

A Quran-Based Framework for Human Capital Motivation: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Introduction

As a driving force of human behavior, motivation plays a pivotal role in organizational success. Research shows that intrinsically motivated employees contribute to greater productivity, innovation, and organizational loyalty. The central challenge for managers, however, is to move beyond material rewards and create meaningful incentives that accord with human dignity. Traditional approaches to motivation are often costly and of limited effectiveness, while overlooking employees' psychological and spiritual needs. Sustainable motivation therefore requires a combination of material and nonmaterial incentives. By designing motivational strategies grounded in Iranian-Islamic culture, leaders can strengthen employees' sense of belonging and commitment. Effective motivation also requires a holistic view of the dimensions of human existence. Drawing on religious teachings and psychological theories, managers should create an environment that addresses employees' material and spiritual needs alike. Such an approach not only improves organizational performance but also lays the foundation for sustainable human-resource development within an Islamic value framework.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design (qualitative-quantitative). In the qualitative phase, all verses of the Holy Quran were examined through cyclical process analysis, and their motivational themes were extracted. The analytical stages comprised data collection through repeated reading of the verses, regenerative reduction through thematic categorization, and conceptual organization. The findings were validated through expert review and researcher self-review; credibility and dependability were also assessed. The quantitative phase used a descriptive survey. The statistical population consisted of 9,256 managers and 80,143 employees in Fars Province. Based on Morgan's table, 324 managers and 384 employees were selected by simple random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed 44-item Likert-scale questionnaire. Item analysis and Cronbach's alpha



confirmed the instrument's validity and reliability. First- and second-order confirmatory factor analyses were conducted in SPSS and AMOS. The results confirmed the significance of the factor structure and the validity of the Quran-based motivational framework.

Results and Findings

In accordance with the mixed-methods design, the qualitative findings were first classified into three dimensions—orientations, principles, and methods—as a basis for understanding human capital motivation. A framework was then developed from these dimensions, and its validity was confirmed from multiple perspectives in the quantitative phase.

Motivational orientations are the fundamental beliefs, goals, and interests associated with the motivation of Muslim human capital. They provide the foundation, direction, and guidance for motivational action aimed at attaining desirable states and the ultimate ends of human perfection in accordance with Islamic teachings. Because these orientations arise from an Islamic worldview and anthropology, they differ from Western motivational orientations. This dimension comprised divine obligation, proximity to God, divine mercy, divine justice, divine will, divine guidance, divine assistance, divine rites, obedience to God, divine vicegerency, monotheism, faith, resurrection, and truthfulness.

Motivational principles serve as operational guidelines for designing and applying motivational structures and direct them in practice. In other words, they specify and guide, from various perspectives, the quality and manner of motivational action derived from the identified orientations and methods. This dimension comprised the pursuit of perfection, dignity, free choice, good character, striving, wisdom, security, supplication, trustworthiness, benevolence, forgiveness, repentance, steadfastness, covenant, good deeds, patience, and self-accounting.

The term method refers to the manner in which an action is carried out; in this study, methods concern how motivation is generated. This dimension comprised explanation, illumination, warning, praise, glad tidings, exemplification through the presentation of role models, reliance on God, affirmation of divine unity, granting choice, punishment, encouragement, honoring, enjoining good and forbidding evil, providing opportunities, and service. First- and second-order confirmatory factor analyses were subsequently used to test the factor structure of the developed human capital motivation framework. The analyses showed that the framework possessed adequate validity and reliability.

Conclusion

This study developed a comprehensive motivational framework based on the teachings of the Holy Quran, consisting of three dimensions: orientations, principles, and methods. Evaluation within Iran's organizational ecosystem confirmed the framework's validity. The findings contribute to the production of Islamic humanities knowledge in the field of motivation and can serve as a practical guide for explaining and strengthening human capital motivation on the basis of Quranic teachings. The framework may also assist managers who seek to manage and



develop human capital and improve work motivation through an Islamic approach suited to the Iranian-Islamic cultural ecosystem. In addition, it can guide future research in this area and support the development of indigenous theories of motivation.

Keywords:

Holy Quran; motivation; human capital; organization.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with research ethics. The authors observed the ethical principles in conducting and publishing this scholarly research, and this is confirmed by all of them.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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