



Qalb-Based Entrepreneurship for Community Wellbeing: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract. Many Muslim-majority nations are amongst the world's poorest, and it was stressed that more deliberate efforts should be made to encourage entrepreneurship to uplift those who fall under poverty group and increase their life's quality.

Locally, it was indicated there had been an increasing trend of those falling within the poverty bracket in the Muslim community. This trend was further intensified by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The situation placed a heavier burden on the authorities, specifically, the needed zakat collection had jumped tremendously in order to meet the needed projected zakat distribution. More sustainable solutions are needed to address the situation; to enable the Asnafs to improve their livelihood and wellbeing by not relying on charity or handouts. Given the recently completed study (FRGS/1/2017/SS03/MMU/02/10) that confirms the Qalb behavioural traits as determinants of the inclusive entrepreneurial intention. It recommended the introducing Qalb-based entrepreneurship as a key solution among the community. Arguably this will strengthen their resilience in order to enhance their individual situations and ultimately improve the collective wellbeing. This paper presents exploratory findings on Qalb-based Entrepreneurship among Muslim entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Qalb · Entrepreneurship · Wellbeing · Resilience

1 Introduction

When researching poverty in the Muslim community [1] hypothesized “there maybe something about the religion, not just the ethnic group, that is associated with poverty.” Many Muslim-majority nations, specially Asia and North Africa, are amongst the world's poorest, and it was stressed that more deliberate efforts should be made to encourage entrepreneurship to uplift those who fall under poverty group and increase their life's quality.

In Islam, entrepreneurship is a vital and important missionary. Islam urges its followers to engage in entrepreneurship because practically all prosperity stems from a business. A Muslim entrepreneur is expected to constantly obey Allah and fulfil His

commands as revealed in the Quran and Hadith. The power of a Muslim is dependent on the relationship between humans and Allah (Hablu min Allah), as well as all the honourable attributes (Mahmudah) in an individual to attain the Al-Falah, not to mention the interaction between humans (Hablumin naas). As a Muslim, the bond between humans and Allah is the most vital and must come first before everything else.

[2] contrasted Islamic thoughts on entrepreneurship to Western attitudes on entrepreneurship. The distinction stems from the realisation that the goals of entrepreneurship in Islam are directed by the Maqasid Al-Shariah. [3]. The salient traits are economical, halal earnings, social welfare, patience, optimism, vision, morality, honesty and truthfulness, excellence innovativeness, hardworking, fear of Allah, strategic thinking, employee involvement, customer orientation, risk-taking, initiative, and knowledge [4].

The word “Qalb” (heart in Arabic) holds several different meanings. To name a few, It might refer to the organ that pumps blood in people and animals, personality, love, affection, compassion, intellect, courage, or the most important portion of something, to mention a few. Some believe that the heart is the centre of spirituality. According to Prophet Mohammed (SAW), it is an organ in man’s breast that, if it is healthy, the entire being is healthy, while the being will not be unhealthy if it is not. Furthermore, Qalb is more than emotion and mere affection [5]. The 4 principal virtues that Qalb is based on are; wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage [6]. According to [7], the values of Qalb-based leadership; “1) Right and clear direction, 2) Visionary and foresight, 3) Wisdom and intelligence, 4) Openness and tolerance, 5) Trust and justice, 6) Transparency and integrity, 7) Accountable and responsible, 8) Loving and caring, 9) Transforming and collaborating, and 10) Balanced and sustainable”. Researchers at the Centre for Academic Leadership (AKEPT)¹, have employed Maqasid al-Shariah framework in to develop the Qalb behavioural traits based on the there 3 levels namely: 1st level is necessities (Daruriyyat), 2nd level is needs (Hajiyat), and 3rd level is luxuries (Tahsiniyyat) [5]. According to [8], Qalb is considered as being balanced, which can also be applicable for non-Muslim world.

Having courage to ensure justice supported with wisdom as well as temperance is considered being balanced in life. Where leadership is a part of entrepreneurship [9], this can be the ground to apply Qalb to entrepreneurship studies. Specifically, the Qalb leadership traits are adapted into Qalb entrepreneurship traits.

In Malaysia, the size of the Muslim community at the lower end of the income pyramid had been on a worrying increasing trend². Thus, Malaysia’s transformation into an entrepreneurial nation is a priority for the government. The Ministry of Higher Education initiated Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2016–2020, with the goal of producing more job creators rather than merely job seekers among university graduates. In addition, the government offers microcredit through Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia and TEKUN Nasional, as well as entrepreneurship training, to help local entrepreneurs grow. Once more, the Malaysian government had asserted on the commitment of its agenda with the launch of the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 and the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030.

¹ <http://akept.mohe.gov.my/main/?event=al-101-qalb-based-leadership>.

² <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/384323>.

However, the earlier highlighted trend had been compounded further by the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. There is an urgency for effective solutions. Given the recently completed study funded by the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme from the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (Project No. FRGS/1/2017/SS03/MMU/02/10), whose findings confirm the Qalb behavioural traits as determinants of the inclusive entrepreneurial intention. It recommended the introducing Qalb-based entrepreneurship as a key solution among the community, especially the poor, to improve their resilience and enhance their situation. To assert the eligibility of this argument, this paper is presented to conduct an exploratory research on Qalb-based Entrepreneurship among Muslim entrepreneurs.

2 Literature Review

Maqasid al-Shariah helps in understanding the goals and purposes of Shariah as Islamic law [10] defines Maqasid al-Shariah as “understanding the Islamic belief and goals from the Shariah perspective in addition to the unfolding secrets in any given matter as prescribed by Islamic law”.

There were traditional as well as modern classifications of Maqasid al-Shariah. According to the traditional one, Maqasid can be divided into three levels as following: 1st level is necessities (Daruriyat), 2nd level is needs (Hajiyat), and 3rd level is luxuries (Tahsiniyyat). Daruriyat are essential for human life as well as surviving with focus on the five different aspects namely offspring, mind, wealth, soul, and faith. While, Hajiyat are less essential than Daruriyat but they ease the hardship of human life. Tahsiniyyat as the third level represents the beautifying and refinement purposes [11].

A study conducted on educating the Ummah by introducing Islamic bio-ethics in genetics and modern biotechnology as a comprehensive approach suggests that Islamic bioethics could be promoted as a holistic and universal education platform, to begin with [12]. This study addressed the objective of Maqasid al-Shariah as a comprehensive and encompasses moral principles directly applicable to modern biotechnology, and any conduct that is deemed ethical or permissible must fulfil its five purposes: preservation of religion and health, preservation of progeny, preservation of intellect and preservation of wealth.

From [13], the Maqasid al-Shariah is shown as a useful framework to help understand the behaviour of Muslim entrepreneurs. [14], showed the importance and usefulness of Maqasid al-Shariah to build moral values and develop better mankind and humanness by explaining the embedded moral values in the objective of Maqasid only, without studying deeper the dimensions and the levels. [3] presented a critical review of the literature on the Islamic entrepreneurship objectives and Maqasid Al-Shariah framework in their exploratory study. This study found that there is a strong conceptual link between the objectives of Islamic entrepreneurship and Maqasid Al-Shariah. The authors offered a new contribution by providing a new conceptual framework integrating the Islamic entrepreneurship objectives and Maqasid Al-Shariah, particularly within Al-Ghazali’s view of Maqasid Shariah.

[5] constructed Islamic leadership based on Maqasid al-Shariah along with conventional as well as Islamic literature, and produced 25 separate themes of Islamic leadership

behaviours. Furthermore, 91 items were constructed as measurement for Islamic leadership values and behaviour according to the three levels of purposes or priority in Maqasid al-Shariah. Specifically, 47 items were specified under necessities (Daruriyat), 29 items under needs (Hajiyat), and 15 items under luxuries (Tahsiniyyat). These items illustrate the values and behaviours according to each theme as well as level. These were adapted using insights obtained from works discussing Muslim entrepreneur traits and characteristics.

According to [15], the holistic characteristics of Muslim entrepreneurs must inculcate aspects like sin, merit, hell and heaven. Thus, Muslim entrepreneurs should differ from other entrepreneurs in their motives and aims because along with managing their business successfully, they should also have good performance in terms of faith and belief in Allah. [16] investigated the impacts of entrepreneurs' religiosity on their values and the relationship between their values and entrepreneurial behaviours by examining the differences between practising Muslim entrepreneurs and non-practising Muslim entrepreneurs. They suggest that Muslim entrepreneurs have more respect for, commitment to and acceptance of the religious and traditional customs and ideas compared with those non-practising Muslim entrepreneurs.

[17] concludes that Islam encourages Muslims to be entrepreneurs in their life with clear guidance and rules. Furthermore, they deduced the following as the key characteristics for Muslim entrepreneurs; 1. Faith (Taqwa) to Allah, 2. Halal as a Top Priority, 3. Do not Waste, 4. Worship to Allah is a Priority, 5. Practising High Moral Values, 6. Trustworthy, 7. Concern for the Welfare, 8. Knowledgeable, and 9. Caring for the Society and Environment. This can be seen as in line with the findings of [18] who outlined the general features for Muslim entrepreneurs to adhere to the Muslim lifestyle, strive through lawful channels of Islam, appreciates Islamic values, contribute (wealth or assets) to the Islamic path, and shoulder the responsibilities to self, family as well as employees.

[19] draws the relationship between spirituality in Islam with entrepreneurial motivation, performance and commitment to social responsibility. There seem to be general similarities in the discussions relating to traits and characteristics of Muslim entrepreneurs, besides the majority of scholars agreed on prioritising Allah and adhering to Islamic values in trading and commerce. The 9 traits outlined by [17] earlier can be said to cover all aspects suggested by the various works.

Meanwhile, a study by [20] addressed the relationship between human physical-mental health and religious involvement. This study mentioned the Qalb or heart as a spiritual and supersensory organ that is responsible for higher cognitive functions such as the realization of the ultimate reality, values, meaning and purpose in life. This is in line with the teachings from the Quran; "Have they, then, never journeyed about this earth, letting their hearts gain wisdom and causing their ears to hear! Yet verily, it is not their eyes that have become blind, but blind have become their hearts that are in their breasts" (Quran 22:46).

[21] have determined and described seven domains of spiritual intelligence according to the Islamic perspective which includes Al-Qalb, spiritual intelligence that guides the person to know Allah and execute the laws of Allah. [22] explained the human development as the main pillar of leadership for nation-building and human civilization

in general, and from the Islamic perspective, Qalb or the heart is the most important component in guiding the individual development. [23] proposed the notion of Qalb or the heart with mind, where a person can lead by his/her Qalb, especially when the person has a good heart is likely to take the better options and initiatives. Thus, Qalb-based Entrepreneurship is the spirit or state of acting in an entrepreneurial manner with traits and characteristics highlighted earlier.

3 Methodology

The case study methodology is employed in this research [24, 25]. Case study methodology usage can be traced back to the early 1900s when it was popularly used by the University of Chicago, Department of Sociology [26]. [27] A case study is carried out by paying close attention to detail in the observation, reconstruction, and analysis of the instances under investigation. A case study is conducted in such a way that the perspectives of the “actors” in the situation under investigation are taken into account. When seeking to comprehend complicated organisational challenges, a case study technique allows one to focus on something that is sufficiently understandable and manageable with all its complexity. [28]. [25] Case studies are used for a variety of reasons, including illustrating cause-and-effect relationships, putting a phenomena in context, investigating a problem or a topic, etc.

Triangulation and pattern matching are two of the most used approaches for analysing data in a case study. This study’s triangulation is accomplished using methodological triangulation, which involves the utilisation of several data sources. This is accomplished by employing various typical forms of case study evidence sources, as identified by [29] and [25], namely; observation, interviews, and survey data. Face to face interview using a semi-structured format was used for this study. Specifically, Each entrepreneur was profiled in terms of their entrepreneurial aspects and Qalb traits through the guided survey and interview sessions. The Muslim entrepreneurs were identified and approached via university entrepreneurship centres around the country. The findings are presented and discussed in the following section.

4 Findings and Discussions

The preliminary study included 10 Muslim entrepreneurs, 3 males and 7 females. Each entrepreneur was first asked to complete the questionnaire to determine their levels of Qalb behavioural traits, Muslim entrepreneurial traits and Inclusive Entrepreneurial Intention. Researchers were available to provide an explanation if any of the items were not clear to them. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the entrepreneurs were then interviewed using a semi-structured approach. The participating entrepreneurs came from a broad range of age groups and business sectors as indicated in the following Table 1.

To confirm the entrepreneurs’ intention to contribute back to their community, the questionnaire measures their inclusiveness i.e. their Inclusive Innovativeness and their Inclusive Entrepreneurial Intention. Table 2 specifies the scores obtained by each entrepreneur. The entrepreneurs rate their inclusive innovativeness which indicates their

Table 1. Case List

Case	Gender	Age	Sector
E1	Female	20–25	Tourism
E2	Female	20–25	Tourism
E3	Female	36–40	Education
E4	Male	31–35	Games
E5	Male	36–40	Service
E6	Male	20–25	Service
E7	Female	20–25	IT
E8	Female	31–35	Retail
E9	Female	20–25	Transportation
E10	Female	40 <	Engineering

Table 2. Inclusiveness Mean Scores

Case	Inclusive Innovativeness	Inclusive Entrepreneurial Intention
E1	3.60	3.33
E2	4.00	4.00
E3	4.40	4.83
E4	3.80	4.17
E5	4.00	5.00
E6	4.00	4.33
E7	5.00	5.00
E8	3.20	3.50
E9	4.20	2.17
E10	3.00	3.50

ability to produce solutions or offerings that are inclusive i.e. able to benefit all in the community including those often marginalized and the poor, with mean scores ranging from 3.00 to 5.00. Meanwhile, for their Inclusive Entrepreneurial Intention, the mean scores of the 10 cases range between 2.17 to 5.00. This suggests that all the entrepreneurs believe that they do have the ability to produce offerings that are inclusive in nature and all but one shows moderate to high intention to be an inclusive entrepreneur. During the interview, case (9), showed a low score on the inclusive entrepreneurial intention, however it scored high on inclusive innovativeness expressing high desire to help “those unfortunate people as what NGOs do. Like producing jobs for them or something related to service more than products.” Thus, this suggests that at the least they have the intention

to behave inclusively which means in reflection on the Qalb behavioural traits the orientation is not only self but moving towards benefiting others and community in general i.e. from Daruriyyat to Hajjiyyat and Tahsiniyyat.

To confirm the suggestion, the mean scores for the Qalb behavioural traits are then recorded. The following Table 3 lists the scores for each entrepreneur. The highest score for the first level Darurriyyat is 4.88, for the second level Hajjiyyat is 4.91, and for the third level Tahsiniyyat is 4.80. While, the lowest scores are 3.73 (Tahsiniyyat), 3.78 (Hajjiyyat), and 3.96 (Darurriyyat).

From the scores (Table 3) the Darruriyyat Traits was identified as main trait by 7 cases out of 10, Hajjiyyat Traits with 2 cases, while only 1 case identified Tahsiniyyat Traits as main trait.

From the overall scores, it can be said all interviewees showed between and high score of Qalb Behavioural Traits. From the interviews, all entrepreneurs indicate their interest in contributing back to their community but most state the need to establish their businesses first, especially among the young entrepreneurs.

Next, to better understand their traits and characteristics, the analysis include exploring the score of the (9) Islamic Entrepreneurial Traits. The following Table 4 lists the scores for each entrepreneur. The 9 traits are; 1. Faith (Taqwa) to Allah, 2. Halal as a Top Priority, 3. Do not Waste, 4. Worship to Allah is a Priority, 5. Practising High Moral Values, 6. Trustworthy, 7. Concern for the Welfare, 8. Knowledgeable, and 9. Caring for the Society and Environment.

From the scores and then confirmed via the interviews, all 10 cases consistently expressed one common major trait they identify highly with, which is “Worship to Allah”. This is then followed by emphasis on having “Faith in Allah” and placing “Halal Top Priority” respectively. It can be deduced that they identify themselves as Muslims, thus matters of worship and faith are core to their being. Thus, they also place a high emphasis on the importance of Halal both in what they might produce and offer to others

Table 3. Qalb Behavioural Traits Mean Scores

Case	Dar	Haj	Tah	Overall Qalb
E1	4.32	3.96	4.07	4.11
E2	4.36	3.96	4.07	4.13
E3	4.52	4.22	4.33	4.36
E4	4.56	4.43	4.67	4.55
E5	3.96	4.00	3.73	3.90
E6	4.68	4.48	4.20	4.45
E7	4.84	4.78	4.80	4.81
E8	4.88	4.91	4.67	4.82
E9	4.60	3.87	3.93	4.13
E10	4.20	3.78	3.87	3.95

* Dar – Daruriyyat; Haj – Hajjiyyat; Tah – Tahsiniyyat.

Table 4. Islamic Entrepreneurial Traits Mean Scores

Case	Trustworthy	Welfare	Do not Waste	Society & Environment	Faith	Halal	Worship	High Moral Values	Knowledge
E1	3.80	4.13	3.63	3.75	4.0	5.00	5.00	4.48	3.57
E2	4.00	4.00	3.88	4.00	4.60	4.67	5.00	4.14	4.00
E3	4.40	4.63	4.00	4.00	4.60	4.33	5.00	4.24	4.71
E4	4.20	5.00	3.50	4.50	5.00	4.67	5.00	4.67	4.57
E5	3.40	3.00	3.38	3.75	4.20	4.33	5.00	4.24	4.43
E6	4.60	4.63	4.00	4.50	4.80	4.33	5.00	4.57	4.29
E7	5.00	4.75	5.00	5.00	4.60	5.00	5.00	4.62	5.00
E8	4.80	4.88	5.00	4.50	4.80	4.67	5.00	4.86	4.86
E9	4.80	4.38	4.00	4.75	4.60	5.00	5.00	3.62	4.14
E10	3.80	4.00	4.38	4.00	4.60	4.33	5.00	3.52	4.00

as well as in terms of the returns or gains they accumulate. Next, the cases showed the importance of being knowledgeable which is reflective of the context of the enquiry; entrepreneurial intention where most will highlight the importance of knowledge in order to be a successful entrepreneur. An interesting finding concerning this study is that the next trait the cases identified significantly following the top 4, is “Concern for the Welfare” which is a highly relevant trait towards being inclusive. This can be said to be further reinforced by the next trait; “Practice High Moral Values”. Reviewing the 10 cases also were able to conclude that they also identified with the other 3 traits namely, being “Trustworthy”, “Caring for the Society & Environment” and “Do Not Waste”. Since the Qalb traits were also mapped to the Islamic Entrepreneurial Traits thus the findings from the 10 cases can be said to support and reinforce each other.

5 Conclusions

The case studies help to provide insights to what are the motives that may drive the Muslim entrepreneurs and how the respective motives may influence their inclusive entrepreneurial intention. The findings suggest that awareness and reinforcement of Qalb Entrepreneurial Traits can lead more of our Muslim entrepreneurs to become inclusive entrepreneurs that can contribute to the betterment of the Ummah. The findings imply that when the entrepreneurialism is Qalb in type rather than general entrepreneurialism, increasing intensity signifies moving from Darruriyat to Hajjiyat and ultimately Tahsiniyyat. This will translate from the individual entrepreneur’s orientation will expand from self to become gradually more inclusive from their immediate circle to the community or Ummah.

As a result, we believe that if disadvantaged people or Asnafs are taught Qalb-based entrepreneurship, it will be successful. That will result in their having strong

behavioural intentions to give back to the community that benefited them. i.e. the intention to be inclusive entrepreneurs. The acculturation can be done at various levels, from spreading knowledge and awareness via educational programmes, embedding Qalb-based Entrepreneurship into learning activities, to conducting training or accelerator programmes designed using the Qalb entrepreneurialism framework. The envisioned outcome will be the transformation of the Asnaf who are being burdened needing the assistance from Ummah to being contributors to the Ummah's well-being. In other words, this will ultimately improve the collective well-being. More importantly, agencies such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia or popularly known as JAKIM, adopt the above into their planning and programming.

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