

Rational Leadership in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Multiple Competencies Model for the Middle East

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The Corona crisis has exposed significant imbalances in health and economic governance systems in many organisations around the world. There is an unwillingness in the systems to deal with such crises, especially in the leadership that is prepared to manage such conditions. In addition, there is a prevailing scepticism that conventional models of leadership are not effective in the Middle East. With the same logic, selecting leaders is a confusing task in the Middle East due to the haphazardness surrounding this task and the lack of clarity of appropriate selection criteria. This study within a few frameworks and theories scrutinises leadership models in order to classify certain leadership dimensions. The findings of this study suggest a new model to assist to clarify the issue by setting a group of 10 personality traits with 8 behavioural skills in addition to the social status. The triangular model stemmed from previous studies that addressed the leadership in general and the leadership model for the Middle East in particular. With the use of the methodologies of literature review and historical analysis, the descriptions of the leadership model will be demonstrated. Implications of this study selecting leadership easier in practice. Furthermore, this will enable recognition of leadership according to specific criteria which will help ensure greater equality and empowerment at all levels of the system.

Keywords: *Leadership, Rational Leadership, Leadership Theory, Covid-19 crisis, Middle East.*

Introduction and Background

The Corona crisis has proven that states with effective governance systems are best able to respond to overcome crises. The Coronavirus crisis is unprecedented and came at a time when the world is more interconnected than any other time in history (Tourish, 2020; Lotayif, 2020). Leadership is almost the biggest thorny issue in the Middle East because of its importance and is a magnet of competition for the majority of people. On one hand, the criteria for selecting the best person to take over the leadership is questionable, and on the other, holding power is very tempting and if the leader is not qualified he will. When the Corona pandemic broke out in December 2019 in the Chinese city of Johan, the world thought it was just a small virus whose effects would be confined to a small spot in China. As the days passed, the facts of the virus began to unfold and spread beyond the boundaries of that remote city, jumping over barriers and across people, moving from one country to another. However, as we have seen, the reactions of states, people and institutions to the spread of Covid-19 have varied considerably. The cost of transmission has manifested in the form of direct costs to people's health and to the health systems of states, and on the other hand, economies in their total and partial form have clearly appeared (Ashley Collman, 2020).

This is where the leadership role of states with broad-minded leadership and a good vision has enabled them to make the right decision (Aldulaimi, 2018b) very quickly and under uncertainty, and the negative health outcomes have been at record lows and in accordance with the best international standards.

Admittedly, the leaders are different in their characteristics and even those who had imprinted on the institutions that led them did not agree on a comprehensive description of all these qualities, each of them seems to have a dominant characteristic that distinguishes them and makes him a dominant person of others and even feels the desire to follow him and feels that he should also be at the forefront. There is a quiet and sober leader, there is a dependable revolutionary, there is a thinker, an analyst and a creator, there are those who dare to make decisive decisions, and there are those who have a socially acceptable, smiling and playful personality.

There is a common saying that "adversity makes men". In recent history, that example has seemed very close to the late British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and the way he led his country during the Second World War. Now, many leaders around the world are facing a similar "critical time", given the new Corona epidemic which threatens the lives of millions around the globe unless swift and coordinated action is taken to address it. There is no easy way out of this crisis, which increases the problems faced by world leaders in this regard as they must first choose the best strategy to deal with the epidemic, which is not easy on the one hand and at the same time they bear the enormous task of reassuring their citizens and

persuading them to follow the orders of the authorities, even if this means complying with decisions that they have to abide by the "social divergence", the high costs to which individuals bear, and the negative consequences for the sector such as hiring, for example. A slightly wrong move could therefore undermine (Aldulaimi, 2012) confidence in the authorities and unleash unrest that would increase the current risks posed by the epidemic. But in any case, we still have to wait to see whether the leaders of our nations can rise to the occasion by dealing appropriately with the crisis we are facing today.

Nevertheless, most developing countries need to develop effective and efficient leaders that enable organisations to sustain development. Considerable research is needed in bridging this lack of knowledge and identifying constructs attributing to the specific aspects of leadership. Practically, adopting a completely Western mode of leadership in Arab nations is impossible. In addition, disregarding the exclusive features of Arabic culture that contribute to the design of leadership practice in this experience is difficult. House (1995, p. 443) asserted that "there is increasing awareness of the need for an improved understanding of the way the leadership is enacted in various cultures".

Significance and Objectives

The civilised human community must have a leading elite who were fermented by the dough of the vision and his idea supported by the best decision-making and share it boldly. With an insightful vision that is able to anticipate and resist challenges, it is consistent with the constants. So leadership is a talent, training and teaching, linking the Persians here in how to discover and guide energies? And her training and a statement of position. The wisdom is all the wisdom to put something in place, which is right, the kindness of practicality and good judgement.

Based on the previous explanation, this study aims to develop a certain model of leadership which enable the existence of effective leaders for organisations in the Middle East. Therefore, the objective of this research is to address this problem by suggesting a new model to assist to clarify the issue by setting a group of 10 personality traits with 8 behavioural skills in addition to the social status.

The reason of the need for a new leadership model is the fact that the process of preparing leaders for crisis means developing practical capacities to prevent or respond to crises, review prevention measures, develop plans and train individuals in different roles for them in the face of crises. The training process of the crisis management team has already been referred to, but the training process may include in some organisations of a special nature all individuals belonging to this organisation, and crisis management literature indicates that there is a direct relationship between the organisation's preparedness for disasters and three organisational

variables: the size of the organisation, the organisation's previous experience with disasters, and the level of organisational managers.

Many researchers and scholars whose leadership or crisis management are located within the fields of study may consider that these studies are many, but these studies were not only as efforts to raise the topics discussed about one of the above concepts or related to the gift, but have always been topics that call for continuous monitoring, study and discussion, whether by linking them to new variables or through attempts at theory and putting new ideas, given that the number of crises and their diversity. Within or outside the organisations, the researcher considered to address the role of the most important elements in crisis management, by highlighting what is possible about the capabilities and preparations of the administrative leadership in dealing with crises and exceptional circumstances within the organisation.

Thus, based on the above, this study attempts to answer the main research questions: what are the special traits and criteria for the selection of a leader in organisations? Some leaders who deal with the problem, he is affected, stopped, obstructed and surrendered to it. Success in the face of crises depends mainly on raising the readiness and advance preparations for dealing with crises, one of the basic tasks of leadership which must work to establish construction on solid ground, raise its efficiency, give it the appropriate flexibility to withstand changes and crises, and to achieve this must have the vision of the future and the breadth of the horizon. This enables them to make strategic decisions regarding the future of the institution and can use a number of administrative tools to raise future readiness such as risk management, future planning and planning scenarios. Communication and transparency is important as most crises are related to a large segment of stakeholders. The importance of effective communication is to ensure that efforts are mobilised and everyone cooperates to address the crisis. History is full of many successes and failures in crisis management, mainly associated with success or failure of media communication during crisis management.

Literature Review

In the current "Corona" crisis, we find that the ingredients for success in crisis management have been applied professionally by our wise leadership. In line with the aforementioned arrangement of these components, we find that the proven readiness to deal with the crisis, its readiness in terms of infrastructure and digital, which supported distance learning, telecom work; the provision of all government services remotely; its readiness in terms of government institutions, whether those that contributed to dealing with the crisis directly or that have maintained its readiness to deal with the crisis; its readiness in terms of infrastructure and digital which supported distance learning, telecom work and remote delivery; and its readiness in terms of government institutions, whether those that contributed to dealing with the crisis directly or maintained the continuity of government business and performance, from

government policies and performance, and from government policies and formation (Aldulaimi, 2019).

Since the original work of Max Weber (1864-1920) plenty of definitions of the term leadership have emerged. Leadership means the ability of the individual to influence a person or group of people, guide them and guide them in order to gain their cooperation and motivate them to work with the highest degree of competence in order to achieve the goals.

The crisis reflects the position or situation faced by the decision-maker in an administrative entity (state, institution, project) in which events follow and the causes are intertwined with the results, with which the decision-maker loses its ability to control it or its future directions. After that theories of leadership emerged and have gone through several stages as shown in table 1.

The first stage is the Personality era, the second stage is the Behaviour Era, the third stage is the Situation era, the fourth stage is the Contingency era, the fifth stage is the Transactional era, the sixth stage is Culture Era and the seven stage is the Transformational era. Muslims believe that Islam is a comprehensive approach to life and that Islam is a valid way of living for all human beings in every time and every place. Muslim scholars highlighted some of the salient philosophies of leadership and this vision must then be projected for Muhammad's character was virtue centric and is consistent with the Qur'an'. Hofstede (1993) argued that organisations are culture-bound and that managers are not separable from their indigenous cultures. Accordingly, research on Arab organisations (Al-Hegelan and Palmer, 1985) implied that Arab managers are reluctant to delegate authority, avoid responsibility and risk-taking, prefer a stable lifestyle over rewarding but challenging work and give priority to friendships and personal considerations over organisational goals and performance. Face-saving and status-consciousness are also commonly said to be important values in traditional Arab culture, especially within tribal cultures (Gregg, 2005).

Webster's dictionary defines the crisis as a turning point for the better or worse, a defining moment or a difficult time. In particular, the organisation, its users, products, services, financial situation and market reputation, while Levbinger (2007) identified that it was an event that had the potential to put the organisation in a notorious position and threatens and jeopardises its future profitability. its entire existence. The crisis is seen as a highly influential event that threatens the organisation's growth and uncertainty about the causes, results and means of decision- making, as well as the belief that decisions must be made quickly. Pearson, Christine M. and clair Judith (2009), is a high-impact event that threatens the organisation's growth and is characterized by the ambiguity of cause, impact and means of solution. Jones, (2001) identified it as an unstable phenomenon that represents a direct and explicit threat to the organisation's survival and continuity, which is characterised by a certain degree of risk and represents a turning point in unstable situations that result in undesirable consequences that

negatively affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the decision-maker and lead to material, moral and physical loss that reflects on the reputation, status and future of the organisations (2:2001, Jones.).

Table 1: Evolutionary Stages of Leadership Theory, Source: King, A. S. (1990).

<p>Personality Era Great Man Period Great Man Theory (Bowden, 1927, Carlyle, 1841: Galion, 1869) Train Period Trait Theory (Bingham, 1927) Influence Era Power Relation Period Five Bases of power Approach (French, 1956, French and Raven, 1959) Persuasion Period Leader Dominance Approach (Schenk, 1928)</p>	<p>Transaction Era Exchange Period Vertical Dayad Linkage \ Leader Member Exchange Theory (Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975) Reciprocal Influence Approach (Greene 1975) Emergent Leadership (Hollander, 1979, Jacobs, 1970) Role Marking Model (Graen and Cashman, 1975)</p>
<p>Behaviour Era Early Behaviour Period Reinforced Change Theory (bass, 1960) Ohio State Studies (Flesishman, Harris, and Burt, 1955) Michigan Grid Model (Blake and Mouton, 1964) For _ Factor Theory (bowers and Seashore, 1966) Action Theory of Leadership (argyris, 1976) Theory X and Y Operant Period (Sims, 1977, Ashour and Johns, 1983)</p>	<p>Anti _ Leadership Era Ambiguity Period Attribution Approach (Pfeffer, 1977) Substitute Period Leadership Substitute Theory (Kerr and Jermier, 1978)</p>
<p>Situation Era Environment Period Environment Approach (Hook, 1943) Open_ Systems Model (Katz and Kahn, 1979) Social Status Period Role Attainment Theory (Stogdill, 1959) Leader Role Theory (homans, 1951)</p> <p>Contingency Era Contingency Theory Path Goal Theory (House, 1971)</p>	<p>Culture Era Mckinesy 7_5 Framework (Pascale and Athos, 1981) Theory Z (Ouch and Jaeger, 1978) In search of Excellence Approach (Peters and Water_ Man, 1982) Schein (1985) Self _ Leadership (Manz and Sims, 1987)</p> <p>Transformational Era Charisma Period Charismatic Theory (House, 1977) Transforming Leadership theory (Burns, 1978) Self-Fulfilling Prophecy Period</p>



<p><i>Situational Theory (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969: 1977)</i> <i>Multiple Linkage Model (Yukl, 1971. 1989)</i> <i>Normative Theory</i></p>	<p>SEP Leader Theory (field, 1989, Eden, 1984) Performance Beyond Expectations Approach (Bass, 1985)</p>
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Methodology and Design

This study using the methodologies of literature review and historical analysis to describe the leadership in the Middle East. An effective and well-conducted review as a research method creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and facilitating theory development (Webster & Watson, 2002). By means of combining views and perspectives from many sources, a literature review can tackle problems and find answers to research questions with a rigorous manner.

The historical approach provides us with the descriptive aspect in the study of phenomena in its temporal context and the developments that have been inflicted on the intention from the use of the historical approach is the interpretive power that provides us with tries to attach importance to time in that interpretation. In other words, it introduces the circumstances surrounding the birth of the phenomenon, promotes it, or puts it in the interpretation of it, nor is it sufficient. This approach recounts the facts and accumulates them but presents the perception of the circumstances and the surroundings that govern the birth of phenomena. This approach has been used in an attempt to reveal the concept of both leadership and crisis over time and extinction successive (Aldulaimi, 2018a)

Constructs of Leadership Model

Leadership is one of the important factors in achieving the objectives of the organisations, creating a balance between them and the employees, seeks to provide a favourable environment for employees, feels the importance of preparing for development and change permanently, as well as meeting their requirements and achieving their ambitions according to the possibilities and opportunities of the organisations despite what may hinder their continuation and survival of threats and symptoms, may not be taken into account at times. Based on the leadership definition mentioned previously we came up with the number of characteristics as shown in Figure 1.

Personality Traits

The first trait is braveness and it means boldness and intensity in the time of difficulties and the severity of the heart in crises. Braveness is the power in the heart and stability in fears and

is a creation that is generated by patience. The second trait is initiative and it to the person who is the pioneer of his people. A person with initiative is the first in everything and has the ability to neutralise themselves from the emotional feelings imposed by the surrounding and sometimes frustrating circumstances. The third trait is intelligence and it refers to the mental abilities and IQ score. The fourth trait is determination and insistence and it is willpower to do something, and the real intention to do it. The ability to insist or resolve is necessarily a determined pursuit of the goal and ambition to have a strong resolve. The fifth trait is honesty which “implies fulfilling the promise, giving the right advice to the one who asks for it, doing one’s work as sincerely and as perfectly as possible, and telling the truth, fulfilling one’s word, objective judgments and objective decisions”. The sixth trait is dominance which refers to the leaders seeking authority, control and power that emanates with formal positions of the leadership. The seventh trait is trust and, in many studies, tends to be considered as an expectation or belief that one can rely upon another person’s actions and words and/or that the person has good intentions toward oneself (e.g., Cook & Wall, 1980; Dirks, 1999). The eighth trait is justice because the leader requires to be fair in words, deeds and judgments, and to the limit that being just becomes a trait he is described with. His actions and statements are always free of racism with no degree of discrimination, oppression or tyranny. The ninth trait is generosity which means a willingness to devote time, effort and patience to colleagues, peers, and people around them, without expecting anything in return. The tenth trait is authenticity which means the leader is genuine, self-aware, and transparent with one face. An authentic leader is able to inspire loyalty and trust in his/her employees by consistently displaying who he/she really is as a person, and how he/she feels about his/her employees' performance.

Behavioural Skills

The first is analysing which refers to the ability to interpret the information and use it to make decisions related to people, organisations, and situations. The second is organising: to organise is to identify the activities necessary to achieve the goals that a person has set for himself and divide them so that they can be implemented in a timely way. This is the simplest form of organisation, but in managing the organisation needs a number of elements that ultimately lead to the achievement of the desired goals, which are often many. The third is decision-making which refers to the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities. A decisional conflict refers to concurrent opposing tendencies within the individual to accept and reject a given course of action (Janis and Mann, 1977; Mahdi, Mohd, and Almsafir, (2014). The fourth is communication as the leader who communicates and participates. Without effective communication, a manager is not an effective leader (Barrett, 2006). The fifth is knowledge, a leader must have a reasonable amount of knowledge regarding the competence of the organisation. The sixth is innovation that is the process for creating direction, alignment, and commitment needed to create and implement something new that adds value (Horth and Vehar, 2012). The seventh is human skills which

means the ability to deal with others, whether they are subordinates, colleagues or presidents, understand their behaviour, and be able to motivate them to work, achieve cooperation between working groups, lead them and guide their efforts towards achieving the desired goals. The eighth is teamwork because strong leaders build strong teams instead of depending on their own odd capabilities. Consultations seem to be superficial in the sense that the manager seeks to obtain the agreement of organisational members on decisions that have already been made.

Social Status

The social status refers to the rank a person occupies in the social structure and determines the evaluation of the individual by society. People believe that some jobs have a higher social status than others. The theory of social comparison suggests that individuals are subject to social comparisons, and people export judgments about themselves. The impact of social interaction on opinions and trends is emphasised as it indicates that the procession of social influence and certain types of competitive behaviour is caused by the need for self-assessment and status determination, this does not achieve security during comparisons with other people (Festinger, 1954, p117). Low and poor social acceptance is on the contrary to this, and this makes him/her anxious and sensitive (Dutton, 1999).

Socialites point out that the social status of the job is reflected in salary, rewards, the position held by the individual, and more over the educational qualifications and certificates. But it seems different for the social environment in the Middle East, because social status is influenced first and foremost by belonging to the group, tribe or social group, whether urban or tribal. It is also known as the centre occupied by the individual in the social system and this centre is determined by several variables, the most important of which is the work of the individual, his wealth, honuor and strength, and the degree of respect and appreciation that he receives from others.

The social status makes the leader a role model to others and has the desire for others to imitate his behaviours and values. In Arab culture, people respect the person's status, and preferably the leader has a remarkable social rank because it gives him prestige and a good reputation. Arab societies are divided into several classes and every class has certain norms and characteristics. A large number of contemporary sociologists study social classes in a different way, as they address the subject of class with its psychological and social dimensions for individuals, and its functions for society in general, and for the same classes in particular, Durkheim, Kingsley, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton are among the most researched and studied sociologists. Social hierarchy, according to this perception, is a fundamental manifestation of modern society, and class inequality is a means that confirms that the most important social situations are those occupied by the most competent people. There are many factors that show the importance of hierarchy from a functional point of view, as higher social

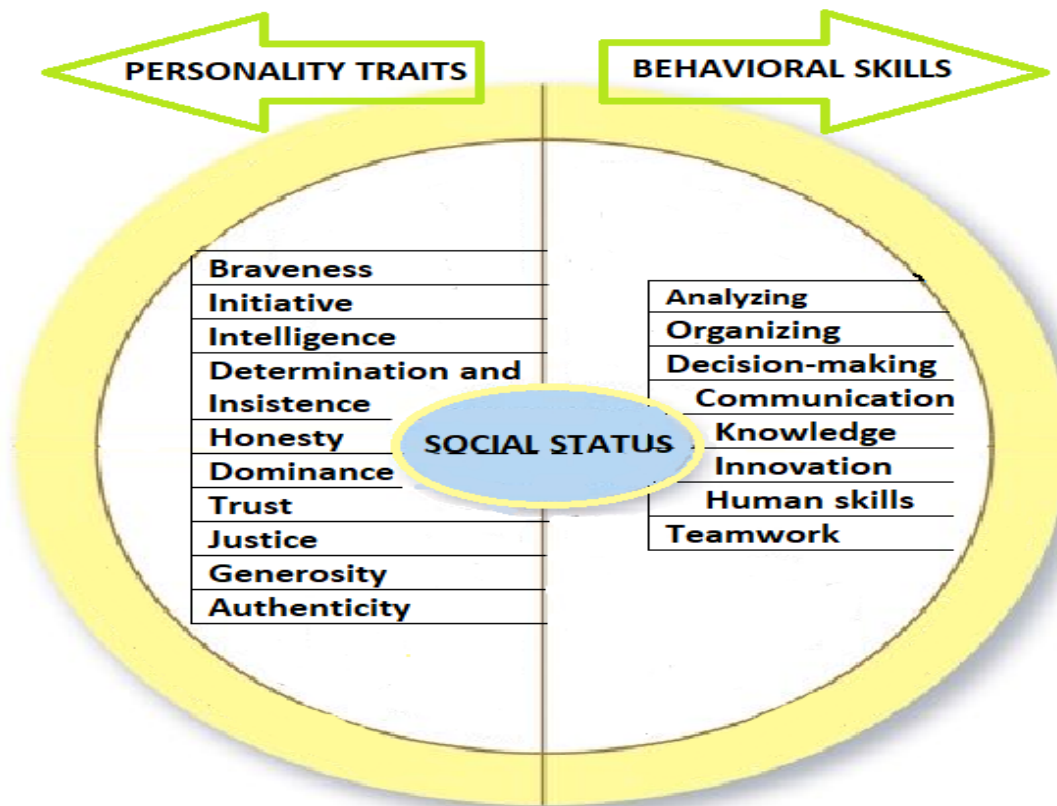
conditions require special qualifications, competencies and in-depth training that are available to only a few individuals, and relative scarcity becomes a cause of class inequality.

Conclusion and Implications

The enthusiasm of this study was the lack of standards of leaders' selection as acknowledged by scholars in the Middle East. Therefore, the objective of this research is to construct a framework of leadership competencies consisting of a group of 10 personality traits with 8 behavioural skills, in addition to the social status. The justification of the need for a new leadership model is the fact that conventional leadership approaches lack inquiry into the personal and sociological factors that shape their leadership. We attempt to develop a logic model which contributes to help organisations to choose the best fit leader and not to get into the dilemma of personal and subjective choices. Also, conventional leadership approaches believe their creed on leadership is universally applicable. On top of this is that conventional leadership approaches lack inquiry into the personal and sociological factors that shape their leadership (O'Hagan, 2009). Furthermore, the study addressed two research questions: first, are there special specifications and criteria for the selection of a leader in organisations? And second, why conventional models of leadership are mostly not effective in selecting the right person to be on the top of organisations in the Middle East?

The methodology that was used to implement the study was literature review and historical analysis in order to analyse and describe the descriptions of the Rational Leadership Model in the Middle East (RLM). A few frameworks and theories were scrutinised to classify certain leadership dimensions. This model consists of three main dimensions as shown in Figure 1, the first is personality traits with 10 traits (Braveness, Initiative, Intelligence, Determination and Insistence, Honesty, Dominance, Trust, Justice, Generosity, and Authenticity). The second is the behavioural skills which have 8 behaviour traits (Analyzing, Organizing, Decision-making, Communication, Knowledge, Innovation, Human skills, and Teamwork) and third is the social status.

Figure 1. Rational Leadership Model in the Middle East (RLM).



Implications of the study for leadership in practice is that it addresses the need to develop an explicit model of leadership considering the specificity of culture in the Middle East. This will enable recognition of the main liabilities needed for choosing leadership. Moreover, further attention is to be given to its development whether mental leaders are to reflect on the relevance of the leadership model to greater empowerment at all levels of the leadership or the practical aspect to reinforce the appearance and influence of the leader on followers. We ultimately expect that this study serves as a foundation for a new theory and motivates extra research to be conducted to examine the validity of the constructs of the model in the management field.

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