

Controlling: An Islamic Perspective

Prof. Madya Dr. Md Golam Mohiuddin, Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development
University Technology Malaysia, Johor, Malaysia., Email: islamicmanagement2010@gmail.com
Afroza Bulbul, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Business Administration International Islamic University Chittagong,
Bangladesh, Email: iamaftrin@hotmail.com

Abstract: Management practitioners can learn the concept of controlling from divine messages. The basis for control is the same irrespective of the type of control, i.e., internal or external, business and personal control, social or non social control. In this paper an effort has been taken to show the fundamental divine views with regard to management function controlling. Distinctions have been presented between controlling through God fearing perception and controlling through technology. This paper will show the ways to think about divine views as well control model practiced by leaders of the golden era of Islam.

Key Words: Controlling, Divine message, standard, performance, Taqwa control.

1. Introduction: The qualities of people are very important in controlling. The hierarchy of control practiced fifteen centuries ago by Muslim administrator is now recognized by contemporary researchers in organization control. To design an appraisal system based on Islamic principles, the organizational leadership and its social environment must be positively oriented toward such a system. Organizational effectiveness controlled and evaluated both subjective and objective terms and Islamic organizational values are found in the Holy Quran and traditions of Prophet(peace be upon him). The foundation of control was stated in Islam in a very simple and concise manner. Surah Al Qasas stated that Allah is merciful and just. He does not destroy or degrade people until they have deliberately rejected His law and continued in practice of iniquity.

Nor was thy Lord the one
To destroy a population until
He had sent to its Center
An apostle, rehearsing to them
Our Signs; nor are We
Going to destroy a population
Except when its members
Practice iniquity (Al Quran, Sura Qasas)

In simple words, the rules established by Islam as stated in the above cited quotations show that Allah will not penalize anybody until certain stated conditions are met in the following sequence(Abu H.A.M. 1995).

- (a) A messenger is sent to the center of the cities (group of people) or to the head of the people.
- (b) The messenger communicated the message and its requirements.
- (c) People received and understood the message, which came down from Allah to the people.
- (d) People continued in their old practices, which are against the delivered message.

The analogy of the above stated conditions with management control rules and cycles show that they have a great deal of similarity. The basis for control is the same irrespective of the type of control; internal or external control, business or personal control, or social or non-social control. The main concept remains true; a prerequisite for any type of control is twofold: (a) pre-establish the rule, and (b) communicate it to the performer (s) before he (they) performs (Abu H.A.M, 1995).

2. Objectives of this Study: The main objective of this study is to discuss the controlling function in Islamic perspective. Other objectives are:

- a) To show the control process practiced by Hazrat Umar(RA)
- b) To present the distinctions between controlling by Allah fearing views and controlling through technology.

3. Methodology of the Study: The study is based on primary data only. For secondary data several library of the Muslim World, different officials, private records, published and unpublished materials, journals, research report and seminar papers etc. have been used. Besides the Holy Quran and traditions of Prophet (pbuh) have been chosen as good references of this study.

4. Limitations of This Study: The study is not assumed free from limitations. Although adequate precautionary measures have been taken in the present study, it is supposed to be complacent in the matter of reliability of those data. The main two limitations are discussed below:

- 1) This study only concentrates on some Islamic literatures and these are from primary source only.
- 2) Scarce of adequate literature is a serious drawback to proceed with the study.

The Islamic rules may be analyzed in the light of management control rules stated as follow:

5. A) The message is pre-established by Allah:

Allah (SWT) stated in the Qur'an several times that this book (reference is made to the Quran) has been sent down from the highest authority (Allah), revealed to the Prophet, the contains the only right path which will ever exist, and will be protected and preserved by Allah Himself.

We sent down the (Qur'an)
In Truth, and in Truth
As it descended: and We sent
Thee but to give Glad
Tidings and to warn (sinners)
This is the Book;
In it is guidance sure, without doubt.
To those who fear God (Al Quran. Surah Bani Israil-17:105).

In terms of management controls the rules must be pre-established by the top authority of the organization. i.e. The Board of Directors, the President of the company, or other managers.

5. B).The message is a set of do's and don't and describe how Allah wants the prophet to behave:

In several verses Allah stated in the Qur'an addressing the Prophet that his prime message and the entire purpose behind the message are *Glad Tidings and Warner*.

Dow hath come unto you
An Apostle from amongst
Yourselves: it grieves him
That ye should perish:
Ardently anxious is he
Over you: to the Believers
Is he most kind and merciful (Al Quran. Surah Taobah-9:128).

By the same token the company rules should clearly and adequately describe what the managers do expect from the performers.

A new lesson could be learned from Islam. That is in writing the company policy and procedures (rules in general terms) the ruler must emphasize first and strongly the benefits driven from adhering to the pre-established

rules. As a second place, the rules must show the consequences of not abiding by the rules. This is what we must learn from the Islamic concept "glad tidings and warmer" (Abu H.A.M. ,1995).

5. C).The messenger understood the message and its interpretations. He communicated the message to the people in their own terms and languages:

Allah stated in the Qur'an that Allah sent a messenger from the same people (the messengers: people who will receive the message who they like have a great affection to him). There are several lessons to be learnt from Islam.

- (1) The messenger came from the same community and familiar with the environment and knowledgeable with their social norms, values and conditions.
- (2) The messenger's do like (affection) the messenger and care for him. On the other hand the messenger cares for the messengers, and is offended by the reception of some messengers and their refusal of the message.
- (3)The message came down in the language of the messengers. Consequently, they will be able to read it, recite it, and understand it, and comprehend it.

A similar (favor
 Have ye already received?)
 In that We have sent
 Among you an Apostle
 Of your own, rehearsing to you
 Our Signs and sanctifying
 You and instructing you
 In Scripture and Wisdom,
 And in new Knowledge (Al Quran. Surah Baqarah-2:151).

In today's business language, the business rules must be communicated to all levels of performers in their own terms and language. The rules must be in writing for future reference purposes, and to enable the performers to understand top management expectations. It should be noted that expected performance is the basis for performance evaluation (Abu H.A.M., 1995).

5. D). Allah will let people with their own free will follow or not follow the predetermined Islamic rule. After a certain period of performance, Allah will hold every person responsible for his actions:

By the same token, the business performers are given adequate time to perform and produce. The result of their performance must be properly recorded.

After an adequate length of time, top management will compare actual performance against expected performance and request explanation for the resulted deviation (Abu H.A.M., 1995).

SL	Controlling Through Taqwa (fear of God)	Controlling Through Technology
1.	It is an inner feeling which derived from fear of God.	After observation through material outlook it is a preventing measure.
2.	It requires religious teaching and feelings of the presence of God.	Religious teachings are not mandatory.

3.	No extra force or charge is required.	Determining situation or measuring or correcting performance it require extra forces or elements.
4.	Taqwa with technology controlling will be excellent	Taqwaless technology controlling may be incomplete as well troublesome.
5.	Taqwa based controlling is prophetic tradition.	Technology based controlling is the result of materialism.

6. Cases Studies:

Control Process Practiced by Umar (RA):

Umar (RadiAllahuAnhu) did not go to any management school for training, but his education, wisdom, and especially his company of the prophet allowed him to master the art of management. Umar (RA) used to clearly define a set of criteria for appointing leaders. Umar(RA) used to extensively define the roles of his commanders and his governors, and he made sure that they followed his general direction while allowing them their operational freedom.

Umar (RA) once asked his companions, what they would think if he appointed one whom he believed to be the best man among them and ordered him to do justice. Would Umar (RA) have done his share? They replied saying “Yes”. Umar (RA) retorted “No”, not unless he saw whether the appointee did what he ordered him to do.

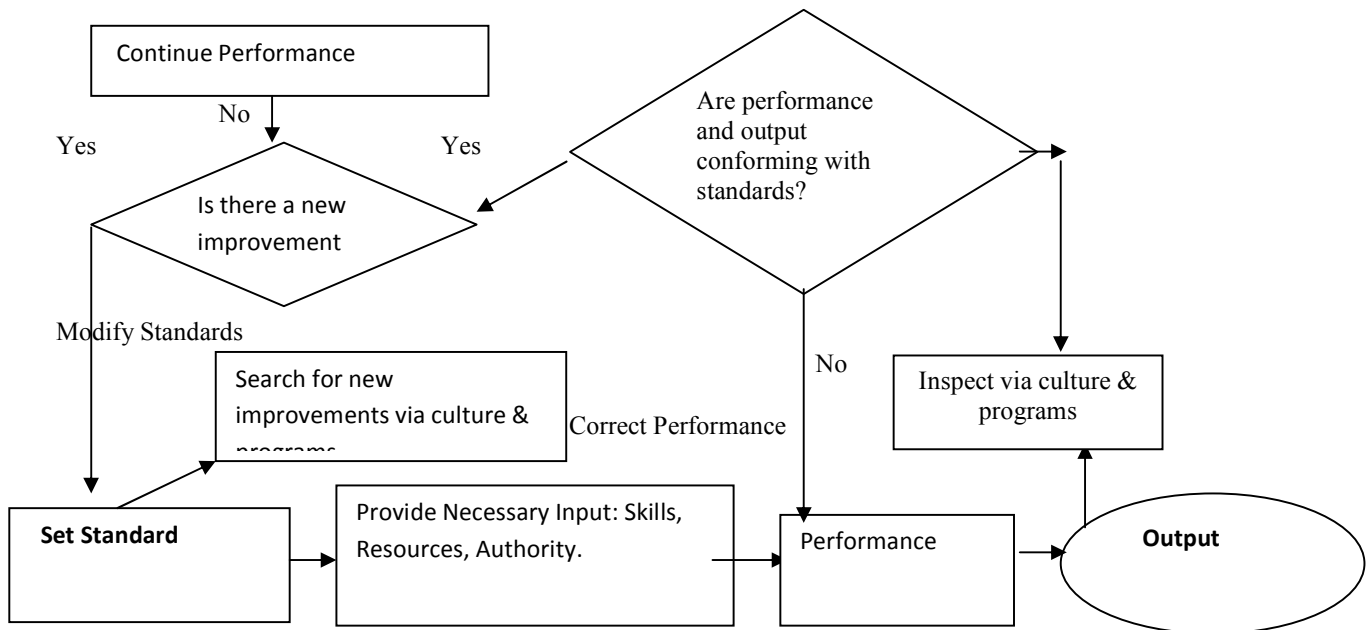
Umar (RA) would know the control process. Umar (RA) indicated that he would not have done his share had he not checked whether his appointee did what he ordered him to do. This signifies that Umar’s(RA) first task is to explain to the appointee what he is expected to do. Then, he has to check whether the appointee is doing what he was ordered to do. The checking of Umar (RA) over the performance of his appointees was carried out through certain programs such as the annual Hajj conference, Umar’s(RA) personal visits, intelligence agents, and the agency of complaints which received the public complaints about the various rulers. It was also carried out informally through the culture of the people which was based on forbidding what is evil and enjoining what is good. In cases where the appointees did not carry out their duties appropriately, Umar(RA) did not hesitate to change them. As a matter of fact, Umar(RA) did not take such actions just to correct some wrong, rather he was very decisive in making any decision that could improve an already good performance. Umar (RA) was committed to continuous improvement as pointed out. The process of improvements was facilitated by the culture or advice as prophet Muhammad (SAW) said “*religion is advice*”, which is practiced by Umar (RA) through participative management programs.

Basing on the above discussion, we can summarize the control process practiced by Umar (RA) as follows:

- 1) The standards have to be well clarified.
- 2) The necessary input should be provided. This input should include the necessary resources and skills as well as the needed authority.
- 3) A continuous search for new ways of improving the performance and its standards should be established. This search is carried out through a favorable culture and some specially designed programs. The culture should be that of: Commitment to quality, participation, and involvement. The programs in modern organizations can include quality circles, regular invitations of outside consultants, training, research and development, and customer’s surveys.
- 4) Both the performance and the output are closely checked against the standards through the existing culture of commitment and involvement, and some specially designed activities such as regular measurement, statistical quality control, and customer’s surveys.

- 5) If the performance and/or the output do not conform to the standards then corrective actions must be taken.
- 6) If the performance conforms to the standards, then the possibility of improving the performance is checked.
- 7) If there is a way of improving the process, then the necessary corrective actions to implement it should be taken. These corrections should encompass the ongoing performance, the input, and the standards themselves.

The above control model is presented in **Figure: Control Process Practiced by Umar (RA):**



7. Conclusion:

The canons of Islamic management have always been a) Haquq Allah (the right of Allah, HA), b) Haquq al Ibad (the right of worshippers). These rights have to be recognized and implemented by the leader in every aspect of his/her administration. Under the rule of the first four Muslim rulers right of Allah and rights of worshippers were practiced very diligently. They are also complementary, for when one perform HA, he/she will perform HI. Umar and Umar bin Abdul Aziz (720 AH) left excellent examples of Islamic administrative performance in this regard (Al Tamawi 1967; Shibli Nomani 1957). To perform HA and HI, the prophet and the above mentioned rulers emphasized a three level control hierarchy in their administrations as shown in the following table:

Control hierarchy	Control agent
Social control	Society
Administrative control	Leader
Self control	Individual

According to Ali, the qualities of people are very important in controlling. He therefore recommended the appointment of honest, intelligent and active people to leadership position (Al –Buraeey, 1988). This hierarchy of control practiced fourteen centuries ago by Muslim administrators is now recognized by contemporary researchers in organization control (Hopwood). What results from this analysis is that control systems (i.e., performance appraisal) in an organization cannot be separated from the societies culture, values, norms, leaders and individuals. If an Islamic organization is to practice an appraisal system based on the Shariah, it must be supported by the surrendering Islamic culture, social values, organizational leaders and employees.

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