

## Prophetic Leadership Model: Conceptualizing a Prophet's Leadership Behaviour, Leader-Follower Mutuality and Altruism to Decision Making Quality

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### Abstract

*This article advocates that research is lacking on the connection between leadership theory and social network theory. To date, little empirical research has been conducted on leadership and social networks. Thus, the proposition of this article goes beyond traditional leadership models to advocate for a fuller and more integrative focus that is multilevel, multi-component and interdisciplinary, while recognizing that leadership is a complex function of both the organisational leaders and the followers who perform tasks, all of which subsequently leads to decision making qualities. Indeed, the current leadership model focuses on leadership behaviour and the ability to gain followers mutuality, to achieve decision making quality involving the integration of leadership and social network theories. Given the apparent mutable palette of contemporary leadership theory, this emergent construct of the leadership paradigm can expand the poles of the leadership continuum and contribute to a richer and deeper understanding of the relationships and responsibilities of leaders and followers as they relate to decision making qualities. This new construct, which is termed prophetic leadership, explores the literature of the life experiences of the prophet in the 'Abrahamic Faith' religion. Drawing on a priori links between the personality trait and spiritual leadership that has recently garnered the interest of scholars, the present study asserts a normative leadership theory that links the personal quality of a leader, posture and principal (based on the Prophet's leadership behaviour) to synergy and decision making quality. Altruism is proposed to enhance relationships between leadership behaviour and decision making quality. For future research, much work needs to be done specifically aiming to (a) achieve greater clarity of construct definitions, (b) address measurement issues, and (c) avoid construct redundancy.*

*Keywords: transcendent leadership, social network theory, prophet's life*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Prophetic leadership rests on the tenets of trait theory, spirituality, Islamic leadership and social network theory. This field of study is still in its infancy, as such theory is marked by differences in definitions and other basic characteristics. Much of what has been written on this subject has appeared to be isolated to a particular religion, is non-academic, lacks sufficient publication, and consequently lacks rigor. This study, therefore, analyses verses in the Qur'an and the *Seerah* to construct a prophetic leadership model and explores the nexus between personal quality, posture and principal of the leader to decision making quality, which is mediated by leader-follower mutuality and altruism as moderating factors.

The proposition in this article goes beyond more traditional leadership models to advocate a fuller and more integrative focus that is multilevel, multi-component, and interdisciplinary, and it recognises leadership as a function of both the leader that leads an organisation and the followers that perform tasks during the time of complexity. Indeed, the present leadership model focuses equally on leadership behaviour and the ability to gain followers to determine decision making quality. The present article also advocates that further research is required on the connections created by leadership; this is the emerging work linking social network theory to leadership theory. To date, "little empirical work has been done on leadership and social networks" (Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, & Tsai, 2004). In the model proposed here, there is a full extension of an integrative framework that spans implicit leadership theories to the external structure of social network relationships. It also incorporates how individual actors and their relationships are embedded in a larger social network structure (Klenke, 2007). In line with the proposed integrative framework, Balkundi and Kilduff (2005) concluded, the "network approach locates leadership not in the attributes of individuals but in the relationships connecting individuals."

## 2.0 PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP

Prophetic leadership theory is rooted in the life experience of the prophets. It encompasses all aspects and elements in the life and leadership of all types of situation (i.e., complex or non-complex). This holistic model emphasises the personal qualities, decision making processes and managerial skills of the prophets to construct a prophetic leadership model and to determine its relationship to leader-follower mutuality and decision making quality, which are compelling issues for management practitioners and researchers. Drawing on *a priori* links between trait theory and spiritual leadership that have recently garnered the interest of scholars, the present study asserts a normative leadership theory that links the leader's personal qualities, posture and principals to synergy and decision making quality. Altruism is proposed to enhance the relationships between a leader's personal qualities and decision making quality.

The current prophetic leadership model claims that *seerah* (i.e., the life of the prophet Muhammad, Jesus (Isa). and Moses (Musa ) peace be upon them all) in the holy Qur'an and *sunnah* (the character of the prophet), which is narrated in the *hadith*, can be exemplified for effective leadership and decision making quality. Three religions, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, have been intertwined and are considered to be inextricably linked to one another because of a 'family likeness' and a certain commonality in theology. These three religions are called the Abrahamic faiths, Abrahamic traditions, religions of Abraham, Abrahamic monotheistic religions, Semitic religions, Semitic monotheistic religions, or Semitic one god religions (<http://abrahamicfaiths.com/>).

In the early twenty-first century, there were an estimated 3.8 billion followers of these three Abrahamic religions, it is estimated that 54% of the world's population considers themselves adherents of one of the Abrahamic religions; about 30% follow other religions and 16% are non-religious (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010). Islamic researchers believe that the holy Qur'an is a source from which one can learn about effective leadership (e.g., Ahmad, 2006; Ather and Sobhani 2007; Bangash, 2000; Noor 1998). The Qur'an has revealed the stories of prophets as great leaders of their people and the advice within the Qur'an should be followed. Across the ages, many people of Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths have turned to the Qur'an, the Bible and the Torah, respectively, for their role models, examples and metaphors. Furthermore, many researchers have discussed the Biblical examples of prophets in leadership and management studies (e.g., Weber 1978, Friedman and Langbert, 2000). Hence, the proposed "Prophetic Leadership" model is necessary as a holistic leadership model because Biblical role models and the characteristics of a Biblical individual make these Prophets arguably the most successful transformational (Friedman and Langbert, 2000), consultative, distributed, situational, emotional and spiritual leaders in history (Noor, 1998). Furthermore, religious believers all over the world have grown up perpetuating and sharing their narrative visions (Fry, 2005) and relying on their good examples being followed.

## 3.0 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In Muslim teaching, the precepts laid down in the Qur'an and the examples of the Prophet (pbuh) (*seerah*) are to be exemplified. What the Prophets did in concrete situations is an essential part of Islamic teaching. By studying the life of the Prophet (pbuh), one may derive important principles to be followed. Allah says twice in the noble Qur'an: "*He it is who has sent the Prophet with guidance and the Deen of Truth so that it may become dominant over all other systems, however much the mushrikeen may be averse to it*" (Al-Qur'an 9:33, 61:09). The *Seerah*, therefore, offers an important lessons in leadership, serving as an essential prerequisite for the transformation of any society into an Islamic state. This process of transformation is a quintessential model for all Muslims, as they struggle to transform their organisations and societies (Bangash, 2000).

### 3.1 Al-Qur'an and *Sunnah*

On earth, Man is Allah's *khalifah* (vicegerent or representative or leader) (Al-Qur'an 2:30; 6:166; 38:26) and acts only to implement Allah's laws. A *khalifah* (leader) is not free to act as he chooses or to submit to the wishes of any group. This is therefore a fundamental difference between Islamic leadership and that of other systems, where aspirants to high office

often say and do what the people want regardless of the merits of these actions (Bangash, 2000). Thus, Al-Qur'an and *Sunnah* discuss the leadership qualities of the Prophets that should be followed by *khalifah* on earth; such qualities include the leadership behaviours of the Prophet, including personal qualities, religious spirituality, principals and posture.

### 3.1.1 Leadership Behaviour

Prophet Ibrahim- peace be upon him (pbuh)- was appointed as *Imam* (leader) due to leadership qualities he possessed. After successfully completing a number of tests, Prophet Ibrahim was appointed *Imam* (leader) of all people. The Qur'an says: "And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with His Commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: 'Surely I have appointed you an Imam for mankind. Ibrahim said: 'And of my offspring' (will there be Imams)? He said: 'My covenant includes not the wrongdoers'" (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:124). An important point emerges from this dialogue, in that an oppressor is not fit to be leader of Muslims, regardless of what other qualities he may possess. Implicit in this *ayat* are two other points about leadership: 1) to be legitimate, it must involve divine sanction and, 2) because Islam rejects the concept of hereditary leadership, each person must qualify for it by merit (Bangash, 2000). Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) fulfilled the mission of leadership for which Allah *Subhanawataala* (SWT) chose him. This example indicates that leaders must have vision, courage, the ability to articulate their vision and a willingness to make sacrifices on behalf of an organisation (Black and Porter 2000). Moreover, leaders motivate followers to sacrifice their own self-interests for the greater good (Northouse 1997). Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) was a person who was willing to make a great sacrifice for the good of others, an example of a transformational leader (Friedman and Langbert, 2000).

The Qur'an highlights an important aspect of Islam's concept of leadership that contains the prophetic leadership model. Thus, the authors examined the leadership qualities and personal attributes exemplified from the messenger of Allah (Musa, Isa and Muhammad, peace be upon them all) enumerated in the holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* to propose in the model. Personal qualities, religious spirituality, posture and principals of the Prophets were scrutinised to construct a model that can influence a follower's mind and can achieve quality decision making. Altruism thus will enhance decision making quality.

### 3.1.2 Personal Quality

#### *Courage*

Showing courage and the ability to take calculated risks are essential attributes of a leader. To inspire others to perform great feats, a leader must be seen as someone who is not afraid to face danger. The unyielding courage shown by Prophet Musa (Moses) under the most stringent circumstances to deliver *tauhid* and establish *Shari'ah* among the Israelites is an example of a courageous leader. Additionally, Koenig (2007) and Neyrey (1998), in their study of the Gospel, describe Isa (Jesus) as having boldness, courage and confidence. According to Neyrey (1998), evidence from Matthew 22 in the Bible describes Isa's (pbuh) courage to stand, despite facing suffering and rejection in both his work and mission.

In the battle of Badr, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was clearly taking a great risk to defend Medina with only 330 Muslims as compared to 3,000 Quraish; he won a battle that an ordinary leader may have avoided. Badr highlighted the Prophet's courage, as well as the commitment of the Muslims fighting under him. Similarly, the expedition to Tabuk (9AH) was fraught with just as great a risk, as only 30,000 Muslims marched across the desert in scorching heat to confront a Roman army of 100,000. It was these examples of courage and bravery that established a pattern for future generations of leaders to be emulated. Courageous leaders will result in increased leader-follower mutuality and subsequent high quality decision making. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 1:** *Courageous leaders have a significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision making quality.*

## *Eloquence*

A leader must be eloquent and articulate. These characteristics are required to communicate the purpose of the mission clearly and to inspire people to follow it. The Qur'an itself is the most eloquent document; it appeals to both the mind and the heart. Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) was recognised, since childhood, for his ability to have great eloquence. This was proven by his victory in his debate with the Babylonian King, Nimrod. Nimrod asked Ibrahim: *What can your god do that I cannot?* Ibrahim said, *"My Lord is He Who gives life and death. Namrud said "I give life and death. I can bring a person from the street and have him executed, and I can grant my pardon to a person who was sentenced to death and save his life."* Ibrahim added *"Well my Lord Allah makes the sun rise from the East. Can you make it rise from the West?"* (Qur'an 2:258). The king was confounded, and Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) left him speechless. Eloquence was also stressed in the verses in which Allah commands Musa (pbuh) to speak to Fir'awn (Qur'an 20:43-44), Allah urged Musa (pbuh) to use gracious language, as it is a highly effective approach that should always be adopted when communicating with people. In many verses of the Qur'an, the importance of choosing kind words is stressed. In fact, Allah commands man to speak gently, even when conversing with one who is arrogant. These verses are evidence of the importance of using such a manner in communication, and they show that communication skill is important in leadership. According to Keller (1998), the Bible portrays Isa as having strong characteristics of a "teacher," both intelligent and eloquent.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) articulated the message of Islam in such a way that it was immediately accepted by a small group of people in Makkah. In an attempt to dissuade the Prophet (pbuh) from his mission, Utbah ibn Rabi'ah offered him money, beautiful women and a position in the Meccan hierarchy; however, the Prophet (pbuh) recited *Surah Ha-Mim Sajda* (41:20-30). The recitation of the *Surah* had such an effect on Utbah that he returned to his fellow chiefs in utter humiliation, telling them to leave the Prophet alone ([www.islamicthought.org.pb-zb-leader.html](http://www.islamicthought.org.pb-zb-leader.html)). Thus, eloquence is significant to both leader-follower mutuality and decision making quality.

**Proposition 2:** *Eloquence has significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision-making quality*

## *Sabr (patience) and forgiveness*

In the face of immense persecution in Mecca, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) not only showed great patience, he also counselled his followers to do likewise. At that time, a guiding verse in the Qur'an was revealed, which states *"With every hardship there is ease, with every hardship there is ease"* (94:5-6). This verse means that problems are always associated with opportunities. Thus, another quality essential for a leader is *Sabr* (patience), as a lack of patience will simply drive away followers.

Prophets Ayub, Yaqub and Yusuf (pbuh) also experienced persecution but endured their trials and tribulations with great patience. However, there is a distinction between the trials one is put through directly by Allah and those that are faced at the hands of other human beings. Prophet Ayub's trial was not caused by human beings; however, in the case of the Prophets Yaqub, Yusuf, Musa, Isa and Muhammad - may peace be upon them all - it was the people who tormented them. Most critical is the case of the noble messenger, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), because he not only had to endure such suffering himself but also counselled *sabr* to his companions who were being persecuted. An outstanding example of the Prophet's *sabr* was demonstrated following his suffering at the hands of the people of Ta'if, in the tenth year of his mission in Makkah. When the chiefs of Ta'if set the thugs of the town upon him, instead of seeking revenge, the Prophet prayed for their guidance (Bangash, 2000).

Muhammad (pbuh) was also seen as a lenient and forgiving leader, and the following Qur'anic verse explicitly shows the active and reformative leadership of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Allah says: *"It was by the Mercy of Allah that you were lenient with them, for if you had been stern and fierce of heart, they would have dispersed from you. So pardon them and seek forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And when you are resolved, then put your*

*trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who put their trust in Him" (Surah Ale Imran, 3:159). This proves that patience and forgiveness will lead to leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision making quality.*

**Proposition 3:** *Sabr (patience) and forgiveness have significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and decision making quality.*  
**3.1.3 Religious Spirituality**

#### *Knowledge and Wisdom*

Knowledge can be acquired through study and hard work. Wisdom (*hikmah*), on the other hand, is the ability to apply knowledge to a particular situation to bring about the most desirable outcome. Almost everyone can acquire knowledge, but *wisdom* comes only through an inner enlightenment and by seeking sincere guidance from Allah (Bangash, 2000). Allah says, in Qur'an 2:129, that the Prophets (pbuh) were given both knowledge and *hikmah* (wisdom). Al-Qur'an 3:45-46 also indicates that Prophet Isa (pbuh) was honoured with articulateness and intelligence, and Isa tells his people that he brought them *Hikmah* (wisdom) (Qur'an 43:63). In Qur'an ayat 17:39, God Almighty explains what the word *hikmah* (wisdom) means, "You shall not accept any information, unless you verify it for yourself. I have given you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brain, and you are responsible for using them. You shall not walk proudly on earth-you cannot bore through the earth, nor can you be as tall as the mountains. All bad behaviour is condemned by your Lord. This is some of the wisdom inspired to you by your Lord. You shall not set up another god beside God, lest you end up in Gehena, blamed and defeated." Here, God is telling us that wisdom is in the Quran. It is wisdom that comes from Him and not from other men.

There are many instances from the Prophet's *Seerah* where his *hikmah* achieved results that his followers were unable to see. The most striking example of Prophet Muhammad's wisdom is the 'Treaty of Hudaibiyya' in the sixth year of the *hijrah*. The Hudaibiya treaty showed the Prophet's wisdom in accepting some terms of the treaty that his companion Omar ibn al Khatab had refused. It was later proven that these terms were for the benefit of Islam by the Qur'anic sura "Al-Fath" (The Victory) (Qur'an 48:1-29). These benefits, according to Welch (1992), included 1) inducing the Meccans to recognise Muhammad (pbuh) as an equal; 2) the cessation of military activity, which posed well for the future; and 3) gaining the admiration of Meccans, who were impressed by the incorporation of the pilgrimage rituals. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 4:** *Knowledge and wisdom have significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision-making quality.*

#### *Taqwa (humility, moral conduct)*

Taqwa is humility, where one is humble, conscious of Allah's presence and fearful of Him at all times. Not seeking a leadership position is part of *taqwa*, as portrayed by Prophet Musa (pbuh) when he answered the revelations from Allah. He sincerely admitted his inability to do it alone and requested for the Prophet Harun (pbuh), his brother who was fluent and better at speaking, to assist him. The verses in Qur'an Surah al-Qasas/28: 33-34 reads: *He said, "My Lord, I killed one of them, and I am afraid they will kill me; and my brother Aaron is more eloquent than me so send him with me to support me and back me up. I am afraid they will call me a liar."* Similarly, when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received his revelation, he was full of fear for the responsibility that God had decided to place on his shoulders. Any other person in his place would have been filled with pride, as he would have felt that he had become great. However, the Prophet was different; he could achieve great things but could take no pride in his achievements (Hidrat Mirza, 2005).

The *Seerah* of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also shows his personal honesty and integrity. Thus, he gained considerable popularity among the people and became known as "Muhammad al-Amin." The Arabs often entrusted him with their belongings and talked about his honesty and efficiency even before being commissioned as a Prophet. As a result of Muhammad's (pbuh) integrity, truthfulness, honesty, wisdom and efficiency in commercial trade, he also earned a great deal of profit and attracted Khadijah, a rich widow, to marry him. Thus, *taqwa* is an important leadership quality because

the power and authority that leaders acquire can easily make them arrogant, leading to hatred among followers. thus the following, then, is proposed:

**Proposition 5:** *Taqwa has significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision-making quality.*

#### *Spirit of sacrifice*

Simplicity and self-sacrifice are other qualities that Islam urges, especially for leaders. A leader is a role model, and his behaviour has direct bearing on the conduct of others. If the leader is seen to be making personal sacrifices, then the followers will make even greater sacrifices. Similarly, leaders must have no personal or class interests. The Prophets never did anything to benefit themselves or their families. In fact, throughout their lives, they made great personal sacrifices for Allah and their companions. Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh), for instance, received communication from God to sacrifice his son Ismail, whom he loved so much (Qur'an surah As-Saafat 37:102-108). Prophet Ibrahim was willing to make a personal sacrifice for God and was honoured for his faithfulness to God. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) denied himself even the smallest comforts of life while the rulers of Persia and Rome enjoyed great luxury (Bangash, 2000). The Prophet regarded such comforts as elements for people who wish to cling to this *dunya* (worldly life).

A spirit of sacrifice is another area in which the Islamic order is fundamentally different from today's predominantly secular Western systems. An Islamic leader and those in positions of authority make sacrifices so that the down-trodden will have more; ostentatious living is specifically discouraged. Islam encourages its adherents to *"Eat and drink [of what Allah has provided you] but do not be extravagant"* (Al-Qur'an 7:31). Similarly, it rejects gross inequalities in society that ultimately lead to conflict and violence. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 6:** *The spirit of sacrifice has significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision making quality.*

#### **3.1.4 Principal**

The prophet's character features not only "leadership as a personal quality" but also "leadership as an organisational function." The first connotes an extraordinary mix of personal traits, whilst the second pertains to the managerial propensity to marshal resources for effective decision-making within the organisation (Noor, 1998). Leadership as an organisational function consists of three principles: attunement, alignment and empowerment.

The three-loop orientation that combines alignment, attunement and empowerment in nation-building and organisational development is an approach advocated by some leading management gurus.

#### *Alignment (Articulation of Vision)*

Alignment is the direction-setting aspect of leadership. It is an inductive process that engenders a vision of greatness and fosters a sense of mission among an organisation's people (Noor 1998). Clear articulation of the vision and firm conviction of the leader are the primary requirements for any movement to bring about change. Those who are invited to join must know the ultimate objective.

For example, Prophet Ibrahim's (pbuh) vision was to spread monotheism and build a new nation where his descendants would live as a unified people with a belief in monotheism, concern for the helpless, and justice for all. Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) emigrated, as related in the Qur'an surah Al-Ankabut 29:26: *"And Lot believed him, and said: Lo! I am a fugitive unto my Lord. Lo! He, only He, is the Mighty, the Wise."* In another verse (As-Saffat 37: 99), Allah Almighty says: *"And he said: Lo! I am going unto my Lord Who will guide me."* So, Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) travelled from place to place to spread the name of Allah. Another vision of Ibrahim (pbuh) involved a place where people would be in peace, able to concentrate solely for the worship of Allah. Ibrahim's (pbuh) wish was answered when Allah ordered him to build the Sacred House, the Ka'bah. He had his vision fulfilled before settled in a town in Palestine, where he died and was buried. That town, Al-Khalil Ibrahim, (Hebron), is now named after him (Al-Qaradawi). Ibrahim (pbuh) not only had a vision but was also able to communicate this vision to descendants living hundreds of generations later, via the "Abrahamic Religion."

When Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) started to deliver the message of Islam, it was clear and concise; there was no ambiguity about the worship of the One and only God, who has no partners, and Muhammad – peace be upon him - was the messenger of Allah. The vision was articulated in such a way that tribal and family affiliations were not only loosened but also broken. Those who wanted to carry on the old tradition because they would be its principal beneficiaries became its greatest opponents. This situation became evident in Makkah, where members of many leading families joined the new faith by braving the wrath of their kindred. Rejection of the existing order was an important part of the vision. The Prophet also made clear, through his own example, that there could be no cooperation with the existing *jahili* system. Thus, the goal was articulated in such a way that its recipients understood it clearly and were prepared to face any challenge, including separation from their families, to defend it ([www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb.leader.html](http://www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb.leader.html)).

In the Prophet of Islam's leadership model, alignment refers to the *tawhid*, or the Paradigm of the Oneness of God, and this alignment is tempered by *Iman* (faith). Fully subscribing to *tawhid* implies that one truly believes in Allah SWT, has faith in Him and fears Him. The leader or manager who is spiritually aligned will always remember that he is vertically accountable to God Almighty for all of his actions. As such, he will continuously be mindful of the need to please the Creator and not do things that are construed to be negative; he will always seek to enjoin good and forbid evil (*'amr malaruf, nah'i munkar*). Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 7:** *Alignment has significant influence on leader-follower relationship and subsequent decision-making quality*

#### *Attunement*

Together with the clear articulation of the vision, the leader must inspire and motivate people. The leader must attune people's indifference to interest and turn their pessimism into optimism, while motivating them to action for the realisation of the goal. Attunement is the *esprit d'corps*, the will, the emotion, the passion and the compassion that together fire the process of goal attainment (Noor, 1998). Attunement garners the spirit of teamwork to prevail, with everyone contributing towards a meaningful level of performance. It enhances the communication process and enjoins all the members of the organisation to move forward in unison. The noble messenger of Allah was able to motivate people who not only accepted the message but were also prepared to sacrifice their lives for it. This level of commitment was not inspired by any enticements to worldly gains; their only reward, they were told, was in the Hereafter (Banggash, 2000). The Qur'an narrates the stories of many Prophets who delivered the message, though their people did not accept it. When Prophet Lut (pbuh) urged his people to abandon their abominable ways, there was nothing wrong with the message or with his articulation of it, but his people rejected it nevertheless. Thus, acceptance of the message is an important part of the mission. If the message is not accepted, the mission remains unfulfilled ([www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb-leaders.html](http://www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb-leaders.html)).

In the Prophetic leadership model, attunement refers to *ibadah* or daily acts of faith. By committing oneself to daily actions that enjoin good and forbid evil, the managerial leader will help foster a human environment of understanding and caring for each other's well-being. In time, when the daily acts of faith are done in unison as a *jama'ah* (congregation), the acts will constitute the team's "shared values in action" (Noor, 1998). Therefore, attunement will influence followers to achieve organisational goals. Therefore, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 8:** *Attunement has significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision making quality.*

#### *Empowerment*

Empowerment is the willingness to enable people with skills and knowledge to use their talents and energies to become increasingly effective. When people are empowered, they are able to solve work-related problems and make decisions, preferably as a team unit.

A successful leader is able to empower, guide and control change to achieve the stated objectives. Prophet Musa (pbuh) empowered his brother, Prophet Harun (pbuh), who was in charge of the flock (Al-Qur'an 2:92-93) during his absence, to receive the *Tawrat* and establish the *Shari'ah* for the Israelites. However, Prophet Musa's mission was temporarily sabotaged by a Samaritan; as the Qur'an says, *After he left, Moses' people adopted a calf made from their ornaments, a form which made a lowing sound... (Surat al-A'raf: 148).*

Often, organisations and nations falter in the face of stiff competition and while undergoing adjustments in response to new technology because they do not believe enough in the ability of their people to act independently for the good of their employers or leaders. Such people feel powerless and unmotivated when their initiatives are not appreciated. But when empowerment is employed, people feel wanted and appreciated. People appreciate being given the opportunity to decide and the freedom to act; under these conditions, they will usually tend to do their utmost to achieve the declared mission. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 9:** *Empowerment has significant influence on leader-follower mutuality and subsequent decision making quality.*

### 3.1.5 Posture

In the process of decision making, the Prophets of Islam adopted the three basic postures of Islamic leadership: *syura* (mutual consultation), *adl bil-qist* (justice with equity) and *decisiveness*, in all of their dealings with his ummah and in the decision making process.

#### *Shura and Hurriyyah al-qalam (Freedom of Expression)*

*Shura* is a process involving mutual consultation that must be adhered to by those in positions of authority so as to ensure a sense of participation and fairness in problem-solving and decision-making. The Qur'an calls upon all Muslim leaders to consult those who are affected or are more knowledgeable and better informed about the issue at hand (Qur'an 3:159; 42:38). Allah says: *"And, those who answer the Call of their Lord" [i.e., to believe that He is the only One Lord, (Allah), and to worship none but Him Alone], and perform As -Salat (Iqamat -ai -Salat), and who (conduct) their affair by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them" (Ash-Shura, 42:38).*

The most outstanding example of the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) *Shura* occurred on the eve of the Battle of Uhud (3AH). The Prophet accepted that the majority wanted to go out and fight, although he was of the opinion that the city should be defended from within. He did not impose his own opinion, as the Prophet felt that the followers' trust and confidence would be gained if their opinions were respected. The revelation by God Almighty serves as a strong reminder to all that consultation with others is obligatory. In the Battle of Ditch/Kandaq (5AH), the suggestion of the companion (Salman) to dig a trench as a defence mechanism worked well for the Muslims. This situation shows the spirit of *shura* was in evidence during the prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) time. Similarly, during the battle of Badr, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) gave His companions *hurriyah al-qalam*, the freedom to express their opinions, and thus, they won the battle. It was narrated that Hubab ibn Mundhir, who was not a leading personality among the Companions, stood up and gave this opinion: *"O God's Messenger! If you were not ordered by God to be positioned here, let us be positioned around the wells and close up all but one of them in order to prevent the supply of water to the enemy. You set up your camp at the side of that one well (from which we will take water), and we will encircle you."* Muhammad accepted his view.

The story of Prophet Moses (pbuh) also teaches us that cooperation, compromise and encouragement are essential in warding off heedlessness. This can be seen from Prophet Musa's request for a companion to help him be better and to glorify Allah more. Thus, in many verses of the Qur'an, Allah admonishes His *um'mah* to remain together. Hence, is the following is proposed:



**Proposition 10:** *Syura and Huriyyah Al-Kalam have positive relationships with decision making quality.*

*'Adl and Rahmah*

'Adl (justice and equity) and Rahmah (compassion) are two other essential characteristics a leader must possess. Justice without compassion leads to tyranny, and compassion without justice creates anarchy (Bangash, 2000). The Muslim leader has to lead with a sense of justice and fairness to all of his followers regardless of their race, nationality or faith. The Qur'an commands all Muslims to be just and equitable, even when it involves those opposed to them (Al-Qur'an 5:08; 4:135; 7:29). Allah says: "o you who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witness lest o Allah, even against yourselves, or your parents or your kin, be he rich or poor; for Allah can protect both so follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid, justice, and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, Allah is ever well-acquainted with what you do" (An-Nisaa. 4:135).

Al-Nawwas ibn Sam'an reported that the Prophet said, "Righteousness is good character, and sin is what rankles in your heart about which you do not want people to know." Additionally, Wabisah ibn Ma'bad said: "I came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) who said, 'You have come to ask about righteousness?' 'Yes,' I answered. He said, 'Ask your own heart for a fatwa. Righteousness is when the soul feels peace and the heart feels peace, and sin is what creates restlessness in the soul, and rumbles in the bosom, even though people give their opinion (in your favour) and continue to do so."

When the Prophet consolidated the position of the Muslims in Madinah, he concluded a treaty (Al-Dhimmah) with neighbouring Jewish tribes for the defence of the city. Muhammad (pbuh) was recognised as the undisputed leader, judge and supreme Governor of the citizens of Madinah: "Give (thy) judgement in accordance with what Allah has revealed. Be not influenced by their wishes ;and beware of them lest they make thee depart from some injunction given thee by Allah" (Al-Maidah , 5:49). Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 11:** *'Adl and Rahmah have positive relationships with decision-making quality*

*Decisiveness and Resolution*

A leader must be decisive and resolute. He must demonstrate such qualities at all times because a decision delayed may be an opportunity lost. The Prophet himself showed great decisiveness at many critical moments in life, such as when dealing with the Jewish tribes in Madinah (the Banu Qaiynuqa', Banu Nadhir and Banu Quraidha) after their treachery was exposed. The Banu Qaiynuqa' were expelled from Madinah following the Battle of Badr because of their scandalous behaviour towards a Muslim woman in public. The Banu Nadhir was the next to violate the terms of the treaty during the Battle of Uhud, followed by Banu Quraidha that broke their treaty obligations by conspiring with the Quraish to undermine Muslims during the Battle of Ahzab (5AH). Thus, the Jewish menace in Madinah was eliminated. Only a leader with firmness and conviction could implement such a policy ([www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb-leader.html](http://www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb-leader.html)).

Further, Prophet Muhamad, upon whom be peace, advised Abu Dharr, a very close companion who was weak in physique, not to seek a leadership position because such a task was not for the weak. Those who are given such responsibility must live up to its obligations (Bangash 2000). If they fail, they violate a great trust and are answerable for it on the day of Judgement. It is clear from the Prophet's *Sunnah* that decisiveness and firmness are important considerations for leadership; those who are weak are not fit for it (Noor, 1998). Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 12:** *Decisiveness and resolution have positive relationships with decision-making quality.*

### **3.1.6 Synergy (leader-follower mutuality)**

The fusion of these four elements of personal qualities, religious spirituality, posture and principals will produce the synergy of a leader-follower mutuality, one of the essential qualities of a leader. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) achieved this both in Makkah and in Madinah. In Makkah, the people were persecuted, yet their loyalty was retained. In Madinah, the hosts

(*Ansar*) were motivated to make great sacrifices by accommodating and caring for newcomers (*Muhajiroun*), as well as by offering protection for the Prophet. An additional challenge was to prevent any misunderstandings arising between the host and newcomers as a result of the sudden influx of such a large number of people in Madinah. There were troublemakers trying to create dissension in the Muslim ranks. The Quraysh of Makkah regularly sent emissaries to the notables of Madinah, urging them to eliminate the Muslims. There were those, like Abdullah ibn Ubayy<sup>4</sup>, who viewed the arrival of the Muslims as undermining their own leadership ambitions. The same was true of the Jews, who viewed the Muslims as undermining their monopoly on religious matters. Group solidarity was, therefore, extremely important for Muslims in the face of these challenges, though it was based on *iman* rather than on blood ties or tribal and ethnic identity. Similarly, mobilising resources to sustain the movement is another important task a leader must perform. ([www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb-leader.html](http://www.islamicthought.org/pp-zb-leader.html)).

Leader-follower mutuality is important because it provides some degree of quality decision making. The higher the level of the leader-follower mutuality, the greater the willingness of the people to identify with the mission and their readiness to make sacrifices for it; this situation leads to a higher degree of quality of the decision made to achieve organisational goals. Leader-follower mutuality is, therefore, an important consideration in the decision making quality.

**Proposition 13:** *The higher the level of synergy (leader-follower mutuality), the higher the quality of the decision made.*

### 3.1.7 Altruism

Altruism connotes the principle of living while having regards for, and acting for the good of, others, always showing compassion and concern (Webster's Dictionary). Altruistic behaviour conveys an attitude of caring and sharing, an unselfish concern for the continued well-being of others, a state of being mindful of the feelings of people around us while being considerate to their needs, and always striving towards a win-win outcome in whatever we do together (Fry 2003).

A good leader encourages his followers to serve others to get ahead in life. As a leader, one is bound by a position of divine trust to be responsible and accountable for executing justice, equity and consensus in all affairs of life. A leader may be a father, an *imam*, an administrator, a manager, a supervisor, or even an influential employee. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) pointed out that everyone is entrusted by God Almighty to be a khalifah or a shepherd:

*"Everyone of you is a shepherd, and everyone is responsible for what he is shepherd of," (Sahih al Bulehari; and Muslim)*

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was a proactive pioneer in getting things done for the cause of Allah SWT. To infuse *iman* or belief in his followers, he was forthright in his pronouncements about what was legitimate and what was forbidden of them. Additionally, he modelled himself through leadership by example, always setting the pace for others to follow. He always acted without displaying arrogance, but subjugated himself to the best interests of his *ummah* (community), remaining continually courageous but humble. In the process, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was regarded as a man of considerable integrity, with a passion to fulfil his mission and the compassion to help lead his people to the straight path.

As for Prophet Isa/Jesus (pbuh), he was a humble servant of the word of Allah. His truthfulness, love, justice and humbleness have been demonstrated in his model conduct of living. His peaceful disposition and gentleness had a great effect on the people while spreading peace, harmony, and blessings throughout the community. His goal was the well-being of the people. A study by Winston (2004) offers early and potential insights into Jesus' (Isa) decision making. According to Winston, although many of the decisions made by Isa were completed at levels directed by rules and laws or through a rational process, the decisions were made based on '*agapao*,' an inherent love of others. Koenig (2007) also asserts Mark 10:42-52 in the Bible also addressed Jesus (Isa) as a humble and servant-like leader who was never boastful or arrogant. Al-Qur'an; *Surah Maryam*: 19/32 reveals the following: "*Jesus said, "He has made me obedient to my mother, and He has not made me arrogant and unblest."*

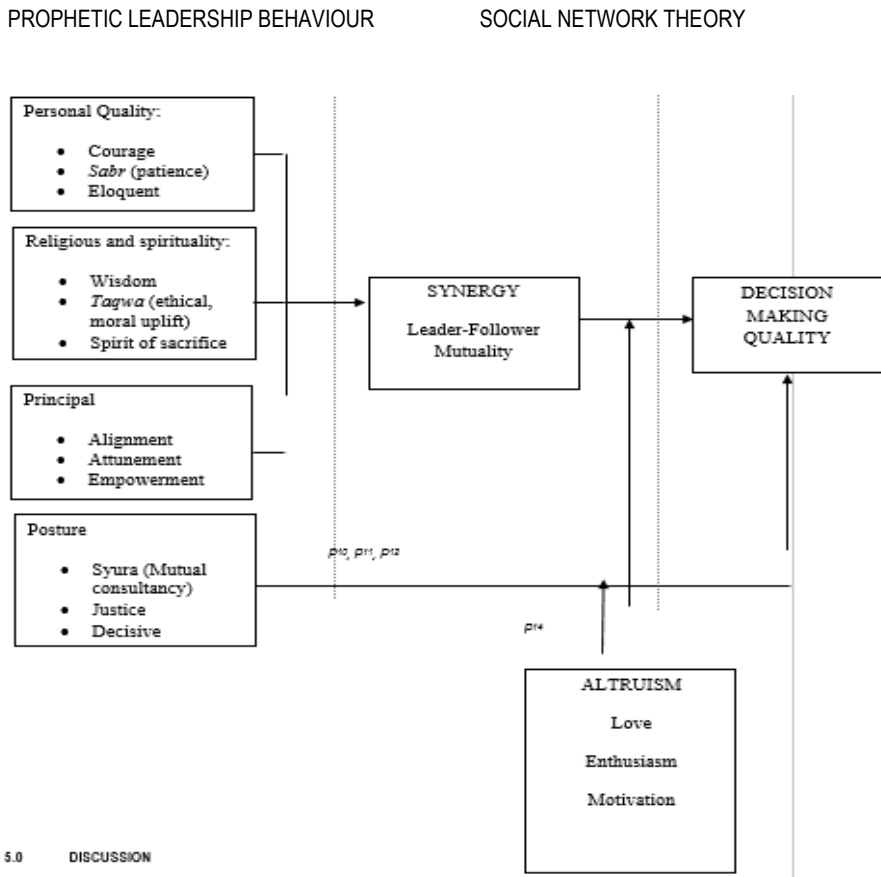
Thus, leadership involves the process of influencing people to transform their way of life, at times through affirmative action, to achieve betterment. A change for the better could be achieved through modifying one's behaviour, one's circumstance, or one's environment (or any combination together) such that the outcome would benefit mankind in particular. Such a process signifies the basis of altruistic leadership (Noor 1998), which will enhance decision making quality. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 14:** *Altruism (altruistic leadership) will enhance the relationship between leadership behaviour and decision making quality.*

#### 4.0 PROPOSED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Prophetic leadership model is developed from the great examples of ‘Abrahamic faith’ prophets (i.e., Ibrahim; Musa; Isa; and Muhammad- may peace be upon them all) and their leadership behaviours. It integrates the leadership of the Prophets, which comprises their personal qualities, decision making processes (posture) and managerial skills (principal). The model is expressed in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: This framework presents the full version of the model that includes leadership behavioural theory, social network theory and the outcome.



5.0 DISCUSSION

#### 5.0 DISCUSSION

The evolution of leadership theory and practice has come to a point at which more integrative views are branching out, such as trait, transformational, spiritual, Islamic, and transcendental theories. The fundamental premise of this paper is to propose a normative integrated leadership theory called the prophetic leadership model. The starting point for exploring

this idea comes from Noor (1998) and Bangash (2000), who proposed a model that described the Prophets' leadership behaviours to influence leadership effectiveness. The present authors extend the model by integrating the social network theory into leadership theory (i.e., the Prophet's leadership behaviour to the followers' minds), which influences leader-follower mutuality and the actual social network structures and relationships that are established. These social networks ultimately facilitate decision making quality, where the leader's ability to influence others will depend, in part, on the social network in which that leader is embedded, as well as on how positive the network is regarding the leader's personal qualities and managerial skill.

Another rationale behind the concept of a social network is altruistic management. When we are good to other people, when we respect others, and when we are mindful of their needs and concerns, we are most likely to receive similar, mutual responses from them in our interactions with them. "Others" in this context includes our followers, as well as both the internal and external social networks. To attain and enhance decision making quality, the authors propose that altruism as a moderating factor in the decision making process (e.g., leader's posture) and decision making quality.

To achieve something worthwhile, as in attaining a quality decision, a leader has to grapple with a number of forces in a three-step approach. Firstly, he has to contend with himself and his followers. He has to determine his team's competency to handle the issues at hand, so as to ensure that the team's mission is accomplished. In the process, he has to inculcate love among the followers, to work with sincerity without prematurely anticipating the rewards as they are only administered thereafter (*akhirah*). Second, he needs to assess the motivation levels of his team members to keep their commitments alive. Thirdly, he has to make certain that each member of the team contributes in terms of functions and roles, to keep everyone enthused and focused. The altruistic leader has to continually keep in focus the super ordinate task at hand, while at the same time being truly mindful of the specific needs and expectations of his people. In doing so, he has to rise to the level of his true potential. This is where personal quality, posture and principals all prevail.

While much work remains to be done in terms of sharpening the construct definitions of prophetic leadership and operationalising it, in the opinion of the authors, prophetic leadership is an important and provocative concept that holds promise for multi-paradigmatic and multi-methodological theoretical and empirical research.

## 6.0 DIRECTION TO FUTURE RESEARCH

As the study of prophetic leadership is in the nascent stages of development, many avenues to refine the construct and move from the conceptual phase to empirical, theory building, and testing phases await leadership researchers. Development and validation of a measure of prophetic leadership that allows researchers to distinguish the construct from similar constructs empirically are needed (Cooper et al., 2005). In addition, studies are needed that relate prophetic leadership and followership development to other fields, such as finance, politics, and organisational behaviour. Qualitative studies, such as retrospective cases of prophetic leaders employing phenomenon analysis may be particularly useful in identifying the construct dimensions of prophetic leadership. In addition, Eisenhardt (1989) made a persuasive case for building a theory from the case study research by including either single or multiple cases. Continued development of the theory is a central activity when building a new construct.

Another avenue for future research involves the use of critical incidents of prophetic and un-prophetic leader behaviours to produce typologies of such behaviours, which may be instrumental in defining the nomological network of the construct domain more precisely. Qualitative interviewing lends itself to the elicitation of significant life stories that have served as trigger events. These events can be followed by an examination of the transformative effects by portraying personal quality, posture and principles, which are hypothesised here to be dimensions of prophetic leader that will influence a follower's mind, motivation and enthusiasm for higher qualities in decision making.

Although much work remains to be done, the prophetic leadership construct is important and promising. The inner lives of the Prophets and their followers show different situation guides and motivates scholars' to scrutinise the leadership behaviours and styles of the prophet. They also propose a model at multiple levels of analysis, while also enhancing the organisational effectiveness and performance. Religious and spiritual identity is posited to be at the core of prophetic leadership, presupposing that both the leader and the followers exhibit positive selves and leader identities that are shared. Duchon and Plowman (2005) did indeed report a positive relationship between scores on a spiritual measure and work unit performance. Prophetic leaders enhance performance and motivation and a highly developed sense of how their roles as

leaders carry the responsibility to act morally and in the best interest of others (May et al., 2003); they also enhance and deepen other followers' spiritual identities by creating conditions at work that nurture the human spirit.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, prophetic leadership development is the process by which personal quality, religious spirituality, decision making process (posture) and managerial skill (principal) converge and become unified in the prophetic leadership behaviour, which, in turn, is related to synergy (i.e., leaders-followers mutuality). Altruism as a moderating factor works toward the optimisation of performance and the establishment of an organisational climate that nurtures the human spirit at work, as well as positive and strength-based organisational cultures. In sum, religion and spirituality in prophetic leaders are drawn from the selfless ground of the human experience. Religion and spirituality recognise the emotional labour involved in the tasks and responsibilities of leadership, as well as the suffering and sacrifice that are integral components of prophetic leadership. The question of whether prophetic leadership leads to greater synergy between the leaders and the followers is yet to be tested for different organisational cultures.

The model of prophetic leadership introduced in this article includes leadership behaviour, synergy, altruism and decision making quality. The leadership behaviour encompasses personal quality, religious spirituality, posture and principle of a leader. Personal quality and religious spirituality are self defined as having courage, patience, eloquence, wisdom, taqwa and spirit of sacrifice. Posture reflects the decision making process as conceptualised by mutual consultancy, justice, equity and decisiveness. Principal is conceptualised by managerial skills, such as the dimensions of alignment, attunement and empowerment. Synergy serves as a bridge between leadership behaviour and decision making quality, while altruism will enhance the relationships. Both synergy and altruism are embedded in the social network theory. The model proposes that prophetic leaders are based on spiritual, transcendental and Islamic behaviours and values that view their responsibility as *ibadah*. Their leadership behaviour, taken from the prophets, will lead to better decision making.

Much work needs to be done, particularly with regards to (a) achieving a greater clarity of construct definitions, (b) addressing measurement issues, and (c) avoiding construct redundancy. With respect to construct clarity, the key dimensions of prophetic leadership have been defined in the present study to create a theoretically based definition. However, the current definition of prophetic leaders is based on the Qur'anic verse and *seerah* of the prophet, unaware of the context in which the current situation operates. As according to Avolio et al. (2004), it is very broad and contains many diverse elements from diverse domains (e.g., traits, states, behaviours, contexts) that pose serious measurement challenges.

At the present time, the study of prophetic leadership is hampered by both a lack of construct clarity and the absence of reliable and valid instruments of prophetic leadership. Achieving construct clarity involves identifying the relevant construct dimensions, specifying the interrelationships among construct dimensions, and identifying the boundaries within which the construct elements are interrelated in a lawful manner (Dubin, 1978). The social sciences have a strange inability to recognise that a theoretical model must have boundaries, even if the boundaries are overlapping. Finally, the issue of construct redundancy involves the need to avoid overlaps between construct dimension of prophetic leadership and other values-based theories such as spiritual, transcendent or Islamic leadership. One of the important research challenges ahead is establishing the discriminant validity of the prophetic leadership construct. If discriminant validity cannot be established, then the question raised by Cooper et al. (2005) regarding the need for creating other leadership constructs becomes highly relevant. If the prophetic leadership construct is not unique (i.e., fails to demonstrate discriminant validity), time and effort may be more effectively spent using existing theories to address questions generated by prophetic leadership.

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