoring system that is known as JKR SKALA (dated 25th June 2015) from the 342 projects in RMK10, 261 projects or 76% were delayed, whereby 36% of which were delayed for more than 2 months.

JKR was entrusted to manage and deliver 5,095 projects in RMK9 (from 2011 to 2015) and according to the statements from the then Minister of Public Works, Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof (May 2015) 770 projects or about 15% were considered as failed projects because they were not completed on time. As a result, some projects were imposed penalties for late completion (Utusan Malaysia, 27th May 2015).

Moreover, it was also reported that technical audits on JKR projects that were carried out between 2009 to 2014, reported 65% projects were late in terms of completion time and as overall one (1) in every three (3) JKR projects were 'sick' projects which means that the projects were late from their original schedule for more than two (2) months (Ketua Pengarah Kerja Raya, 24th May 2016; Roslan Ghani, 22 November 2016).

Literature in project management has widely discussed and revealed the many success and failure factors in project delivery. One of those factors is leadership because leadership can harness the heterogeneous composition of people in the project team, influence them in the most effective manner, bring out the best talent from them, continuously build and maintain team cohesiveness towards achieving the same project goals (Crawford, 2000; Prabakhar, 2005; Pinto, 1986; Thamhain, 1999; Thamhain, 2004a; Mullaly, 2004; Muller, 2005, Keegan and Den Hartog, 2004; Kendra and Taplin, 2004, Barber and Warn, 2005; Wan Maimun and Ahmad, Ramly, 2006; Kerzner, 2006; Tan, 2006; Dolphi and Andrews, 2007;