Philosophical Underpinnings of Islamic Management Method: Worldview, Epistemology and Ontology

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Abstract

This article focusses on the discussion pertaining to the philosophical underpinnings of Islamic management method. It represents the elements that should form the basis of determining and characterising Islamic management method and to differentiate it with the conventional management method. The basic elements referred to are worldview (tasawur), epistemology and ontology of the management mehod itself. The conventional management method is used extensively in almost all institutions including Islamic development institutions. For example, the Total Quality Management (TQM), the Quality Control Cirlces (QCC) and the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) have often been used to manage a substantial part of today's Islamic development institutions. The question which arises is whether these conventional management method are appropriate to be adopted in managing the Islamic development institutions or the Islamic based development itself? Does it have sufficient analytical instruments to examine and decipher management challenges and even more so to offer management solutions according to Islam? This article seeks to address these issues with the focus of discussion on the three elements that have become the fundamental basis of assessing the underlying philosophic assumptions of management method that is the mould or tasawur (worldview), its basis of knowledge or epistemology and its characteristics or ontology.

Introduction

Most of the Islamic development institutions that are being developed today aim at offering products and services that are based on Islam. However, one aspect that has not been given due emphasis in the process of developing these institutions is their management. Although there is an increasing trend in developing these Islamic development institutions which is comparable to the increase in the products and services that are being offered, nonetheless there has been no guideline formulated on a specific management method to be adopted in managing the Islamic development institutions. Currently the most dominant management method is the conventional management such as the Total Quality Management (TQM), the Quality Control Circles (QCC) and the Business Process Reengineering (BPR).

These methods are widely used by the development institutions including Islamic development institutions. The question which arises is whether these conventional management methods are appropriate to be adopted in managing the Islamic development institutions? Does it have sufficient analytical instruments to use as a management method and to decipher management challenges and even more so to offer management solutions at the institutional level according to Islam? Logically the management method used by the Islamic development institutions should also be based on the referencing framework that is in tandem with Islam itself.

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In other words, the basis of Islam must be used as the framework or the main axis of management method for the Islamic development institutions. The emphasis on this matter is important to ensure that that the management of an Islamic development institution corresponds to Islam.

This article will try to examine the basis used to develop the conventional management method framework that is the mould or worldview or as referred to in this paper - *tasawur*, its basis of knowledge or epistemology and its characteristics or ontology. For the comparative purposes, this article will provide discussions on the Islamic *tasawur*, epistemology and ontology. The examination on these three elements of *tasawur*, epistemology and ontology are important. The *tasawur* element formulates the mould which includes the philosophy which in turn moulds a management method. The epistemological element determines the sources for the formation of a management method. In the meantime ontological element brings up the analysis regarding the characteristics in the management method (Muhammad Syukri Salleh et.al., 2004 and Sirajuddin Zar, 2004:6). The main objective is to formulate the philosophical underpinnings of the conventional management methods and to differentiate it with the Islamic management methods.

The Tasawur of Management Method

From the conventional terminology *tasawur* is referred to as worldview. It comes from a German word *weltanschauung* (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 2002). Literally the word *weltanschauung* means to view (or *anschauung*) the world (or *welt*). Technically, it is defined as a perception framework and the conviction of an individual regarding his world and how he interacts with it (Hill & Rauser, 2006). According to Apostel & Van der Veken (1994) the construction of perception and conviction of an individual should encompass seven elements that are ontology or characteristics of the world, the description regarding the world's characteristics, the description pertaining to the world, futurology or the direction to be taken in this world, axiology or the world's value, the methodology or the method as to how to attain the world's objective, epistemology or the basis of knowledge regarding the world and aetiology or the history to the making of the world. Although these elements pertaining to the worldview seems comprehensive nonetheless according to the conventional understanding these seven elements are limited to the experience that an individual has gone through (Carroll, 1997). It is very different with the worldview that is referred to as *tasawur* in Islam.

The word *tasawur* in Islam is derived from the Arabic language. It is derived from the root word *sawwara* that also means an outlook on something (Haron Din, 1992: 3 and Ramli Awang, 2002: 6)[2]. Nonetheless the outlook or view that is referred to in Islam is not only limited to an individual's experience solely. Specifically, Islamic *tasawur* means as the real and actual outlook and truism regarding Islam that aims to explain in totality basic Islamic principles truthfully and comprehensively that it blends in a person after he understands the same (Haron Din, 1992: 3; Ramli Awang, 2002: 6 and Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2003: 21)[3]. Mohd Kamal Hassan (1993) defined Islamic *tasawur* as a comprehensive meaning pertaining to the universe and human's interaction with it from the Islamic perspective and that the understanding forms the basis of a person's view of his life.

From the elaboration of the definitions presented, Haron Din (1992:28) thereafter formulated the basis or roots of Islamic *tasawur*. According to him, the root of Islamic *tasawur* is Islam as the godly (*rabbani*) religion. This means Islam is the absolute rights of Allah. As such, the Muslim *ummah* is obliged to accept and practise Islam as ordained and prescribed by Allah. Ramli Awang (2002:15-53) on the other hand deduced three fundamental features in Islamic *tasawur* First, Allah as the Creator; Second, man as the creature; and Third, this universe also as the creature.

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[2] Ramli Awang (2002:5) quoted from Ibn Manzur (t.t:2533), 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Syarif al-Gurgani (t.t:61) and *al-Munjid fi al-Lughah wa al-A'lam* (1975:440) presented four definitions for this root word *sawwara*. First, to give a perception to the form that is viewed; Second to try and give an actual view on something; Third, to give an actual outlook on something; And fourth to produce the outline of the thing in the mind.

[3] Some writers tried to use the conventional term in referring to the meaning of Islamic *tasawur*. Muhammad al-Buraey (1985:309) and Mohd. Kamal Hassan (1993) for example used the term Islamic worldview in referring to the real and actual view on Islam. Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud (1994:15) on the other hand used the term Islamic *weltanschauung* in referring to the same meaning. However, according to Haron Din (1992:2), these two terms Islamic *worldview* and *weltanschauung* do not give an accurate definition on the Islamic *tasawur* term itself. As such Haron Din and a few other writers are inclined to use the Arabic term Islamic *tasawur* to explain the meaning of the actual and true view of Islam itself.

The basis of Islamic *tasawur* is the utmost and important matter as well as the differentiating point between the Islamic system of life as well as the other living systems. It also includes the differentiating point between the management methods for Islamic development institutions or referred to as the Islamic management method to that of conventional management method.

In the Islamic management method, Islamic *tasawur* should be the basis or the mould that forms the management method (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2003:21). There are three foundational features to the Islamic *tasawur* that is provided by Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003:19-23) that is Allah as the Creator, man as a creature and the universe also as a creature as the *tasawur* fundamental basis of Islamic based development. Besides Muhammad Syukri Salleh, Khurshid Ahmad (1980:178-179), Aidit Ghazali (1990:22-23) and Md. Zaki Abd Manan et.al. (2004:4-7) have also presented the fundamental basis that corresponds with the three foundational features of Islamic *tasawur* in developing anything within the tenets and doctrines of Islam. These fundamental basis refer to tauhid, *rububiyyah*, *khilafah* and *tazkiyyat* in order to gain *al-falah* in reality is borne from the three foundational features of the said Islamic *tasawur*.

On the other hand, the source of conventional management method is actually based on the conventional social sciences philosophy such as capitalism and socialism which differ from the three fundamental features of Islamic *tasawur*. Conceptually the basis of the conventional management method's worldview focuses solely on the economic ability such as the objective to maximise output, maximise profit and maximise consumption as well as economic supremacy[4]. It also puts the mass consumption as the main and ultimate aim of managing institutions (Carroll, 1997). Such world view indirectly negates the *tasawur* of Allah as the Creator. It also negates Allah's blessings (*mardat Allah*) that should form the main and real aim.

Besides, man's function, in the world view of conventional management generally is in conflict with the second root of *tasawur* Islam that is man as a creature of Allah. In the conventional management understanding, man is regarded as an economic creature whose function is to merely produce and consume (Hagen, 1958 & 1962). However based on *tasawur* Islam, man as Allah's creature has a more specific role than that. The production and consumption activities are part of the tools for man to carry out or defend his specific responsibility that is encumbered upon him[5]. The specific functions of man referred to is man as servant and vicegerent of Allah. According to Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003:31) man's function as servant and vicegerent of Allah is realised through two relationship dimensions. Man's function as servant of Allah is realised through his vertical relationship with Allah as the Creator. In the meantime his function as the vicegerent of Allah is realised through the horizontal relationship with other human beings and the natural resources as the creatures of Allah. As such man in the conventional management method is seen as a human being that is not complete and not taking the role that he is meant to be.

Furthermore the premise which rests on the scarcity of natural resources and man's unlimited wants in the conventional management method's world view conflicts with the three fundamental features of Islamic *tasawur*. Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003:54) for example stressed that the issue on the scarcity of natural resources would not exist if seen from the perspective of Tauhid that is the Creator-Creature relationship between Allah and the natural resources. This is because these natural resources which to Allah belongs the absolute rights and ownership should not be restricted as it has been created and bestowed to His servants according to His Divine will[6].

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[4] Please refer to Carroll (1997).

[5] According to Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003:23), man's responsibility and function has been prescribed before the birth of man, that is, from the time man was in the world of *ruh* (sublime). For this, Muhammad Syukri Salleh referred to averse in al-Quran (Surah al-A'raf, 7:172) which provides the following intrrpretation: "*And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We testify," lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "Verily, we have been unaware of this.*"

[6] Relevant to this matter Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003:72) quoted a verse from al-Quran that bears the following understanding: "*And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him.*" (Surah al-Talaq, 65: 2-3).

Furthermore Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003:73) stated that the implementation of the distribution management in Islam which represents the manifestation of man's status as a creature also has the competence to overcome the scarceness of these natural resources[7]. Besides, man's wants and desires could also be restricted when man as Allah's creature strives to manage his *nafs* (desires) so much so that he achieves the level of the noble *nafs* for the sake of reaching Allah's *redha* (pleasures) (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2003a: 13)[8]. The dissension of conventional management methods' worldview pertaining to the scarcity of the natural resources and man's umlimited wants has made the analytical instruments imprecise to be used in managing an Islamic development institution.

In short, the *tasawur* of conventional management method is shaped in the social sciences mould that makes the material and physical aspects as the focus and absolute purpose. It is not in tandem, in fact, it conflicts with the three fundamental features of Islamic *tasawur* that is Allah as the Creator, man as the creature and the universe also as the creature. As such, from the *tasawur* point of view the conventional management method is not suitable to be adopted on the Islamic development institution. Conversely, Islamic *tasawur* should be made the fundamental basis in the Islamic management method.

The Epistemology of Management Method

Besides *tasawur*, another basic aspect that characterises a management method is the epistemological aspect. Epistemology is defined as the theory of knowledge. It is derived from a Greek word *episteme* meaning knowledge and *logos* which means theory, science or research (Blackburn, 1996: 123). Typically epistemology refers to the research pertaining to the source, classification, specialization and limitation for knowledge (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2006; Woozley, 1966; Hamlyn, 1967 and Dancy, 1985). It encompasses the elements of generating knowledge, the relationship of knowledge with the truth, the reasons why knowledge is acquired, the changes that occur in knowledge, the relationship of knowledge with man's experience and the mind's limitations to translate knowledge (Blackburn, 1996 and Amini Amir Abdullah, 1997:25).[9] Simply, epistemology epitomizes an area that considers the details of every process involved in the effort to acquire knowledge (Jujun Suriasumantri, 1990:10 and Khairusy Syakirin, 2003).

With the scholars of Islam, the term epistemology or the study pertaining to knowledge is referred to as *nazariyyat al-maʿrifat* (Hussein al-Kaff, nd)[10].

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[7] Among the distribution mechanisms in Islam are *zakat*, charitable alms, *waqf*, wills, *faraid* (inheritance), *hibah* (gifts) and others. Please refer to Muhammad Syukri Salleh & Fadzila Azni Ahmad (2000:146).

[8] Man's unlimited wants are motivated by the stages of *nafs* or the lowest level of *nafs* that is *ammarat*, *lawwamat* dan *mulhamat*. The *nafs* at these levels push man to act or consume excessively or elavishly. The higher level of *nafs* such as *mutmaʿinnat*, *radiyat*, *mardiyyat* and *kamilat* that is achieved the processes of *mujahadat al-nafs*, *radiyat al-nafs*, *tarbiyyat al-nafs* and *tazkiyyat al-nafs* on the other hand has the ability to control man's wants and desires (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2002:42-43 & 2003a:75).

[9] Based on the range of definitions of epistemology there are also writers who defined epistemology as the philosophy of knowledge which is a field that discusses pertaining to the truth, meaning, content, sources and the process of knowledge (Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud,1993). Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah (2005:9) on the other hand is of the opinion that epistemology is only one of the components to the rudimental question of the philosophy of knowledge. Besides epistemology another aspect that is the object of the philosophy of knowledge's examination is ontology. Whereas Jujun Suriasumantri (1995:32) is of the view that the philosophy of knowledge is a component from epistemology. He referred epistemology as a learning philosophy. For a more detailed explanation, pelase refer to Jujun Suriasumantri (1995).

[10] The term *nazariyyat al-maʿrifat* in reality has not been used widely or accepted universally in the Islamic world. Based on the writing of Husein al-Kaff (nd), this term is used by Jawad Amuli (nd) through his writings *Nazariyyat al-Maʿrifat*, Muhammad Baqir Shadr (nd) through his works *Falsafatuna* and Mutahhari (nd) through his works *Syinakht*. Sirajuddin Zar (2004:6) on the other hand refers epistemology as *al-Maʿrifat* by quoting the works of Umar Muhammad al-Taumiy al-Syibani entitled *Muqaddamat fi al-Falsafah al-Islamiyat* (1976:30-31). The limited works pertaining to Islamic epistemology does not mean that the study on it represents an alienated aspect in the Islamic world. In fact the study pertaining to epistemology started in the early eighth century. It started in the period of Mutakallimun that is the age of the development of *'ilmu kalam* or the knowledge that articulates about the belief (*Aqaʿid*) which corresponds with the teachings of Islam. It was from these discussions on *'ilmu kalam* during the period of Mutakallimun that generated various schools of thoughts in Islam. Amongst them is Syiʿah, Khawarij and Murjiʾah who emerged initially from the political crisis with the Muslim *ummah* but later modified to differences of belief from the theological perspective. These differences prolonged until it gave rise to

Although literally *nazariyyaṯ al-maʿrifaṯ* also means the theory pertaining to knowledge nonetheless the concept of knowledge in Islam differs greatly as compared to the concept of knowledge from the conventional understanding. According to the conventional understanding, knowledge signifies the actual presumption or belief on a matter after it has been justified (Blackburn, 1996: 123).[11] The justification referred to in the understanding of knowledge in the conventional context refers to the specific detailing and that the said detailings differ from one conventional school of thought to another conventional school of thought.

The rationalism school of thought which is deeply rooted from the ideas of Heraclitus (550-480 BC), Socrates (470-399 BC), Plato (429-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC) refer to justification, for example, as a result that can be achieved through rational thought that is the method and the analytical process based solely on the logical mind (Honer & Hunt, 1990:113-115 and Ghazali Basri, 1990:2-5).[12] In other words, the rationalism refutes and forms of knowledge that is regarded as not logical including the knowledge on religion. This is accentuated by Descartes and Kant (Louay Safi, 1998:190; Mohd. Idris Jauzi, 1990 and Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2000:72).[13]

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diversified schools of thoughts that are divergent with one another such as Qadariyah, Jabbariyah, Mujassimah, Karramiah, Mu'tazilah, Asy'ariyah and Maturidiyyah (Abdul Shukor Husin, 1994:35 and Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2002:99-106). Although the schools of thoughts' crisis of that time was dominated by the Mu'tazilah and opposed strongly by Asy'ariyyah and Maturidiyyah which seemingly showed the division within the Muslim *ummah* nonetheless the crisis was the beginning point of debates and criticism pertaining to knowledge which was quite organized in the Islamic world. However the discussion and debates that had been carried out was never done in detail or specifically and never directly related to Islamic epistemology (Hasbullah Bakry, 1978:7 and Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2002:95-106). In fact according to Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2001) the discussion at that time was eclectic in feature as it was done fragmentally with the other branches of knowledge in Islam. Only in the mid ninth century detailed discussions were done which took into account the guidance and integration of the other branches of knowledge in Islam. Among the pioneers of such discussions were the philosophers such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Hasbullah Bakry, 1978:7; Muhammad 'Utsman Najati, 2002 and Sirajuddin Zar, 2004:26). However the views of these philosophers especially those of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina pertaining to Islamic philosophy including Islamic epistemology were challenged and disputed by Imam al-Ghazali because it was rooted with Aristotle and Plato's thoughts who were the Greek philosophers. As such Imam al-Ghazali wrote on *Maqasid al-Falasifaṯ* (The Aim of the Philosophers' Thoughts) to understand the basis of the contemporary philosophers of that time. *Tahafut al-Falasifaṯ* (The Turmulous Thoughts of the Philosophers) was written to criticise the thoughts of some philosophers that were said to have diverted from the teachings of Islam. *Mi'yar al-'Ilm* (The Measuring Scale of Knowledge) was to further explain the terms used in his *Tahafut al-Falasifaṯ* and to explain the thinking methods and issues pertaining to real knowledge in Islam and *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* (The Saviour from Falsehood) that clarifies his way and methodology of thoughts that have been inundated by the philosophical school of thoughts until he became a *sufi* (Adil Za'bub, 1993:25-34 and Sirajuddin Zar, 2004:158-161). The discussion and debate within these philosophers indirectly developed the Islamic epistemology discipline whereas the above mentioned works of Imam al-Ghazali are regarded as an important point of reference for Islamic epistemology (Hasbullah Bakry, 1978:28).

[11] The definition of '*justified true belief*' was presented by Plato through his work *Theaetetus*. *Theaetetus* was a product based on the dialogue that ocurred in 369 BC within some of the classical Greek thinkers that is Socrates, Theodorus (5th Century BC) and Theaetetus (414-369 BC) who discussed the meaning of knowledge. For a more detailed discussion please refer to Gettier (1963:121-123). The meaning of '*justified true belief*' as presented by Plato is widely used within today's conventional scholars to define knowledge. *Theaetetus* work has also been used as a basic source of reference for the modern Western epistemology (Blackburn, 1996:123).

[12] Logic in actual fact comes from the Greek word *logos* which means speech, statement, ideas and reasoning. The word logic was used by Heraclitus to refer to rational principles that administers the world. Thereafter Plato developed the role of logic as an analytical method and process to attain knowledge. Aristotle then separated and rearranged the status of logic until it became a distinct discipline of knowledge (Bourke, 1962:263 and Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2002:45). It was through this axial of the thinking and analytical method of these classical Greek thinkers that the foundation to rationalism was formed. Rationalism was then further developed by the conventional rationalism scholars from the Scholastic Christians for example Erigena (810-877), Anselm (1033-1109) and Aquinas (1225-1274) and modern conventional scholars such as Descartes (1596–1650), Spinoza (1632–1677), Leibniz (1646–1716) and Kant (1724-1804) (Bourke, 1962:263).

[13] Descartes for example emphasized that the questions on the morality principle and faith is not knowledge as it has no connection with the mind (Mohd Idris Jauzi, 1990).

The empiricism school of thought Epicurus (341-270 BC) and the Stoics sect (around the year 310 BC) on the other hand identified observable facts and experience as the absolute tools to acquire knowledge (Honer & Hunt, 1990:117 and Ghazali Basri, 1990:6).[14] Indirectly, empiricism only recognises *a posteriori* knowledge that is knowledge that is acquired after the senses have discerned or obtained through man's experience. It therefore denies *a priori* knowledge that is any form of knowledge that preceeds man's experience (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 1994:40&52 and Louay Safi, 1998:157). Besides rationalism and empiricism, other schools of thoughts have evolved as a result of the synthesis from these two schools of thoughts. Among them are the idealism school of thought founded by Kant (1724-1804) and the scientific school of thought founded by Bacon (1214-1294).[15] For these schools of thoughts, the analytical method for rationalism as well as empiricism is incorporated in achieving knowledge. In addition, the scientific school of thought also makes the objectivity principle (value free attitude) as the basis in considering and analysing a particular matter (Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2002:57-71).

In short, knowledge according to the conventional understanding is limited to whatever that can be perceived by the senses, that has gone through experience or that can be discerned solely by the mind.[16] This is the point of difference between the concepts of knowledge from the conventional understanding to that of Islam. In Islam, knowledge is not limited to matters that can be perceived solely by the senses or even those that can be achieved by the rational mind only. This is emphasized by al-Maturidi in his book *al-Tawhid* which states that knowledge can be reached through real perception (senses), true wisdom and verbal transmission of information or traditional information received from those who are trustworthy (Syed Muhammad Dawilah, 1993: 13).This view is also supported by Imam al-Ghazali through his writings, *al-Jawahir al-Ghawali Min Rasa'il al-Imam al-Ghazali* detailing that verbal transmission of information or traditional information as knowledge that is eclectically *rabbaniyyah* and *ladunniyyah* that is revealed knowledge and *ladunni*[17] knowledge. The revealed knowledge referred to is with regards to Allah's dictates as mentioned in al-Quran and the *Sunnat* of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. This revealed knowledge is also acknowledged as the main and absolute source of knowledge in Islam. In the meantime the *ladunni* knowledge on the other hand epitomizes the unique way of receiving knowledge. It is conferred by Allah directly to the selected individuals due to the singularity of the individual according to Allah (Amini Amir Abdullah, 1997:27 and Ezad Azraai Jamsari et.al., 2004:38).[18]

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[14] For Epicurus, the senses represent the basic attributes for knowledge. The Stoics founded by Zeno of Citium (301 BC) also carried Epicurus' stand by stating that all knowledge is derived only from the observation of the senses (Ghazali Basri, 1990:8 and Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2005:57). Before Epicurus and Stoics, Aristotle who had initially strove for rationalism had in actual fact gave rise to a dissenting opinion on the said school of thought nearing the end of his life by highlighting that it is the observationof the senses that is the real source for all form of knowledge (Sorabji, 1972). The views of the classical empiricists were developed by the modern empiricists such as Locke (1632-1704), Berkeley (1685-1753) and Hume (1711-1776). In the 19th Century the biggest influence of the empiricism is the thoughts of Comte (1798-1857) that is referred to as the positivism concept. According to the positivism concept, the existence of a matter can only be perceived by the senses. As such whatever that cannot perceived be by the senses or that exist outside man's experience including faith and religious conviction are not regarded as knowledge (Mohd Idris Jauzi, 1990; Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 1994:63; Jujun Suriasumantri, 1995:91 and Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2002:62).

[15] These schools of thoughts surfaced due to the reaction on the rationalism and empiricism schools of thoughts. Initially it was known as the modern logic school of thought that is empirical in nature. It was based on this logical method that is empirical in nature that later gave birth to the experimental method in analysing knowledge. The very first method presented by Bacon (1561-1627) involved four principles that is observation, measurement, explanation and inspection in which all are quantitative in nature (Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2002:69).

[16] There is also another school of thought that begun to develop among the conventional scholars lately that is intuitionism. This school of thought presented by Santayana (1863-1952), Hocking (1873-1966) and Bergson (1859-1941) is also referred to as the subjectivism school of thought. In addition Kant also touched on this intuition aspect when he clarified *a priori* knowledge (This school of thought is of the opinion that besides knowledge that could be justified through empirical and rational analysis intuition is also to be accounted for as knowledge). However this school of thought received numerous criticisms from the conventional scholars and has not been collectively recognised within the conventional scholars. One of them is Hospers (born 1918) who is of the opinion that intuition is a source of knowledge whose validity is questionable (Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2005:60).

[17] Quoted from Muhammad 'Utsman Najati (1993:234) who in turn quoted from Muhyiddin Shabri Kurdi (1934:34-35).

[18] Please also refer to a verse from al-Quran (18:65) yang bermaksud "and whom We had taught knowledge (*ladunna*) from US".

In the meantime Islam does not reject the senses and the mind as the source of knowledge. In fact according to the revealed knowledge the senses and the mind have the acknowledged position as the source of knowledge in Islam.[19] However as highlighted before, the sources of knowledge in Islam is not limited to these two elements only. This is because these two elements have limited methodology and values in interpreting a matter especially in interpreting matters that are not rational or empirical in nature (Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, 1994:61 and Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2002a: 22). As such the acknowledged sources of knowledge in Islam besides the senses and the mind are revealation, inspiration and intuition. From the hierarchial perspective, revelation is regarded as the most basic yet the highest source of knowledge in Islam. This is because knowledge from the Islamic standpoint represents tools to reach the truth (Ghazali Basri, 1990:19). As such if it is measured from the functional aspects to reach the truth, revealation sits at the highest helm as compared to the other sources of knowledge (Ramli Awang, 2003:29). Revealation essentially represents the foundational framework to the other sources of knowledge in attaining knowledge (Amini Amir Abdullah, 1997:27).

The source of knowledge that is acknowledged in Islam after revealed knowledge is inspiration (al-Ghazali, tt and Ghazali Basri, 1990:19). Inspirational knowledge is knowledge that is perceived by the heart that is the internal elements of man that is clean and which is beyond the control of the mind. It includes physiognamy, *kasyf* (uncovering), *karamat* (act of devine grace) dan *ladunni* knowledge. The third source of knowledge that is intuition on the other hand is closely related to the intellectual termed as the active mind of a person. The acquirement of knowledge by way of intuition is also accomplished through the inner senses or spirituality (al-Ghazali, nd and Ramli Awang, 2003:30). Furthermore the fourth and fifth sources of knowledge in Islam are the mind and the senses respectively. In a nutshell, the theory of knowledge or epistemology in Islam is not limited to the product of man's thoughts or matters that can be perceived by the senses or alternatively, *daruri* knowledge only.[20] Epistemology in Islam gives priority to the level of knowledge that is much higher to be integrated with *daruri* knowledge. The knowledge of the highest order referred to here is revealed knowledge and inspiration or referred to as *nazari*[21]knowledge. It is this combination of *daruri* knowledge and *nazari* knowledge that formed the unique epistemological characteristics in Islam and also that of Islamic management method.

The above discussion therefore implies that in analysing and in solving the problems through the conventional management method whose epistemology is inadequate will also be superficial and cannot be carried out holistically and comprehensively. As an example, the management method that intends to identify the organization's inability to achieve the desired quality level can only be associated to external matters only. It cannot perceive that Allah SWT as the Creator that gives the imprint on every effort of man regardless of success or failure. To make it worse, the usage of the conventional management method cannot analyse and provide solution from the root of the problem especially on management problems that are due to matters related to the devils and desires (*nafs*) (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2003: 11). Analysing such abstract and internal matters require the highest level of epistemological base.

As such the conventional management method is founded entirely on the sources of knowledge that is restricted. It is based on *daruri* knowledge and *'aqli* proofs only without integrating with *nazari* knowledge and *naqli* proofs which in turn are based on the sources of knowledge in Islam such as al-Quran, Hadis, Ijmak of Scholars and *Qiyas*. Thus from the epistemological aspect the conventional management method is not suitable to be used on the management of Islamic development institutions.

The Ontology of Management Method

Ontology is another important basis that typifies the conventional management method. Ontology comes from a Greek word *ontos* that means exists. In terms of terminology ontology means the research pertaining to the existence or the creation of something (Sinha, 1991:139 and Blackburn, 1996:269).

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[19] Please refer to verses from al-Quran (30:9), (3:138), (34:18), (12:109), (6:11) and (88:17) for the proposition to attain knowledge based on the senses and sensory perception whereas the verses of al-Quran (2:104), (16:12) and (13:3) for the proposition to attain knowledge through the mind (Ab. Latif Muda & Rosmawati Ali@Mat Zin, 1997:40 and Ghazali Basri, 1990:30).

[20] *daruri* knowledge is the lowest category of knowledge that is knowledge that is easily understandable without the need for further arguments or debates. The *aqli* proofs are the arguments based on thinking and rationality (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2003b: 16).

[21] *nazari* knowledge is the knowledge that requires more abstract thinking and deliberations guided by the *naqli* proofs. The *naqli* proofs are the proofs that are based on al-Quran and *al-Sunnat* (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2003b: 17)

Based on the said definition, ontology also refers to the reality of a matter (Sarwono, 2002). Just as in *tasawur* and epistemology, ontology in Islam also has a different concept as compared to the understanding of ontology from the conventional perspective. In the conventional understanding, the discussion pertaining to ontology is divided into four schools of thoughts that are realism, empiricism, positivism and post-modernism. For the realists, the ontological research only involves things that are considered as reality only, that is, matters that are apparent and can be perceived through observation without being influenced by any prejudgments, bias and interests

(Neuman, 1997: 45 and Miller & Salkin, 2002:159). In other words, ontological research of the realism school of thought must be value free. The ontological research and analysis is divided into three fields that is the empirical field, the actual field and the real field. In the empirical field the research is limited to reality that is perceived through observation. In the actual field, research covers reality that is observed as well as those that have not been observed. The real field conversely covers processes that produce reality. The focus of the realists in ontological study and analysis is to identify reality that has not been observed and to find concepts involved in the process of producing reality (Revany Bustami et.al., 2002:45). The empiricism school of thought in contrast, as explained in the preceding section, only limits the research to the senses' object or element exclusively. In other words, it only focuses on the object or element that can be proven through man's senses only. Indeed these empiricists are convinced that every element in an object unite and function mechanistically without any arrangement of external forces or abstract matter that is not perceivable by man (Neuman, 1997: 45 and Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2002:62).

The positivism school of thought although emanated based on empiricism school of thought has a different ontological classification. These positivists also known as the scientific faction limits the research and analysis only to elements that can be analysed through the positive mind (rational) besides being perceived by man's senses. The methods used by the positivism to study and analyse the ontological assumptions of an object or element is through objective or value free experiments that is carried out and limited to information that is quantitative in nature only (Neuman, 1997:63 dan Blaikie, 2000:102). Besides that, another important aspect of the positivism ontogical classification is that all matters are perceived from happenings that have a cause and effect relationship. Therefore this group rejects all matters that are random, abstract and erratic (Revany Bustami et.al., 2002:10).

In addition, the post-modern school of thought has the ontological assumptions that differ greatly from the ontological assumptions held onto by the realism, empiricism and positivism schools of thoughts. These post-modernists emphasize that matters that are perceived by man do not really reflect the actual situation. This also holds true for the cause and effect relationship that not necessarily can be correlated to all matters that occur in life. Consequently these post-modernists tried to study matters that are beyond the perceptions of man or that can be explained by the rational mind. Amongst others, it takes into account intuition, imagination, personal experience and an individual's emotions in making an ontological assumption. Nonetheless the assumptions made are limited to the matter that is related to a particular time. It sets aside things that occurred in the past and also things that happen in the future that will take place in another world (Neuman, 1997:82).

In short, the ontology of a management method according to the conventional theory in whichever school of thought shares the same features. First, it is focussed on the physical or material aspects that can be perceived by the senses or explained rationally as well as that could be associated with the quantitative measurements purely. Although the post-modernists tried to make the ontological presumption based on the non-material characteristics such as imagination, nonetheless it still revolves around elements that can be perceived by man such as experience. Thus matters that are beyond man's experience are not recognised in the conventional management method (Jujun Suriasumantri, 1995:91). Based on the following premise it can be observed that the aspects emphasized in the conventional systems for example in the conventional management method are only physical aspects that can be perceived empirically and explained scientifically such as increase in productivity, increase in income and maximising consumption and maximising profit.

For this Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003:14) asserts that even if there are more complex accounting in the conventional management method such as the social, culture and political aspects yet the conventional management method still makes the productivity, income and consumption aspects as the determining factors to development and progress.

The second feature that is shared by these conventional schools of thoughts in making the ontological presumption is the methodology used. The ontology presumptions of the conventional management method only use the *'aqli* method by relying on the lower level of knowledge that is *daruri* knowledge. In connection therewith, Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003b:20) states that although the conventional management method has the ability to perceive and analyse, for example, the reality of a particular management problem however that reality is not certain to be accurate as long as it is not measured with the higher levels of knowledge known as *nazari* knowledge and *naqli* proofs.[22] This is because the *'aqli* method and *daruri* knowledge are relative, always changing and very much limited, whilst *nazari* knowledge and naqli proofs are definitive because the source is from Allah SWT and Rasulullah s.a.w..

In contrast to the conventional understanding, the ontology of the Islamic management method does not only consider the physical and material elements (the realm of *al-syahadat*) but also take into cognizance the spiritual elements and the supernatural (realm of the unseen) that cannot be perceived outrightly.[23] Besides that, the methodology encompasses both the *'aqli* and *naqli* methods as well as *daruri* knowledge and the *nazari* knowledge with the position or hierarchy of the *naqli* method and the *nazari* knowledge more predominant as compared to the *'aqli* method and the *daruri* knowledge.[24]

Specifically the *naqli* method and the *nazari* knowledge are different with the *'aqli* method and the *daruri* knowledge because the former is based on the revealed knowledge and inspirational knowledge. This *naqli* method and the *nazari* knowledge are also referred to as knowledge of the highest order because its scope is not confined to empirical matters exclusively as perceived by the *'aqli* method and the *daruri* knowledge.[25] In fact in Islam, management method that is based on the revealed knowledge, al-Quran and *al-Sunnat*, are absolute in nature from its perfection of scope, precision and truth (Ibrahim Abu Bakar, 1994:60; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, 1994:61 and Amini Amir Abdullah, 1997:25-33).[26] Thus from this *daruri* knowledge and *nazari* knowledge, the ontology of the Islamic management method can be divided into three phases that is the phase that is based on the observation of the mind (*'ilm al-yaqin*), the phase that is based on the sense perception (*'ayn al-yaqin*) and the phase that is based on real conviction (*haqq al-yaqin*) (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2002a:73 and 2003b:21 & 24).

At the phase of *'ilm al-yaqin* and *'ayn al-yaqin*, with sources from *daruri* knowledge, the management method is relative in nature which is constantly experiencing changes as well as having a very confined perspective. On the other hand at the level of *haqq al-yaqin* with sources from *nazari* knowledge the management method is absolute in nature and accurate although it cannot be proven empirically.[27]

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[22] Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003b:20) quoted the view of Syed Muhammad Naquib (1995:1-2) who accentuated that reality is only one aspect of truth of a matter. Therefore the reality of facts perceived is not necessarily correct because it abandons the hidden elements such as spirituality and the supernatural.

[23] This is based on the verse from al-Quran (Surah al-A'la,87:7) which bears the following understanding "Except what Allah, may will, He knows what is apparent and what is hidden". This verse is a *naqli* proof that the ontological study and analysis need to cover both the obvious aspects that is the physical and the empirical as well as the hidden aspects or the supernatural and spiritual (Ab Latif Muda & Rosmawati Ali, 1997:37).

[24] In retalion to this, Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah (2005:32) refers to the *'aqli* method and *daruri* knowledge as the ontological presumption typed *Kauniyah* whereas the *naqli* method and *nazari* knowledge as the ontological presumption typed *Qur'aniyah*. He referred such ontological study and analysis as based on a holistic principle.

[25] According to Imam al-Ghazali, an example of the limitation in the *'aqli* method and *daruri* knowledge is the truth about divinity (Adil Za'bub, 1993:78 & 95). Besides its limited characteristics, Imam al-Ghazali also emphasized that the *'aqli* method and *daruri* knowledge are speculations and probabilities. It is different with the *naqli* method and the *nazari* knowledge that are knowledge that have been proven and certain. (Louay Safi, 1998:106 who quoted from Imam al-Ghazali, nd.). This is supported by Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003b:22) when criticising the inaccuracy of the social sciences basic presumptions which premised on man's unlimited wants and the natural resources as imited.

[26] However Islam still recognises *daruri* knowledge as an important source of knowledge. In relations to this, Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari for example had given an example of the main role of the *'aqli* method and the *daruri* knowledge that is to reinforce *nazari* knowledge (Abdul Shukor Husin, 1994:40).

[27] This does not mean that the ontological study and analysis based on *nazari* knowledge and *naqli* deliberations cannot be proven empirically. For this, Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003b:24) put forward the incident of how Sayidina Ali tried to make an empirical evidence pertaining to the *naqli* proof pertaining to people who do good. It is evident that through appreciation coupled with conviction as well as perseverance and dependence on Allah's permanence and will, this matter could not be proven empirically. Please see Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003b:24) for a more detailed discussion.

Besides the scope that contains both the physical and metaphysical elements and the methodology that are based on both the integrated *nazari* knowledge and *daruri* knowledge, there are also two other features of the Islamic management method that glaringly differ from the conventional management method ontologically.These two features are the rejection to the value free concept and the rejection of the cause and effect relationship.

The value free concept and the objectivity feature are very much emphasized by the conventional management method especially in analysing management problems because the characteristic of subjectivity and bias are regarded as not academic and must be sidelined in making a management analysis (Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2005:43). In other words this concept separates the manager with what needs to be managed. This concept in reality has been refuted and considered as invalid by some fields such as in physics as proven by Fritjof Capra in his work *The Tao of Physics* (Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2005:43).

From the Islamic perspective, this value free concept offers a very negative implication. Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2003b:26) explains this issue in the social sciences context as follows:-

> In the event that the value free feature of the social sciences is also agreed upon it is difficult for the Muslim *ummah* to be at the forefront in carrying out research based on Islamic values. They researched a matter that is said to be Islamic but without any measurement to the findings of that research

Besides that the value free feature brings about the separation of theological element within the manager when making a management analisis (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2003b:25), whilst the theological elements represent a belief and conviction that should not be set free in any form whatsoever. This is highlighted by Imam al-Ghazali through his book, *Munqidh min al-Dalal* where it is stated that whatever analysis and behaviour of a person, his belief and conviction to Allah, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and the Hereafter cannot be dismissed whatsoever (Mahmud Hamdi Zaqzuq, 1974:34 dan Adil Za'bub, 1980:34). In addition according to Adil Za'bub (1980:35), that conviction forms the basis for each analysis carried out by Imam al-Ghazali.

The cause and effect relationship in the conventional management method refers to the fixed relationship that is certainly believed to exist in this world and man, in such a way that a manager is able to predict matters which would occur in relations to the subject that is to be managed. This cause and effect relationship is also termed as *tabi'iyah* relationship (Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, 2005:37 & 52). From the Islamic perspective the cause and effect relationship even if exists is not a result of the *tabi'iy* of that matter that is being studied but otherwise that is *Sunnatullah*. Imam al-Ghazali in rejecting the cause and effect relationship highlighted in his book *Tahafut al-Falasifat*:

> "In our opinion, the relationship between what is believed as the cause and effect is not a must. Take example two things. This is not that, that cannot be this. The positive affirmation of one does not imply the positive affirmative of the other; also the dismissal of it does not imply the dismissal of the other. The existence of something does not compel the existence of another's existence; also its extinction does not compel the extinction of the other. For example take two things, such as the disappearance of thirst and drinking, feeling full and eating, burnt and bodily ablazed; light and sunrise, death and the separation of the head from the body, healing and the usage of medicines; loosening of the intestines and the use of purgative, or various incidences that have connections with medicine, astronomy, the arts or façade. All that must be connected with Allah's destiny because He had created all that in such forms and shapes, not because that relationship alone is a must and is infinite. He has the power to make man feel full without eating, or die without separating the head from the body or even the longevity of life even with a head; or even the longevity of life whilst the head is being severed or other matter among matters that is connected (separated from what is certainly believed as the cause)" [28]

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[28] In relations to this, Imam al-Ghazali did not totally refute this cause and effect principle. On the other hand Imam Ghazali termed the concept as the laws of the custom where the existed relationship could be perceived by man's mind because the same matter occur repeatedly. For a more detailed explanation please refer to Louay Safi (1998:118-119).

In relations to this, Louay Safi (1994:119) clearly explains the reason for the rejection of the cause and effect relationship in Islamic ontology is because it is able to jeopardize an individual's *aqidah* (faith) because of his belief that it is solely the cause that produced the effect without relating to Allah SWT absolute supremacy (*kudrat*) and divine will (*iradat*).

In short, the ontology of the Islamic management method covers not only the physical elements but also the metaphysical elements and the supernatural, making *nazari* knowledge as the nucleus to *daruri* knowledge. It is value loaded and not value free as well as not denying the dimension of the vertical relationship for each subject that is studied.

Conclusion

The obvious difference between the bases of the conventional management method and the Islamic management method shows that the conventional management method philosophical underpinnings are different from the Islamic management method philosophical underpinnings. This point of difference can be identified from the mould that forms the conventional management method or its *tasawur*, the conventional management method sources or its epistemology and the conventional management method's elements or its ontological aspects. As such it is not reasonable to use the management method that does not correspond with the Islamic philosophy and principle as well as departing out of the Islamic paradigm in managing Islamic development institutions. Instead, what need to be held onto, in fact, and used as a framework in the Islamic management method is the foundation that are provided in Islam itself that is Islamic *tasawur*, epistemology and ontology.

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