

## Chapter 9

# Distinguishing Leadership Between Islam and Conventional Perspectives

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to compare between conventional and Islamic leadership which have different styles, approaches, and views. It consists of viewpoints rather than empirical findings which are considered crucial in understanding comprehensively the whole concept of both leadership views. This would neglect some negative or misperceptions especially for the Islamic leadership approach. By discussing each of the elements and its content on both leadership views, further studies and researches could be conducted in order to examine or test those elements empirically. This could be beneficial for the practitioners or public figures who are the leaders in their workplaces for adopting or adapting some key principles from both leadership views. Some experiences of leaders in Muslim or non-Muslim countries will be included in this chapter, so that more arguments and examples could be implemented. In Islamic leadership, the Islamic teachings based on Al-Qur'an and Hadith are fundamental principles and the main sources for every discussion.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Studies on leadership have been progressed and discussed in multi disciplines and across sectors. Some issues emerged such as ethics, morality, soul and emotional intelligence which have been incorporated in leadership studies (Coleman 2002). Leadership itself can also be perceived differently if viewed from different perspectives especially from regional, religious, cultural, political and economic development sides. Some experiences can be seen on the conventional view or western view from countries such North America, Europe and the Australian-New Zealand Islands, while for the Islam view is like in Middle-East or Gulf countries. This comparison is crucial to provide additional rationalization required to understand the different decisions made and opinion expressed by the various leaders especially in this unpredicted business and social environment.

Leadership is one of the crucial ingredient and enabler to assist management in ensuring continuous improvement of an organization (Mawdudi, 1984). The understanding of its concept is thus very important because it helps to examine and analyse the related theories (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The common view of leadership theories that have been discussed in the literature are differently introduced by the West such as Trait Theories, Behavioural Theories, Contingency Theories, The Path Goal Theory, Neocharismatic Theories (Gibson, 2001). These theories stress values that are peculiar, hedonistic and reasonable (Moten, 2011). Meanwhile, the great value to any individual or organization must be based on the positive values and manners. In Islam, the leadership concept viewed as an integrated doctrine which can be applied in every single activity in life. It is been thought that every individual is a leader for whoever under his/her responsibilities. Islam is very concern on leaders with heart (Qalb), means that every actions by the leaders must be based on his/her heart, which then the impact of those decision would be positive and constructive.

#### **1.1 The Meaning of Leadership and its Theories**

Leadership is an old phenomenon and being studies for long time which have various sources, however there is no agreement on one universal definition for the concept of leadership. But this leadership concept is needed across organizations and sectors until today. Dubrin (2007) defines leadership as “the ability to inspire confidence and support among people who are needed to achieve organizational goals”, while Yukl (2006) defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.” These are among the definitions of leadership which commonly understood by many individuals.

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Many leadership theories are developed during last 100 years. These theories are attempted to explain the successful leadership qualities individually, working in teams and organizations, and in society. The popular theories which were developed during last century such as the Trait Theory of Leadership, Situational Theory of Leadership, Spiritual Leadership. Table 1 below described certain characteristics of leaders, their attitude and behaviour towards making decisions.

*Table 1. Review of general theories of leadership and their focus*

<b>Leadership Theory</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Trait Theory	(i) emergent traits that dominantly depend on the heredity factors such as height, intelligence, attractiveness, and self-confidence; and (ii) effectiveness traits that derived from perceived experience or learning, includes a charisma of the leader	Ekvall & Arvonen (1991)
Contingency Theories	There is no single right of leadership due to the internal and external dimensions of the environment that require the leader to adapt to a particular situation	Greenleaf (1977)
Style and Behavior Theory	There are three categories of the leaders such as democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire.	Yukl (1989)
Process Leadership Theory	Process theory focus on servant, principal centered and charismatic leaderships	Greenleaf (1996)
Transformational leadership Theory	The transformational leaders tried to arrange their followers based on their needs by exceeding self-interests and put some efforts to achieve a higher order needs. This type of leaders empowers the followers	House & Shamir (1993)
Transactional leadership Theory	Type of contingent-reward leadership that had active and positive exchange between leaders and followers	Bass and Avolio (1994)

Other leadership theories developed during last 50 years, its focus and references are also listed in Table 2. These theories are developed based on the leaders' attitude and behaviours, and understanding of the problems or situations. All leadership theories deal with the decision making abilities of a leader in internal or external environmental uncertainties.

## **1.2 Leadership in Islam**

Leadership in Islam is based on a trust and accountability. A leader is dedicated to lead a group of people or managing an organization with trust and accountability. Leadership requires leaders to have a vision that goes beyond the expectations of the followers. Moreover, Beekun and Badawi (1999) added that the leadership in

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Islam is related to all requirements for performing religious duties. The leader must be responsibilities to all matters under his leadership, including to ensure that the subordinates to be loyal to the leader, could deliver values as emphasized in the Qur'ān.

*Table 2. Specific leadership theories evolved during last 50 years*

<b>Leadership Theory</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Managerial leadership Theories	Leader that has initiatives and involve in a process for helping to understand which consider the needs to be provided or assist other persons in completing their tasks.	Yukl (1989)
Transformational and transactional leadership theories	Transformational leaders focus on change within the organization and transactional leaders focus on organization, supervision, and group performance	Wofford (1994)
Strategic Leadership Theories	It is the ability to persuade others in having good decisions that help the organizations obtain its long-term objectives of success as well as engaging short-term development.	Tone Hosmer (1982)
Situational leadership Theories	This theory tells that the leader or manager of an organization must adapt with certain accepted-styles and then develop or accommodate his/her followers that attempting to persuade him/her.	Hersey (1997)
Servant leadership Theories	It is a concept and set of practices that enhances the manners of individuals in their lives, makes better organizations and certainly introduces a more just and care of working places or environment.	Van Dierendonck (2011)
Spiritual leadership Theories	It is an integrated perspective of leadership where the leaders strive in giving impactful examples as well as build the relationships among employees.	Fry (2003)

Trust relates to amanah in Islam which described a psychological contract between a leader and his followers that attempting to guide the best for them, protecting them and serving them equally with justice. Thus, the emphasis of Islamic leadership is on performing good things. Without trust, a leader has difficulties in handling and getting commitment from the followers. This element of trust is required when the leaders initiate for empowerment and delegations in works to their employees. Holding an amanah given by the human being as well as God is an obligation which being asked in the hereafter.

Accountability to God is one of the major themes of Quran. Accountability to the people has been emphasized in the Quran and have been practices by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in His governance.

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Accountability to God and accountability to people are closely associated with the statements in the Quran:

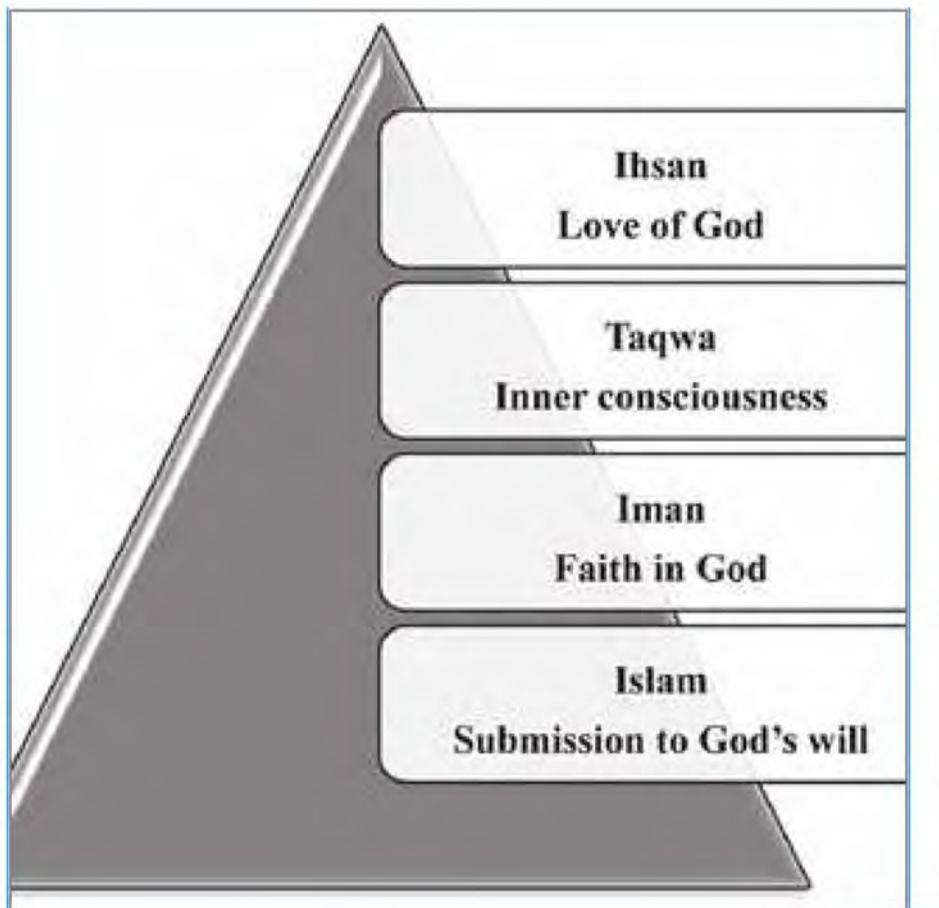
*And say: "Work (righteousness): Soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the Believers: Soon will ye be brought back to the knower of what is hidden and what is open: then will He show you the truth of all that ye did. (At-Taubah 9: Verse 105)*

Furthermore, Islam duties are categorized as either individual or collective duties. Individual duties must be undertaken by each and every Muslim. Individual duties include acts of worship e.g. prayers and fasting. A collective duty can be fulfilled by a group of people who volunteer to perform it on behalf of the rest of the community. With a leadership, the collective duty can be organized and proper conduct can be managed for the society (Hawwa 1988; 1990).

Meanwhile, there are 984 document results with the keyword of Islamic leadership in a Scopus database (reputable and highly ranked database) which been published since 1966 till 2021. The quite number of articles indicates the significant interest of researchers on the topic especially in year 2020 and 2019. The articles were published by researchers in developed countries such as United States, Unites Kingdom and Australia beside the two Muslim majority countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, while the reputable Universities are actively engage with such topic like International Islamic University Malaysia and university of Oxford. Universities in Malaysia dominating the list that published the Islamic leadership topic as shown in below Table.

*Table 3. A summary of articles published in Scopus on Islamic leadership*

Year	Number of Article	Author name	Number of Article	Affiliation	Number of Article	Country	Number of Article
2021	26	Purwanto, A.	7	International Islamic University Malaysia	27	United States	206
2020	104	Mufid, A.	6	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	22	Indonesia	109
2019	110	Faris, N.	5	Islamic Azad University	14	Malaysia	103
2018	81	Akbarzadeh, S.	4	Universiti Utara Malaysia	12	United Kingdom	103
2017	60	Katzman, K.	4	University of Oxford	11	Australia	39

***Distinguishing Leadership Between Islam and Conventional Perspectives****Figure 1. Islamic leadership model***1.3 Types of Leaderships**

The type of Islamic leadership could be varying according to the scholar and researchers. Many studies and literature focus on the characteristics and behaviour of an effective leader from an Islamic point of view. Some countries perceived the Islamic leadership differently, and thus the authors of this chapter attempt to discuss on the leaders' characteristics behaviour that coincide with the concepts of servant, transformational, and ethical leaderships.

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#### **1.3.1 Servant Leadership**

Islam promoted the concept of a servant leader. This concept has been highlighted as been practiced by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and mentioned that “the leader of a people is their servant” (Beekun and Badawi, 1999, 15). The Prophet (PBUH) emphasizes the importance of the dedication and honesty of the leaders in serving their followers (Imam Muslim, 2000). When the leaders serve their followers, they should consider long term social and environmental impact, thus their decision making relates to the collective benefits for the society. Servant also associates with the obligation to obey the laws and regulations, which will bring collective benefit for the society as well. Muslims are aware of the teaching of to serve people based on the individuals’ capabilities.

#### **1.3.2 Transformational Leadership**

Transformation leadership is derived dominantly from the value system. These values must be adopted or implemented by the leaders because considered to be “end values” (Burns, 1978). Dimensions of Islamic leadership can be identified with some of the dimensions of transforming leadership as stated by Leithwood et al. (1999). The vision articulated by the Prophet Muhammad to His followers is a vision of a universal society built on the principles of justice. It is stated in Al-Qur’an:

*O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do (An-Nisa 4: Verse 135)*

*Thus, have We made of you an Ummat justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations...(Al-Baqara 2: Verse 143)*

*We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures (Al-Anbiya 21: Verse 107).*

#### **1.3.3 Ethical Leadership**

Leadership ethics are moral standards that provide clear boundaries between “good” and “bad, and serve as guidelines for leaders in decision making. Ethics will also require leaders to think and act in accordance with the norms of appropriateness in social relationships. Islam has many values related to ethics such as sincerity, honesty, trustworthy etc. Ethical leaders have a positive influence on the people

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they lead. By encouraging attitudes and actions based on the same moral values, leaders will be the role models in creating an ethical work environment and building a strong organizational reputation.

## **1.4 Leader Follower Relationship and Characteristics**

The leader-follower relationship is another aspect of leadership that has been dealt with extensively by Muslim scholars (Al-Mawardi, 1996; Al-Merdawi, 1983; Hawwa, 1988). For the regional/state leaders or heads, this relationship is formalized by an oath of allegiance in which the followers pledge their obedience to the leader. The oath of allegiance is important to establish the legitimacy of the ruler. The oath of allegiance is valid as long as the leader follows Islamic law.

According to Al-Mawardi (1058) (as cited in Al-Merdawi, 1983), there are six characteristics that are essential for an effective leader, namely righteousness, knowledge, sagacity, and courage (Al-Merdawi, 1983, 79-80). Additionally, Ibn Taymiah (1300) outlines the two basic characteristics that a Muslim leader should have, which are ability and integrity. He uses the term ability in a generic sense to show the type of competency that is required to settle the job. Ability for the leaders could be the courage and knowledge, or fairness and the ability to execute judgments, and integrity. It also encompasses the personal attributes which are reflected in the leaders' behaviours. One can draw a parallel between Ibn Taymiyyah's ability and integrity and the modern requirements of structure and consideration (Yukl, 2005).

One can easily draw parallels between the characters suggested for Muslim leaders and the five behaviors that Dubrin (2007) suggests are necessary for an ethical leader. These are:

*Table 4.*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Reference of Al-Qur'an</b>
<b>Honesty, trustworthiness, and integrity</b>	An-Nisa 4: Verse 58; Al-Maeda 5: Verse 1; Al-Isra 17: Verse 34; Az-Zumar 39: Verse 33; Al-Qalam 68: Verse 4
<b>Fairness</b>	An-Nahl 16: Verse 90
<b>Building a community</b>	Aal-e-Imran 3: Verse 104
<b>Respect the individual</b>	Al-Hujraat 49: Verse 11; 13
<b>Working in Silence</b>	An-Nisa 4: Verse 38.

One can also draw a parallel between the characters of a Muslim leader and the five keys to successful and sustained leadership suggested by Thomas (2005). These are:

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Table 5.

Success Factor	Description
<b>Principles</b>	All principles are derived from the Al-Qur'an and Hadith where every leader has responsibilities to the people under his care and able to deliver the truth in every actions. On top of that, the leaders must believe to the oneness of God (Allah Almighty) who had stated (qadar) for every single thing in this world. This stated in the Qur'an of Al-Ahzab 33: Verse 70 and Al-Qalam 68: Verse 4.
<b>Passion</b>	Jihad translates as a seriousness and put an optimal strive in achieving a target. In other words, Islam suggests to work hard and smart in the daily life particularly in the workplace. The efforts to improve and develop a good character considered a passion in Islam that expectedly to excel in every works.
<b>People</b>	Consideration for people has been highlighted as an essential characteristic for effective leaders in Islam as stated in Qur'an of Aal-e-Imran 3: Verse 159.
<b>Performance</b>	Performance associated with the outcome or impact. Islam encourages for an excellent result and master piece works. With a discipline and timely manner, the performance would be better as well as the support of the top management/ organization. Choosing the right man for the right task is crucial to deliver the tasks and achieve better performance.
<b>Perseverance</b>	This refers to the continuity, consistency and improvement. Consistency without improvement is fruitless, means that Muslim instructed to become better and better in day by day life. Perseverance considered as a good deed that contribute to the 'never give up' efforts and initiatives. There are verses in the Quran had explained about the perseverance (see Al-Baqara 2: Verse 177).

**1.5 An Islamic Model of Leadership**

The model consists of four dimensions and five operating principles. The dimensions are fundamental constructs for the leaders. Each of principles has basis from the Al-Qur'an and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which are strongly shape the characters and behaviours of Muslim leaders. This includes the philosophical backgrounds of leadership. Meanwhile, the operating principles will guide the behaviour of the leaders to remain be consistent and compliance base on the Islamic law or shariah in their daily operational activities, which engage with specific and technical actions that can be exercised by the leaders.

**1.5.1 Dimensions of Leadership**

Haddara (2009) proposed four dimensions of leadership or called as 4C model consists of Consciousness of God, Competency, Consideration, and Consultation.

**Consciousness of God.** This refers to Taqwa in an Arabic word. Taqwa is fear of Allah based on the awareness of doing all His commands and not violating by staying away from all His prohibitions and fear of falling into sin. Taqwa also has four meanings; first tawadu' (humble); second, Qonah'ah (ridho); third, Wara' (keeping

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chastity, that is, refraining from what is inappropriate); and fourth Convinced. Taqwa is repeated in the Qur'an 259 times with all its derivatives - contains quite a variety, in it: the meaning of rich, avoiding, shunning, and covering.

**Competency.** Competency is the ability of the leader to perform his/her duties as a leader. It involves knowledge, training, and the ability to motivate people. Competency is also the combination of knowledge and skill of the leader to do the jobs. The subjects of knowledge which are essential for an effective leader are history, political science, psychology, management and sociology. Organizational skills and strategic planning are a must. An effective leader should be well versed in the art and science of management. The effective leader should be an excellent communicator and should know his/her audience. Knowledge acquired through a process of learning should result in a change of the leader's behaviour. This change will be accelerated and enhanced through training.

**Consideration.** Consideration is meant to understand other persons' situations. As a Muslim, understanding the needs of people is crucial which had been reminded by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to care each other and maintain the relationships. As a leader, the sincerity of having consideration will bring to the commitment and loyalty of the followers. Consideration also part of self-control of the leaders as well as a test whether they have senses of problem solving. Every group has their own interests which sometimes the leaders need to consider the best decisions by discussing with other parties or consulting with the experts, thus consideration bring a value of patient and meticulous. Good planning will be achieved when taking into account certain conditions.

Consideration means focus on the people which involves behaviour that reflects the leader's concern to the followers. Below is the statement from Al-Qur'an saying the important of consideration for the leaders:

*It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast Taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him) (Aal-e-Imran 3: Verse 159)*

**Consultation.** A leadership style that is consultative in nature provides a lot of directions and makes all decisions. Even sometimes to consult with the subordinates when the leaders need a confirmation on certain or technical things. Consultation will create confidence and come up with affirmative action particularly in a very important situation before taking the decisions. At the same time the leader has started to open two-way communication by listening to the ideas of subordinates.

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Even so, solving problems and making decisions is still carried out by the leader. Consultation is mentioned twice in the Quran.

*It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast Taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him). (Aal-e-Imran 3: Verse 159).*

*Those who hearken 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;" (Ash-Shura 42: Verse 38)*

In my opinion, there is one more dimension that needs to be added to the leadership dimension so that it is called the 5 Cs, the next is commitment. I think there are 5 things to do as a leader: inspire, challenge, enable other to act, modelling the way, encouraging the hearts. **Inspiring commitments:** Envision an uplifting and ennobling future. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interest, hopes, and dreams. **Challenging commitments:** search for challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve. Experiment, take risks, and learn from the accompanying mistakes. **Enabling commitments:** Strengthen others by sharing information and power by increasing their discretion and visibility. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust. **Modelling commitment:** Set the example for others by behaving in ways that are consistent with your stated values. Achieve small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment. **Encouraging commitment:** Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project. Celebrate team accomplishment regularly.

#### 1.5.2 Operating Principles

According to Haddara (2009) the operating principles has 5 things. These are Ihsan, justice, honoring the pledge, resoluteness, and acceptance. Below are the descriptions of each principle:

**Ihsan.** Ihsan is an Arabic word which means excellence. Quran commends people who endeavor to excel in what they do (An-Nahl 16: Verse 90). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed the Muslims to undertake their works with the best outcome.

**Justice.** It is one of the pillars in Islamic value that very important for the leaders. The justice brings an impact for equality that makes any individuals felt respected. An effective leadership should be supported and conducted by a justice, otherwise

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never safeguard the interest of other people. Islam emphasizes of implementing works and leading with a justice through various verses in the Al-Qur'an.

**Honoring the Pledge.** Every Muslim must fulfil their promises to others. It is like a trust that must be kept and deliver. It is relates to the integrity of a person that has been reminded in the verses of Al-Qur'an such as in Al-Isra 17: Verse 34.

**Resoluteness.** Muslims are encouraged to consult and treat others accordingly. It is relates to a principle of Shura among the members. However, once the members have agreed upon any decisions, everyone must obey to that decision. The leaders in this case should give an example and lead the members towards having a good discussion or debates. The leaders have to ensure and convince the members that all decisions are subject to the decision of Allah (God) or *taqdir* that every member must accept it.

**Acceptance.** The acceptance of the leader is a gentle response by the followers despite having some weaknesses or shortcomings. The change of the leaders must through a legal or acceptable process. It is must be objectively measures on the leaders' responsibility and works. This has been highlighted by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on the respect and having good attitude to the leaders. Unless if the leaders are unable do to the *amanah* of the followers or assumed of lack of competency or integrity, thus Islam has a mechanism or process to choose the alternate leader.

Table 5.

Ideal Leadership Based on Islamic Perspective	Ideal Leadership Based on a Conventional Perspective
1. Strong in aqidah 2. Able to lead and control himself before leading others 3. Good managerial 4. Human relations 5. The vision is al-Qur'an 6. Tawadu' 7. Has the sense of shiddiq, amanah, tablig, and fatanah. 8. Having a sharp social sensitivity (tolerance) 9. Be strong and endure criticism 10. Forgiving and having a tasamuh soul	1. Have intelligence (intelligence) 2. Supervisory ability 3. Have the initiative 4. Self-composure (self-assurance) 5. Personality 6. Fair and understanding 7. General and special knowledge (Communication skills) 8. Having a foresight (perspective) 9. Have honesty (high integrity) 10. Human relations 11. Have courage 12. Willingness to accept 13. Communication skills 14. Tenacity 15. Humane 16. Influential

*Distinguishing Leadership Between Islam and Conventional Perspectives***2. CONCLUSION**

The leadership in conventional view perceived that a leader is associated as a social person who always interacts with his community, while in Islamic approach, the leader is a person with a reflection of his success which starts from himself before leading others. The ideal character of a leader from a conventional perspective goes through a pure training process without any other factors in it, while Islam believes that certain characteristics of a person are the unique characteristics as a gift from Allah SWT (God). A leader in Islam has a mandate given by God Almighty to take care of his followers as well as will be accountable for any actions to Allah SWT (God) in the hereafter, while in the Western perspective suffices the mandate of leadership as only formal legal responsibility. Islam has an excellent role in the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which witnessed and written by His companion on His noble examples.

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