

Islamic ethics - an analysis



This term paper was titled Ethics from Islamic Perspective which is including a morale and akhlaq. This paper was conducted because to give awareness about the important of ethics in Islamic perspective. Suitable with the papers aim's whereas to give some of information and knowledge from an Islamic perspective about the ethics which is in moral and akhlaq aspect. The paper is sufficient to give the reader a feel for its potential to encourage further research in the area of resolving ethical issues, specifically for those who are calling for universal ethical theories to avoid moral imperialism. The Islamic perspective of the ethics concept should be refers based on the Holy Qur'an from the God and Ahadith of Prophet Muhammad. The ethics concept it must be generally and not too bias for others. The findings of this paper, it can be as a discussion, it is because the Islamic Work Ethics has economic as well as moral and akhlaq dimensions.

Keyword: Islamic perspective, ethics, Islamic Work Ethics, moral and akhlaq

INTRODUCTION

This paper was discuss about the ethics concept from the Islamic perspective, so it should be construct an axiom system that faithfully reflects the Islamic view of ethics. The axiom system here is means by a proposition that either not proved or demonstrated but considered undeniable, or subject to a decision, so, the truth is assumed and became the starting point for concluded to the truth to another. This is an essential first step in determining the rules of economic behaviour in an Islamic society. The Islamic view of life processes is unigenot only for its predominant emphasis on ethical norms, but also because of its being " complete". However, to turn it into an operational tool of scientific analysis, an ethical philosophy must be

reduced to a set of axioms, which is respect to Islamically valid rules of social and economic behaviour.

1. 1 The Concept of Ethics, Moral and Akhlaq

The concept of ethics, moral and akhlaq it can be in various point of view from many resources of our readings. Ethical behavior is an order based on a value system of a particular society. More ethics associated with science or philosophy, because it is the standard of good and bad it is human intellect. When compared with the morals, the ethics more theoretical while the moral is the practical. Moral more local or special nature and the ethical is more to general.

There is many term that use by philosophers in order to give a meaning of akhlaq. But, we can conclude it, akhlaq is much related with the moral and ethics so much so have a opinion that stated akhlak is mean by moral and ethics. Put simply on that, Akhlaq is refers to the nature habits that owned on each individuals. It is includes behavior or nature owned by natural as feeling irritable, quick to laugh, irritability and so on. Also includes in this definition, a person belonging habits through training, education, discipline and fitness to be a flesh and blood character and good familiarity to someone. In addition, akhlaq is more refers to our natural habits.

A while ago, in the western tradition, morals studies has long been exists and spread out before the birth of Islam and it known as 'ethics' or 'moral' knowledge. In aspect of etymology, the term of 'ethics' and 'moral' have a same meaning and also refers to the same field of study.

In briefly, 'moral' is derived from the Latin word, meanwhile the word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word. The both of term are related with the practical activities relating to behavior, customs, lifestyles, ways of thinking, freedom and the tendency of a person in engaging in an activity. On the other hand, the term of akhlaq was presented by the Muslim that based on the al-Quran and al-Sunah. On Islamic perspective, the ethics and moral was different from the point of conception, objectives and resources, it is called as Akhlaq.

1. 2 Current related issues

Ethics is usually defined by a written code of ethics. In the Middle East not many organizations and professions have written codes of ethics (Mudawanat Alsuluk) and violation is the norm rather than exception (AMAN, 2006). Behaviors that conform to those written codes of ethics are considered ethical and whatever violates the written standards is considered unethical.

From that situation, it can be simply, people are not too concern about all this matter, when they talk about ethics, they usually do not remind about the moral and akhlaq. This is because, they are set their mind, the term of ethics just use in the business or information technology such as computer accessibility. As a Muslim, they should also think about that moral and akhlaq.

In addition, the new code ethics was create, which is the Islamic Work Ethics (IWE). This philosophy was create to orientation that shapes and influences the involvement and participation of believers in the workplace. It implies

that work is a virtue in light of a person's needs, and is a necessity for establishing equilibrium in one's individual and social life (Nasr, 1984). IWE views work as a means to further self-interest economically, socially and psychologically, to sustain social prestige, to advance societal welfare and reaffirm faith. The concept has its origin in the Quran and the sayings and practice of the Prophet Mohammed.

METHODOLOGY

In completing this term paper, the secondary literatures are used to enable in depth understanding of ethics from the Islamic perspective with the moral and akhlaq concept. The secondary resources which is from readings on a book and the web pages, so the major instrument that has been used is literature review. Based on the reading, this topic has many references in a Malay writing, but there is no problem on that, after read in Malay and understand the content, the term paper writing has been continued.

By reviewing the literature, all the information will be paraphrased based on the understanding. The reference to literature review that has been used is article journal about the Islamic ethics that can be obtained from the online journal databases access.

Another method applied for finishing this term paper is data collection from the web page and it is just for back up information if there any lack of data collection. Approach that had been used in completing this term paper is understands from the readings and reviewing from the materials obtained and understand it.

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS OF ETHICS FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: MORAL AND AKHLAQ

There are various definitions of ethics, moral and akhlaq. The various definitions are produced from various reading materials, such as book and article journal, so there is many opinions from the philosophers. Ethich from Islamic perspective are more concern to the religion behavior, code and ethics.

Islam is supposed to be a complete way of life. A Muslim is bound by Islamic rules and hence is obliged to follow the instructions as prescribed in the Quran and Hadiths. Islam is a religion based upon the surrender to God (Allah). The very name of the religion, al-Islam in Arabic, means submission and peace, for it is in submitting to God's will that human beings gain peace in their lives in this world and in the hereafter. Islam is considered to be a comprehensive religion and its ethical system is considered to be one of the major ethical systems. Realize about the importance of establishing an ethical system in the all fields, especially at our present time which is witnessing an ever increasing ethical problems, several specialist organizations have prepared codes of ethics to be complied with by members of those organizations.

By generally, in Islam, ethics have two dimensions; first ethics toward Allah, the creator. A Muslim has to believe in Allah and has to worship Him. The second is ethics toward others; a Muslim business person has to deal ethically with others by maintaining good treatment and good relationship. This paper is of vital importance because people do not know sometimes what is ethical unless they study ethics. Ethics provide an essential

foundation for business transactions (Cherrington and Cherrington, 1995, p. 1). They are essential for organizational effectiveness and are necessary for interpersonal relations.

3. 1 Definition and Concept of Ethics

Ethics is defined as a branch of philosophy that deals with moral behavior.

Morality refers to whether something is right or wrong, good or bad.

Although morality is a complex concept, it can be defined in terms of both means and ends. Means is the process which occurs, while Ends refers to the consequences (Cherrington and Cherrington, 1995, p. 2). Ethics may also be defined as:

[. . .] a systematic inquiry into the beliefs we have and the management we make about what is morally right or wrong and morally good or evil. It is an inquiry that attempts to answer the following questions: What kinds of conduct are morally right or wrong? And what things are good and what things are evil?

(Cherrington and Cherrington, 1995, p. 2)

Ethics is also defined as the code of moral principles that sets standards of good or bad, or right or wrong behavior (Schemerhorn, 2008, p. 32). Ethical behavior is what is accepted as good and right as opposed to “ bad” or wrong in the context of the governing moral code.

Islamic ethics is defined as the code of moral principles that are prescribed by the Quran and Sunnah (Hadith or sayings of Prophet Mohammad). Islamic ethics is based on rational methods as well as revelation. Revelation

provides the truth which rational methods lead to understanding and appreciation of truth. Hence, Islamic ethics is based on tawheed, or unity principle, which determines the unique relationship between God and man; man and man; and man and his environment (Alhabshi, 1993, p. 83). Within the Islamic culture, the term that is mostly associated with ethics is referred to in the Holy Qur'an as Khouloq (Beekun, 2004, p. 2). Allah in the Quran has described Prophet Mohammad as a Prophet of good ethics.

3. 2 Definition and Concept of Moral

According to Peter Baelz (1977), morals and ethics often have the same meaning. However, is very useful if we could distinguish between the both of them, even though we often failed to make such a difference. While the N. Capaldi, E. Kelly and L. E. Navia (1981) stated that. In form of etymology, the English words 'ethical' and 'moral' is exactly same. Because of that, the study of ethics and moral actually just one and it is a same.

The moral issues are practical issues, but not all belong to the practical issues in the field of ethics. It is because, moral more specifically examine the good and bad, right wrong and how individual should act in a particular situation. Therefore, moral was refers to disciplines knowledge that investigate the various about the human behavioral. Such as the opinion that written by J. L. Mackie (1971):

...moral and ethics can analyze the once action whether that is right or wrong; it is can provide a clear line of distinction about acts and of an internal disposition, whether good or bad; or at least, be able to develop a

knowledge of ethics guidelines that can be adopted to make various moral of judgments.

3. 2 Definition and Concept of Akhlaq

According to Mohd. Nasir Omar, (2010) on his book, Akhlaq is refers to the nature, habits, customs, familiarity, values and lifestyle of the individual or group of individuals. In fact, belief system or religion by a person also often included under the definition of akhlaq by many researchers. It is because of religion greatly influenced the thinking and lifestyle of the individual (Ibn Manzur t. t II: 1244-1248 and Jamil Saliba 1971, I: 49).

While according to Ibn Miskawayh (1966), akhlaq is refers to the situation that forms in a human and it is function as a executive power that was directed that individuals by doing all his habits. Many philosopher was agreed with that statement that akhlaq related with the disposition that create in a person (al-nafs/soul) of a human. Spiritual dimension of the situation is very important because it is the cause of all acts done by humans.

Therefore, akhlaq is does not refer to the act of good or bad done by a person, but to someone spiritual dimension pressing to do an act, whether good or bad. Akhlaq is located in the interior of human's soul and in the meanwhile, the act are refers to the exterior is made from morality. Hence, a good moral will of course realize that good deeds and vice versa.

PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC BUSINESS ETHICS

According to Hanafy and Salam (1995), classified ethical principles of Islam into six categories, which is: truthfulness, trust, sincerity, brotherhood, science and knowledge and justice.

Principles of Islamic Business Ethics

- Justice
- Science and knowledge
- Brotherhood
- Sincerity
- Trust
- Truthfulness

In order to get a pleasure from the Almighty, as a Muslim, it is should be followed this six principle of Islamic ethics by doing all the business or activities in their daily life.

TRUTHFULNESS: Truthfulness is a basic ethical value of Islam and the meaning of Islam itself is, in a way, the other name of truth. There is no scope for cheating, telling lies, swearing too much, and providing false advertising in the Islamic framework of business.

TRUST: Trust is another fundamental ethical principle of Islam and the essence of the trust is the sense of accountability, which is the sense of having to appear before Allah S. W. T and to account for one's action. All the activities were conducted well in no case harm or damage the society or the environment.

SINCERITY: Islam attaches great importance to the sincerity of intentions and actions in every walk of life. For example such as ethical code results in more efficiency as well as a high rate of productivity. Sincerity also discourages manipulation or exploitation of others for personal reasons.

BROTHERHOOD: Islam declares all human beings are brothers to each other without the distinctions of race, colour, tribe, caste and language of an individual or group. Everyone is entitled to an ethically right behavior irrespective of distinctions of caste, creed, race, or territory.

SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE: Islam makes it obligatory for Muslims to seek knowledge and obtain excellence in performance. Research and development is highly encouraged in Islam. It such concern about science and knowledge in the Islamic code of ethics has been highly fruitful for Islamic civilisation in the past.

JUSTICE: Justice is undoubtedly a prerequisite of business and trade as it encompasses the entire whole series of human life. The whole universe is based on the concept of justice and balance. justice here means that every one should be treated as he or she deserves, without any undue pressure or discrimination.

CHALLENGES IN ENCOURAGING ISLAMIC ETHICAL BEHAVIORS AMONG INFORMATION / INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL

Muslims' unethical behavior is influenced by several factors, such as stage of formal development, personal values and personality, family influence, peer influence and so on.

The challenges in Encouraging Islamic Ethical Behaviors Among Information / Information Technology Personnel

CHALLENGES

EXPLANATION

Stage of moral development

The lunatic, the sleeper and the child before puberty not responsible for their behavior.

Personal value and personality

One who stresses honesty will behave differently from those who do not respect others' rights. The locus of control also affects individual ethical behavior (Robbins and Coulter, 2005, p. 112).

Family influence

The home is the place to start being a good Muslim. Children are likely to be ethical if they see their parents and other members of the family consistently adhere to high standards. In Islam, it is easier for a parent to teach his kids what is right (halal) and what is wrong (haram) than to teach them rules and principles of good conduct and behavior.

Peer influence

Children are influenced by actions of their peers with whom they interact. Islam urges people to be very selective of peers as they have very big influence on companions. This coincides with the Arabic proverb “ Birds of a feather flock together” or “ A person is known by the company he keeps”.

Life influence

Key events like taking part in Alhajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) for example has a positive impact on Individual behavior. As the Qur'an states: "Whoever goes to Hajj comes back from his journey innocent and pure and white as of the day of birth".

Situational challenges

It is the situation that sometimes makes one behave unethically, as the only way out. For example, a secretary may lie when answering a phone as the only way to turn away a client. She may simply lie by saying that the manager is not in the office while he is in fact in. On many occasions, the researcher has observed many Muslim secretaries quit their jobs simply to avoid being forced to tell such lies. However, lying is acceptable in Islam under three conditions: first, in wars; second, to solve conflicts between people; third, husband lying to his wife or vice versa for the sake of getting closer to each other and saving the marriage, e. g. saying "I love you" while it is the opposite (Hadith), or "you are the most beautiful woman in the world". All this is meant to strengthen the ties between couples.

Societal challenges

People try to conceal unethical behavior and always justify their actions as being ethical in order to please members of society. In Muslim cultures, society places a heavy pressure on individuals to practice *wasta*, so a manager may have to deviate from the rules and regulations of the business in order to please a cousin, a friend or a neighbor. On one hand, *wasta* is

considered as ethical and legal, e. g. in solving conflicts, while on the other hand, it can be viewed as illegal and unacceptable when it is used to override established laws and traditions, e. g. in obtaining favors like jobs.

In Muslim cultures, a business person is more concerned about what others might think of his decision than what he thinks himself.

Table 1: The challenges in Encouraging Islamic Ethical Behaviors Among Information / Information Technology Personnel

(Source: Abuznaid, 1990)

GUIDELINES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES IN ENCOURAGING ISLAMIC ETHICAL BEHAVIORS AMONG INFORMATION / INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL

In Islam, Allah emphasizes the following ethical guidelines as being outlined in the Holy Qur'an. These guidelines govern the Islamic code of ethics relating to a person's daily life and business dealings. Muslims are required at all times to behave islamically because Allah himself is watching their practices. In response to these challenges, several guidelines are proposed as follows:

Be patient. Islamic business people should not get angry and should not be irritated (Holy Quran, XXV: 63) and (Holy Qur'an, III: 134).

Be fair and just. A Muslim business person has to be fair and just in all his dealings. He has to be fair with his employees; he has to give fair wages and

has to be fair and kind with animals when slaughtering them (Holy Quran, II: 278-279).

Be humble. Being humble is the opposite of being arrogant. Being humble is a great characteristic of Muslims. Business people should be humble and down to earth (Holy Qur'an, XXVI: 215).

Be complacent. Being complacent is another characteristic of a Muslim. Muslim business people should be satisfied with what Allah has allocated them. To Muslims complacency is not the enemy of progress as the West views it.

Be generous. Being generous is the opposite of being stingy. Alkareem is in fact one of Allah's magnificent names meaning being generous. Alkaram (generosity) is another characteristic of the Muslim business people. They should be generous in giving money and goods to the needy. Islam urges people to give legal alms or obligatory charity (Az-Zakat). Az-Zakat is an ordinance prescribed by Islamic law. Social responsibility is another important principle in management practices. Sadaqat (donations), not obligatory, are very much urged in the Holy Qur'an (Holy Qur'an, LVI: 77) and (Holy Qur'an, XLIV: 17, 26).

Be dignified. A business person in Islam should not indulge in investments that are not Halal. Halal is the opposite of Haram. Halal is ethical while haram is unethical. Examples of haram earnings for a Muslim include trading in alcohol,

Be trustful (Al Amaneh). Being trustful means giving rights to others. For example, if you borrow some money from someone, you are supposed to return it at the agreed time at no interest. A good loan with no interest is an example of Islamic financial dealings (Alkird Al hasan) (Holy Qur'an, XL32) and (Holy Qur'an, IV: 58).

Be friendly. Muslims should be friendly and united at all times. No discrimination exists among Muslims, regardless of nationality, gender or color. The only difference between Muslims should be on the basis of piety (Holy Qur'an, XLIX: 10, 13).

Be equitable. Equity is the opposite of injustice. A Muslim manager should be equitable. In Islam people should be treated fairly and with equity.

Do not be involved in fraud. A Muslim business person should treat others the same way he himself would like to be treated (Holy Qur'an, XVI: 90, IV: 58).

Do not bribe. The practice of all kinds of bribes is forbidden in Islam (Holy Qur'an, II: 188). However, there should be differentiation between sadakat (donations), gifts, and bribes. Gifts are encouraged in Islam because they help gain friendship. The prophet encourages the use of gifts saying " Give more gifts so you be better liked" (Hadith). Bribes on the other hand are unethical. Bribes are used to influence decisions. There are two kinds of bribes: the " lubrication" bribe and the " white mail" bribe. The white mail bribe generally involves an elaborate system for concealing the use of large sums of corporate cash. This type of bribe is used to buy influence in high places (Abuznaid, 1990, p. 319).

From these key guidelines principles of ethics, we can conclude that Islam is a religion of high-moral standards. Muslim business people are urged in Al Qur'an and Al Sunnah to follow certain principles and guidelines.

(Source: Abuznaid, 2009)

CONCLUSION

As stated above, the main purpose of this term paper is to discuss the meaning of ethics from an Islamic perspective. The research has defined Islamic management ethics as those guidelines and principles that are prescribed by the Holy Qur'an and sunnah (hadith). The paper has give explanation on the major determinants of individual ethical behavior in Islam and pinpointed based on the moral and akhlaq. Besides that, the paper has outlined some of the ethical principles which is the principles of Islamic business ethics. This paper has also discussed the challenges in encouraging Islamic ethical behaviors among information / information technology personnel. It further helps non-Muslim people become more aware of management ethics in an Islamic environment by giving them a better understanding of the subject, thus making it easier for them to carry out all the activities in an Islamic culture. However, it must be stated that there is not one united form of applied Islamic teachings among different Muslim countries. It is widely known that Middle Eastern countries have become more active in the global market place by applied their ethics. Moreover, this paper has outlined major commonalities between Islam and other religions on the subject of ethics from the Islamic perspective. Although this paper has presented the concept of ethics from Islamic perspective, hope all the Muslim are together applied all the ethics that are based on the al-Quran and <https://assignbuster.com/islamic-ethics-an-analysis/>

al-Sunah to be an excellent humans. Therefore, it is the duty of all researchers interested in this issue to develop this knowledge. May Allah gives guidance in this new endeavour.

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